



Let go of your iPhone.

We expect our iPhones to always go up in number.³ That's just how the world works, right? I currently have an iPhone 5. When it craps out, I'll trade up to an iPhone 6 or 7 or 8—and get more storage, features, and pixels. But consider this: what if that's not how the world works anymore? What if—metaphorically speaking—those iPhone numbers are going to start going down? What if “progress” is an artifact of a very specific set of temporary historical conditions—particularly the abundance of cheap fossil-fuel energy, and the ability to treat the Earth as a production “externality”—which are now hitting hard limits? Faced with a choice between gracefully powering down our civilization, or suffering a violent decline, how do we proceed? Well, besides sharing the pain equally (see Climate Justice; principle of), it's all about expectation management.

Imagine if in the future, when our iPhone 5 craps out—again, metaphorically speaking—our only option is to go to an iPhone 4 or earlier model. What would you do? Well, you'd take the iPhone 4 and find a way to be happy, and it really shouldn't be that hard. After all it's like having all the computing power that existed in the entire world in the 1960s in a sleek black glass rectangle in *your* pocket. If cars had experienced the same tech advances as computers, you'd now be able to drive from New York to Los Angeles in three seconds on a thimbleful of gas. Well, you and your “new” iPhone 4 can still do that.

But I know what you're thinking: the numbers are heading towards zero, and, eventually, you're going to lose or break your last iPhone 1 and there'll be nothing to “upgrade” to. Then what? Maybe you'll go outside and play. Or stay inside and meditate. Or learn to paint. And, who knows, it might be the best thing that ever happened to you.

Now, not all of us are going to be able to pull this off. Most of us are not going to be happy that our iPhone upgrades are going backwards. But, here's the thing: you don't have to be happy about it. All you have to do is find a way to not be so unhappy about it that you start voting iPhone deniers into office, or burn your neighbor's house down looking for an extra iPhone 6, or blame the Jews for the iPhone problem, or round up all those iPhone-stealing Mexicans in camps. What does victory look like in an era of civilizational unravelling? Easy: Finding within us just enough humanity to not do any of those things because of an iPhone.