

NEW INNOVATIONS



Considering the Between Twitter

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In the past year or so, I've given in and am finally on Twitter because I'm currently working as a psychotech journalist and it's proven itself to be a great way to find stories, monitor chatter between sources, and network with fellow reporters. But for professionals like us, and especially clinicians, it's much more complicated than it seems, and blurring the lines can happen in a single tweet.

But the deeper you get into the "Twitterverse", you'll find that not only does it come with its own language, but also its own set of norms. It always amazes me; despite the massive volume of civilized people dwelling within its pages,

things are drastically different from the real world.

So here is a quick guide to the rules I've discovered:

On Twitter, when someone "follows" you, it's good. It means they want to read what you write. In real life, it's creepy. It means they might plan to kill you.

On Twitter, when you "follow" someone else, they'll often thank you for the compliment. In real life, when you follow someone else, they'll probably call the police.

On Twitter, when you read and comment on everything you see and just want more, you're

part of the Twitterati. In real life, you're a gossip.

On Twitter, when you add celebrities, politicians, and interact with them, you're using the platform appropriately. In real life, you're a #1 fan!! (And, on security's "watch list".)

On Twitter, preaching regularly about your deep thoughts or observations makes you an active user and desirable to follow. In real life, sharing these things so persistently would get you labeled with delusions of grandeur or at the very least, annoying.

How do we remedy these two worlds? I mean, even I get

Cultural Differences and Offline Life

confused. I've had thoughts all week that I've been fighting off sharing with people. Twitter teaches me that everyone's interested, so I came really close to telling people today that I notice that unless I'm sitting upright, I am always clenching my buttocks. Is that interesting? I don't even know anymore.

Twitter has blurred my lines of tact and common sense. An otherwise sane person, I now interact with Charlie Sheen and giggle with delight when he responds. I "retweet" crude messages by comedians. I hawkishly monitor the Real Housewives of every city for any signs of drama, and I read

everything posted by game designers and science mags and am left still wanting more. Nothing is ever enough.

I don't know which world is right or why. But I'm happy to be a functioning member of both societies. The real concern, however, is when they merge...

When the most popular people are the ones with the most stalkers and entertain them with witty quips at regular intervals to keep them comin'. When I casually inform my grandmother about the discovery of my new favorite sexual position during Wimbledon. When students announce their crushes in the

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middle of the cafeteria- [ZOMG](#).

Until such time, I appreciate having an outlet for documenting my every experience, thought and observation. Moreover, I like that others are doing the same. I can appreciate a window into someone's mind as much as the next therapist.

But most of all, I'm glad that when in person, we all pretend it never happened.