

# Coffee Talk: Two Sugars One Life The Underemployed Smartphone

Clayton M. Myhill

November 2025

Last week I spent forty-five minutes watching a raccoon try to wash cotton candy. The cotton candy kept dissolving. The raccoon kept trying. I was supposed to be answering emails.

This is what we've done with the greatest technological achievement of our species. We've built a device that can connect to the International Space Station, translate forty languages in real-time, and access the sum total of human knowledge. And we use it to argue with strangers about whether a hot dog is a sandwich.

*If you've ever looked up from your phone to realize you've been scrolling for an hour and couldn't name a single thing you saw, you're not broken. You're just running cave-person software on a device built for astronauts.*

Think about it. You're holding something more powerful than the computers that landed humans on the moon. The President could theoretically call you on this thing. You could watch live footage from Mars. You could learn quantum physics.

But there you are, thumbs flying, locked in mortal combat in the comments section of a cooking video. The debate? Whether "scone" rhymes with "gone" or "cone." This is like using the Hadron Collider to reheat your coffee. It'll work, sure. But something's been lost in translation.

And then there are the cats.

God, the cats.

We've got a pocket-sized portal to the universe, and what captivates us? Mr. Tiddles doing Swan Lake on a Roomba. A tabby staring into a cardboard box like it contains the secrets of existence. We could be unlocking the mysteries of dark matter. Instead,

we're watching a fat orange cat fail to jump onto a counter for the fifteenth time. And sharing it. And watching it again.

It's using a time machine to go back to last Thursday to find where you left your keys.

Here's the thing though: maybe this isn't a bug. Maybe it's the feature.

We've been handed the keys to the kingdom of knowledge, and we've responded, "Cool, but can it tell me if penguins have knees?" (They do, by the way. Hidden under their feathers. You're welcome.)

The true genius of the smartphone isn't its staggering capabilities. It's that it meets us where we actually are: distracted, curious, easily amused, and desperately in need of a break from the weight of being a functional adult.

So the next time you catch yourself deep in a video of a dog who's learned to say "I love you" (poorly, but enthusiastically), don't feel guilty. You're not underutilizing technology. You're being exactly, wonderfully human.

Now if you'll excuse me, that raccoon video has a sequel.

---

*Want the curated sequence? 7 essays, 21 days, one free chapter. [emotional-navigation.com/coffee-talk](http://emotional-navigation.com/coffee-talk)*