Funding the Future

Do we really need more iPhones?

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I shared this video on YouTube this morning. In it, I ask what I think is an important question. Do we really need more iPhones? Or do we actually need more health and social care, education, and so much else that generates remarkably little carbon? Sometime soon, we are going to have to decide.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPUfjcJVFA4

The transcript is:

How many iPhones does the world need?

Now that might sound like an odd opening to a video, but it's a really important question because well, I bet that if you have an iPhone or a Samsung or whatever else it might be - I don't really care which brand we're talking about here - you don't use all the facilities that that phone can provide to you.

For example, the vast majority of people do not use the cameras on their phones to the limit of their ability. Most, in fact, only use the forward-facing camera and not the backward one, which is the really good one. And I could go on and on and on about the ridiculous quality of these phones in comparison to what use we make of them.

And in that there's a particularly important point. We massively over consume material items that we don't really need that then go to waste in our current economy.

Why do we do that? Because we're incentivised to do so by advertising. Advertising that tells us that if we do not have this latest phone or car or garment or whatever else it might be, then we will be an inadequate person. And, therefore we must go out of our way, and quite possibly go into debt, to secure whatever it is that is being advertised towards us.

And the point is, if we don't need those things but are spending money on it, there is a very high possibility that something that we do need, but are not spending on, is not provided instead.

And what am I talking about? Well, look, we all know we're not getting adequate health care at present.

We all know that young people are not being educated properly in the UK at present.

We all know that we have not got proper police forces, nor do we have a proper judicial system if ever they catch a criminal.

We all know that there are inadequate prisons.

We all know that we're not spending enough on the environment.

We all know so many other services that are failing - social care, the NHS, you name it - they're all going wrong.

Why are they going wrong? Because politicians have decided, in the interest of big business, that there is a limit to the size of the state. However much we need the things that the state can supply, and which no one else can deliver to us in a cost-effective way, they're saying, "No, we need iPhones, or Samsungs, or whatever else, or giant cars", and my point here is, we've got to make a choice at some time.

We have to decide.

Are we going to consume forever more at cost to the planet because we know we cannot eat up resources in the way we are already?

Or are we going to have more of those things which actually take remarkably little carbon to deliver like more teachers in classrooms, or more social care, where somebody sits in front of somebody else and makes sure they're okay in their own home, or whatever else.

Are we going to make the choice for the things we really need?

Or are we going to continue to overconsume what we don't really want?

It's the biggest decision that we as a bunch of people, a population, a human race, have to take because depending upon the outcome, we'll either get the services we need and survive, or we're all frankly going to be going to live in a planet that is going to heat beyond our imaginations and we're going to sort of burn in hell.

I don't like that idea.

I don't suspect you do.

So there's only one really tenable outcome here.

Do we want more iPhones or would we like more from the NHS?