

Comfort can be a cure for sickness

Louisa Austin

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It's only the second week back to school, and I'm already tired. And sick. Not completely sick, but the achy, I-feel-like-I'm-getting-sick sick. I've been taking Vitamin C and zinc supplements, eating oranges and trying to get more sleep. But I don't think these things are helping. So I tried something else last night to cure my aches and pains — eating chocolate cake and snuggling with my dog while I read the 50 pages due for a class today.

I think chocolate is the cure for anything, and a sweet, warm dog doesn't hurt. Why do I think this is a better solution than fruit or a pill? Because it is comforting. You can't get much comfort out of a pulpy orange or swallowing a pill when it hurts to swallow.

People love comfort. I'm pretty sure it's why the remote control was invented and why we have heaters and houses. No one wants to be cold on the ground or have to get up to change the channel. It's in our nature to want to relax and have luxury. With it being only the first week and being already stressed out, I could use a little comfort.

Each semester in the last three years, I have tried to carve out time for little pleasures. I allow time to watch TV shows such as "Modern Family" and "The Office" — I think I'm the only person still watching that show.

Laughing helps me de-stress, which is kind of a no-brainer, so I try to get in as much comedy as I can. I read two or three fun books throughout the semester — mostly gritty detective novels by Tami Hoag — getting out my Kindle when I have a few moments to spare.

I'm rereading the Harry Potter series, which makes me wish I was a student at Hogwarts instead of here. Wouldn't it be cool to fly around on a broomstick? It would definitely help with the parking nightmare on campus. We could have broomstick parking where the bike racks are and the parking lots could be used for the rich kids who ride dragons ... but I digress.

Reading for fun helps me feel like I'm still a normal person and not just filling my head with abstract theories of why literature is important and what it can tell us about ourselves. I even manage to get some time in at the gym, which is also a great way to release stress, and I actually somehow get all my homework done and earn good grades. It's usually my sleep that suffers — probably why I'm fighting off what feels like strep throat.

I've learned it's all about balance, and it has been a struggle to achieve that balance each semester with work and school, making time for my husband and friends and still allowing myself some sort of luxury. That's why most of the time I can be found procrastinating by reading a novel on my Kindle while eating a piece of chocolate cake.

Contact Louisa Austin at l.austin@chronicle.utah.edu

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