



Philosophical Ponderings of a Farmer

The Role of Technology in Our Lives (c) 2018

I had an interesting conversation with a friend over the weekend about the role of technology in our lives. And while this is a topic that I think about A LOT, I don't believe I've mentioned it much in my philosophical ponderings as I had never before fully equated it to my business life... until now.

My friend suggested that we, as a society, should consider how instant access to tech (smart phones being the obvious example that I will focus on today) has blurred the boundaries between personal and professional. She was referring to the fact that employees often now consider it normal and acceptable to check their personal messages during the work day. And, conversely, rather than offering their employees work phones, many employers now expect their help to use their personal phones for business activities, which, in my mind, makes it a lot easier for that employee to feel the need to check work messages during off hours.

As our conversation progressed, covering topics such as how overwhelmed we are with "too much information" (in large part thanks to the Internet) to how good it feels to purchase directly from a local producer rather than online, I began to think about how much the lines between my own personal and professional lives have blurred.

Yes, I am using my cell number as the main contact line to my business and yes, I have been known to text or email wholesale accounts from that phone in the evening. But that is not what really bothered me; I began to think about how I've developed the habit of taking a break while out in the field and "playing" with my phone. Usually this involves checking emails, both personal and professional, and checking Instagram.

During our conversation, I argued that this was okay as I own my own business and can, technically, do whatever I like. But is it OK? Do I really need to check my Instagram account while I'm farming? And is my Instagram account a personal or a business activity? While my posts are all focused on Hopscotch (obviously business marketing), and I follow mainly other farmers and food producers, I do think that viewing other people's posts is more of a recreational activity. So where do I draw the line?

As a newbie to social media, I don't yet have these answers, but it is interesting to see how addicted I've become to my phone, using my "business" as the guise to convince myself that I need to check it all time. Yikes - I never thought I would be THAT person. So, since Saturday, I've been making a conscious effort to "not to." Wish me luck in this endeavor!