

# Downtime is crucial for busy students



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Stress — it's the phenomenon of having too much to do and too little time. It's your professor announcing, "Don't forget, your 15-page rough draft is due next class period." It's figuring out you don't have any clean socks as you're getting ready to walk out the door and head to class. It's balancing so many classes, extracurricular activities and homework assignments that you forget to wash those socks at all.

As the end of the semester draws near, all Truman State students probably have experienced stress. For some of us, it means a short supply of socks. For others, it means decreased

hours of sleep and increased caffeine intake. For an unlucky few — myself included — it means both.

A healthy dedication to work is admirable, but when your dirty laundry and empty coffee mugs start piling up, it might be time to re-evaluate your priorities.

I learned this the hard way after an all-night study session, I stumbled into my bedroom and tripped over piles of textbooks, papers and notes spread precariously across the floor.

Luckily, I did not sustain any serious injuries. It was a minor incident, but a serious wake-up call. After dividing my time between work and school, I had barely allowed myself enough time to sleep — much less clean my room. Anything recreational was completely out of the question.

I needed a break. It's OK to admit it and, believe it or not, it's OK to take one. In fact, it's important to slow down occasionally and allow yourself to re-energize.

Last weekend, I was lucky enough to get that hard-earned break when I traveled with a friend to visit her family farm. She warned me ahead of time that I wouldn't have cell phone service or Internet access, and I likely wouldn't be able to get much work done during the two-day getaway.

I checked my phone incessantly during the five-hour drive to the farm, frantically answering emails and warning my friends and fellow Indexers I would be unreachable for a couple of days. As we turned off the highway onto the gravel road near the farmhouse, I watched helplessly as my cell signal was lost entirely. We had entered a dead zone, far from civilization and all its conveniences — but far from the stressors that come with it.

During my first hour at the farm, I continued checking my phone out of habit. During the second hour, I stopped wondering whether anyone was trying to reach me. By the third hour, I was able to forget completely about all the work I left at Truman and was able to thoroughly enjoy walking through the countryside, sitting by the fire and working in the field.

Mentally "checking out" for the weekend was the best thing I could have done for my stress level. I came back to the same problems and workload I had left behind Friday evening, but with a fresh perspective and a renewed sense of motivation.

Traveling to the outskirts of civilization to spend a few days without cell phone service might not always be realistic, but taking an hour or two to relax or do

## Dixon's presidential portrait unveiled



Sam Gorden/Index  
University President Troy Paino and former University President Barbara Dixon reveal Dixon's presidential portrait Friday in Pickler Memorial Library. Dixon, the first woman to serve as president of the University, served until 2008.

something enjoyable isn't as impossible as it might seem.

Take some time to step away from your work. When you come

back, you just might have the energy you need to pick up that pile of textbooks or wash a few pairs of socks.

# Facebook shouldn't replace reality



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Confessions, crushes and compliments, oh my! For Truman State students with Facebook accounts, others' personal thoughts and feelings are only a few clicks away. With pages such as Truman State Compliments, Truman State Confessions and Truman Secret Admirers, it is easy for students to share their feelings and access the feelings of others while never leaving the computer — and there might be a downside.

Anonymously sharing secrets is not a new idea. The website PostSecret has allowed people to send anonymous postcards with their secrets written on them since 2005. However, there is a difference between sending a postcard and pressing 'enter.' People who send postcards often make them artistic and put time into their

creations. When it comes time to send the secret message away, they physically send it. Posting secrets to Facebook pages is easier for Truman students than almost any class assignment.

The ease with which secrets and crushes can be posted does not compare to the pressure to reveal them in real life, and posting them anonymously is dodging the real challenge that comes with sharing with another human being. Sharing secrets via the web can be liberating, but it also can become a crutch when it replaces seeking out friends, romance or support.

I know someone who was posted about on Truman Secret Admirers. She was excited to have been mentioned and it definitely boosted her mood for the day. At the same time, she said she wished she knew who had

posted it. If the person had told her in person, she would have been just as excited and also known who thought so highly of her.

Sharing secrets is a very scary business — after all, they usually are secrets for a reason. But I find it interesting that students seemingly afraid to share confessions with classmates will message those same thoughts to a page run by an anonymous source. Anonymity can be freeing, but I hope students remember the value of sharing secrets and problems with others in person.

Despite whatever benefits the Facebook pages for anonymous posts might have, in the end, students should remember these pages cannot offer a comforting hug after the sharing of a secret or the kiss of a newfound love.

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