



From Doomscrolling to Mindful Media: The Rule of Two and One

Tom Duane's remedy for endless news burnout: pick two issues to care about the add one small joy.

April 28, 2026 By [Tom Duane](#)

We live in a world where breaking news never seems to take a break. Even I have become, at times, almost overwhelmed by current events. I'll open my phone "just to check one thing" and emerge an hour later filled with rage over everything that's happening.. Can you relate?

I've been noticing lately how I consume information, and more importantly, how much is too much. Let me tell you, humans were never designed to process a constant stream of global war, crazy communications from world leaders, economic rollercoasters, and whatever fresh hell is trending this hour, all presented in mesmerizing AI memes and reels. Yet here we are, doomscrolling away.

Tom's Rule of Two and One

So let me introduce a simple, slightly absurd, but surprisingly effective framework: all of us are only allowed to obsess over *two horrible things per day*. Not three. Not seven. Two.

When you try to keep up with everything, your brain doesn't become more informed, it becomes saturated. Some call it "news fatigue" or "information overload," but to me it just feels like anxiety, burnout, and a persistent sense of helplessness. And that is the aim of our Mortifying Leader and his MAGA followers.

By choosing just two major issues to focus on, I'm not ignoring reality, I'm curating it. Maybe today I'll concentrate on JD Vance vs the Pope and Melania's newest "Be Best" bullshit. Tomorrow, it's national HIV budget cuts and the war in Iran. The specifics don't matter as much as the boundary.

Now for the critical part: balance.

For every two heavy topics you allow yourself to engage with, you must actively seek out one joyful thing. This isn't optional.

The "joyful thing" doesn't have to be life-changing. In fact, it's better if it's small and accessible. For me, sometimes it's having a good cup of coffee. Or watching a campy drag performance video that makes me laugh harder than it should. The point is to remind my brain that the world is not

exclusively made up of problems.

We all need to laugh, even when things are rough. I think sometimes the only reasonable response to the news is a dark, campy, slightly unhinged sense of humor. Not because terrible things are funny, but because laughter creates just enough distance to keep me from spiraling.

Although this two-horrible-things-and-one-joy concept is a Tom Duane original, the approach goes right along with a growing movement around mindful media consumption. One of the biggest misconceptions about staying informed is that you have to care about everything equally, all the time. You don't. You can decide what deserves your mental energy, instead of handing it over to a social media algorithm that profits from your stress.

Caring deeply about a few issues is far more impactful than being vaguely distressed about dozens. Let me tell you, protecting my mental health doesn't make me less aware; it makes me more capable of engaging in a meaningful way.

Tom's Challenge

Here's my challenge to you: tomorrow, when you open your phone and the crap of the world comes rushing at you, remember: two horrible things. Just two. And then go find something good, however small, and let it matter.

It won't fix everything, but it might make everything feel a little less impossible.