

Abstract

There are many relations you have with technology. Technology is growing at such a rate that new phones hit the market several times a year. However, sometimes Technology can get in the way of our personal growth. Rarely do we examine our lives without technology or pre-technology. The household we were raised in, the family values we were taught, and the finding of ourselves through the various stages of life all play a part in how we interact with technology. I would like to examine some of those thoughts looking at it through the lens of my own life.

As a child with a father who served in the Army, one of my earliest childhood memories prior to reading and writing was my time spent in Arizona. I remember living next to a woman who made puppets. I remember being fascinated, like a child who discovered sand for the first time. I remember leaving Arizona to come back to New York and being gifted a swan puppet that I would cherish for the next few months.

My dad was a gifted free style drawer. He was a huge comic book fan at the time so most of his drawings related to superheroes. I remember he used to give me paper, pencils, and crayons and sit me next to him to draw. I am quite sure it was his way to keep me quiet while he lost himself in his art. At such a young age I just wanted to mimic his behaviors because clearly as time went on, nor did I have the talent for drawing I also did not have the passion.

My mom is a very oral person. My family and I will often joke that if we put my mom on a trip around the world, she will come back speaking several different languages. She can strike up a conversation with a random person, whether it is on a bus, train, airplane, or even the doctor's office, and form a friendship. It is truly a gift. However, because education was not a focus of her mom, and having myself at fifteen, talking was something she needed to figure out to leverage her lack of schooling.

My dad was not much of a talker, being a military man in all, so most of my conversations were with my mom. Whether she was giving my brother and I direction with chores or yelling at us for being mischievous, her voice was a constant in raising me.

For myself, speech has always been my favorite mode of communication because of all the tones you can take to drive an emotion. Writing, however, is a crucial mode of communication because of the distance between two people or the love of writing. However, sometimes it's hard to gauge someone's emotion through writing. Sometimes because of this miscommunication becomes an issue and leads to clarifying writing interpretation.

I remember moving back to New York from Arizona and being put in kindergarten. All I could think about was "how am I starting in kindergarten when I've been in school for like two years. I was home schooled in Arizona by the daycare I attended. So, I recognized words around 4 years old. I believe I was taught how to write in kindergarten. My aunt Pat was the family babysitter. When the adult wanted to hang out Aunt Pat would mind the kids. Aunt Pat was an education woman and always read us bedtime stories. Shortly after kindergarten Aunt Pat would have us read books by Dr. Seuss. Other than Aunt Pat, school was my primary source of learning how to read and write.

My mom was born in South Carolina and was one of fourteen children. Education was not a focus in her family since everyone had to contribute by putting food on the table. So, all I heard growing up was "if you got your high school diploma, I've done my job". As I got older, I wondered why there was not an emphasis on higher education. And only when I had a conversation with my mom, I learned that was the expectation from her mom and because so many of her brothers and sisters fell short of that goal, she couldn't see past getting a high school diploma.

My dad was a factor worker his entire life with a high school education. He worked six days a week and long hours. He left my brother and I schooling to my mom. I don't remember my mom or dad coming to open school night or any school events. My dad would occasionally ask my brother and I about school but with little interest. I guess and long as my mother was not complaining and they were not receiving calls from school, education went unnoticed.

School is the only place I would read and write outside of doing homework or a project for school. I listen to music in my leisure time. I also started to work at a young age. By 12 I was packing groceries at the local supermarket for extra money. By fourteen I had a newspaper route in my neighborhood. By fifteen years old, I was working in Madison Square Garden getting a w-2 form. So, as you see I pick up where my parents left off by putting a premium on working rather than education. I did start to read the newspaper when I started taking the train to work. I would read the newspaper front to back being intrigued by current events.

I remember my dad buying my brother and I Atari game console and us being so happy. My brother has always been into games, me, not so much. He would play for hours and most of the time I would watch and cheer him on. I would buy games I was intrigued by just to sit and watch him play. To this day my brother is still a gamer, and I quickly ditched the game for outdoor activities like basketball and football.

