

## Some Words for my Friends ...

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The first time I ever played Scrabble was at the dining room table of my grandparents' house on Green Bay Street in La Crosse, Wisconsin. My grandmother, with not an ounce of malice, patiently taught my brothers and me how to play all those years back, only to beat us mercilessly for the decades that have followed.

As I grew older and eventually became a writer, my Scrabble skills never really improved. When my mom discovered the highly popular Words with Friends for the iPhone a few months back, I had to cop to the fact that I'd deleted the app over a year ago.

Unfortunately, Words with Friends is a game I just can't finish. Instead of laying out wood blocks on a board that lay between the two of us, there is this awful digital lag time between moves. I'd place a word and wait, only to find my best friend out in California had taken a "quick break" to hit up a San Jose Sharks game.

By the time my game partner returned, I was on an airplane or absorbed in an episode of "Built to Kill" on Nat Geo. The momentum shifts would continue, and I'd soon lose enthusiasm for a game that, after several weeks, I could barely remember starting.

At Grandma's dining room table, I'd watch her think while I chewed breadsticks and drank root beer. Back then, the anticipation was all part of the fun. But now, the lag time is an app killer; the technology just can't hold up against the variables like my (and my friends') inability to focus on a game long enough to see it through.

Sometimes wanting to like something isn't enough to make it stick. I could play real Scrabble (and lose) all day long against my grandmother, but Words with Friends

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Published on Chem.Info (<http://www.chem.info>)

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just doesn't have a place in my life.

This lesson translates well to purchasing; I think we all sometimes need to talk ourselves out of buying things that aren't conducive to our environments. Just ask me how many times I've dragged out one past impulse purchase -- the "Big Top Cupcake" giant cupcake mold -- a product best designed for people with young children or those who really, really love cake. Turns out one giant cupcake is enough for me for a lifetime.

The point is to go into your investments being honest with yourself and armed with as much information as possible. While retail companies spend a lot of time trying to determine what works for you, at some point, you have to meet them in the middle with a realistic view of your needs as you assess a potential purchase. Some things sound great in theory, but their application just doesn't quite mesh with your organization. That's why information, and self-reflection, is key.

And if you're not in the market for a high-tech purchase, I'd suggest you dust off your Scrabble board as I did when I went to see my grandmother for the Easter holiday. She may be in her 80s, but she's still got our Scrabble game on lock.

*What's your take? Please feel free to comment below or email [anna.wells@advantagemedia.com](mailto:anna.wells@advantagemedia.com) [1].*

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