

SLATE | SPARK

FEBRUARY DISPATCH

February felt like the right place to begin.

In the 1980s, Faith Popcorn, one of the most original strategists of our time, sent her clients a box once a month. These boxes were not inexpensive. Clients paid thousands of dollars a year for them. Sometimes the box held nothing more than a small plastic shark. The point was never the object itself. The point was interruption. A pause. A prompt to stop, think, and reconsider what was coming next and how the world was quietly shifting beneath our feet.

As we launch Slate Spark into the uncharted waters of business development in 2026, I decided to do the same thing.

Each month, you'll receive a small package centered on one idea to consider.

For February, the question is simple. **What does *your world* mean today versus yesterday?**

Over the past ten years, we were encouraged to expand in every direction. More connections. More platforms. More followers. More information. Our circles of influence grew larger and larger. But with that expansion came dilution. The relationships that actually build businesses were crowded out by noise.



What we rarely talked about was the time cost of that expansion. Time is one of the five pillars we consider essential for success, and it is the only one that cannot be replaced, scaled, or recovered. Every additional person in your orbit, every extra feed, channel, alert, and conversation came with a hidden tax on your attention. For many of us, the return was not worth the investment. We were busy, responsive, and informed, but not necessarily effective. Time slipped away quietly, spent maintaining breadth rather than building depth.

Likes no longer mean what they once did. Posts are not believed the way they used to be. Followers are easy to come by. Engagement is not. Real influence has quietly shifted back to something smaller, more intentional, and far more human.

I think of February as a month of contemplation and rehabilitation, a pause before spring, before momentum. This is the right time to reduce, not add.

Go into your social media accounts and pare down. Follow fewer than 100 people or organizations. Be ruthless. If a connection does not sharpen your thinking or deepen a real relationship, let it go.



I've said for years that sometimes more is just more, not better. What I hadn't fully connected until recently is how deeply that idea applies to the way we now confuse digital scale with business health. That equation no longer works.

Take the small globe in this package and ask yourself a harder question. Where will the future of your product or service actually come from? An explosive surge. A resurgence. A handful of people who truly matter.

Reconnect individually. Find an article that genuinely interests you and send it to five people you want to stay in real relationship with. Not a post. Not a broadcast. A direct note.

Unsubscribe aggressively. From newsletters. From Substack columns. From alerts that make you feel busy but not informed. Unsubscribe until your inbox feels quiet again.

Then use AI intentionally. I ask my AI partner, Celeste, to monitor only the topics and people that sit inside my true circle of influence. Each day, she delivers a short, two-line summary of articles tied to those subjects, the columnists I care about, and the people I am following closely, with a link if I want to read further. It is not everything. It is exactly what I've told her matters. It functions as my personal newsfeed for the day, filtered by judgment rather than volume.

I do this deliberately. Information is only valuable if it earns the time we give it, and curation is how I make sure my time is spent where it actually pays a return.

Enclosed, you will also find a grid I have created for you to begin the process of establishing the circles of collaboration for your pathway to success.

This is about setting the stage for a finer focus. Not global dominance. Not scale for scale's sake. But the people who will actually help build your business.

Years ago, when I was working on the Obama campaign, we were on a call celebrating the Facebook page reaching more than fifteen million followers. There was a lot of backslapping. Someone asked why I was quiet. I pointed out that SpongeBob had thirty million followers. I then explained that many people followed the Obama page not to engage, but to harass and complain. I said I would rather have meaningful engagement from fewer people than a massive audience with no real connection. Engagement, not followers, is the true marker of excellence.

Sometimes more is just more, not better. So for now, let others chase scale. We'll focus on *my world*.

Make a list of what your world should include.

I hope you find this helpful, grounding, and useful. March is right around the corner.

Christine
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