I grew up on a block where we lived in brownstone owned by my uncle, and we lived on the third floor while he lived on the first floor. My aunt and uncle lived next door with my cousins. My grandfather owned a brownstone down the block and all my father's brothers and sisters lived there. My uncle had a big floor model television before any of us had one. We're talking early 70's. The family used to pile up in his family room and watch iconic movies like Cornbread Earl and Me, starring a child who would later become Laurence Fishburn, or movies like Superfly. Once we got our own television we were already hooked. The only negative thing we heard was "you better not sit too close to the television because it will make you blind".

My father could not quite get me to settle down with his love for drawing, but his love for music I took to right away. I was born the year hip hop was introduced to the world. My dad, a self-proclaimed aspiring DJ was in love with music. I remember going to block parties as young as five years old with my father. As a teen I could get lost for hours listening to music. As an adult I still listen to music to comfort me in any emotion I may be going through. All of my children have a strong attachment to music. If you ask my three oldest daughters who's their favorite rapper, undoubtedly, they will say Jay-z. That's how much I played him in the house or in the car.

There were a few popular gadgets in the 80's that were fundamental to my childhood. The Sony Walkman and the boombox. I was so excited to say up money to buy myself a Walkman. Now I can travel and listen to music which made riding my bike and exploring so much fun. My uncles had the boombox. Several of them as a matter of fact. And because most of my family grew up on the same block, we were always blasting music.

Video cameras were also a staple in our family. My cousin and I used to yell at each other over the use of the video camera. With most of the yelling being not nice things about one another, and usual got one of us in trouble and most of the time, both of us.

Digital technology became a distraction for me when I tried to down music. I did not need to work as hard to buy CDs or cassettes because I could get the music for free. The time I spend focusing on getting free music stops me from doing other important things like completing choirs or participating in outdoor activities.

My friends and I were outdoor kids and out young adults. So, we did not get influenced by technology at a young age. Even when there were computers in every home and the introduction of the internet, technology still was not on my radar. I went from riding my bike and playing football with my friends to being attracted to girls. I did not have a interaction with technology until I got into the workforce from a career standpoint.

I believe the camera phone has become a liability to public safety. People invade your privacy to take pictures. People will watch a crime in progress and look to record instead of calling the police or trying to help. I believe we live in a society where attention is a form of drug. Now with the introduction of social media, people are doing anything for views. Anything so you can watch them. Everyday life for some people is no longer private.

I love the ability to FaceTime, zoom meeting or any other form of face to face through technology. I have a big family and it is nice to see their faces along with their voices. I believe the connection is deeper.

The most important technologies we will need in the future are cellphones and any military technology that is designed to keep us safe in a world of terror such as body scan equipment in airports, satellites, and new methods to stop crimes. I believe the world will get more dangerous as everything evolves.

The relationship I see between writing and digital technologies is one of evolution. At one point in history writing was the primary mode of getting information out to the world. Paper files were created and that's how you stored information. Even though that's still done today, with the invention of computers (easier to type than write), people now can type and digitally store information on their computer or on some form of drive. Now, that does not mean writing is not important. It is still important in early education. I write myself notes and place them on my desk as reminders.

At fifty years old I do not have any social media. I guess from the beginning I looked at it as an invasion of privacy. My wife (who's my best friend) and I made a conscious decision to focus on our lives versus the lives of others. I am old school in a way that I did not take many

pictures as a child or a young adult. So, the subconscious obsession some people have with posting pictures or things of interest was not something I have ever been interested in.

I had one negative experience with social media. My daughter was pregnant with my second granddaughter (my first granddaughter was with my older daughter). While planning her baby shower she wanted me to buy a cake worth 450.00 dollars. When I explained that the money can be used for something of importance, it bothered her. She took to Facebook to air out her grievances. Once I got wind of it, I forbid any of her 8 siblings and stepsiblings to attend. This was 7 years ago. It was a tough lesson for everyone; however, we now are a family who is disciplined with keeping our business off the internet.