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APRICATE: THE KEY TO SOLVING THE WINTER BLUES IS SELF-CONFIDENCE

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The moon rises over Horsebarn Hill on Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2026 in Storrs, Conn. The temperatures were chilly in the heart of winter.
PHOTO BY ZACH MOLLER, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

As a former professional angsty teenage boy, I know how low one's mental health can get during the dreaded winter months. I could have probably gone to the Olympics if rotting in bed and listening to the voices in my head was a contested sport, I probably could have gone to the Olympics. I am not a doctor, but with the days falling short and having no rational justification to go outside, many people find themselves shriveled up into a shell of themselves during the gloomy hibernal season. It sucks, plainly said.

As mentioned, I've been there, and I am positive so many of you lovely readers have as well. As the snow slushes upon my boots and the crisp air claims hold of my lungs, I've been thinking a lot about the emotions that come with winter, and how one can flourish out of it. No one wants to feel small, and I truly believe the answer to the winter blues is a happy dose of self-confidence.

Emotion in general is nothing short of a positive feedback loop. It's a cyclical pattern of feeling emotions, marinating in that emotion and subsequently feeling whatever you already are feeling tenfold.

The key to rising out of the hole is pure, unadulterated authenticity. And isn't that a beautiful thing? Despite the limitations that the season brings, winter should not serve as a disruption from doing the things you love. When trapped in the house or dorm all day, I find I tend to spiral inwards. I look too deeply at myself and all that could be wrong. Screw that! Keep yourself busy, and if anything, use the supposed isolation to practice what you find productive in peace.

To keep active by participating in the hobbies and interests we love is to reassure confidence in ourselves. When alone, spend your time building yourself up, and being your own best friend. Play the guitar, learn how to draw, work out. Feel proud when you accomplish a goal, no matter how small, and let that feeling linger.

The most egregious and counterintuitive thing we can do during our bouts of sadness is to validate it with music that matches its mood. Phoebe Bridgers, Noah Kahan and a host of melancholic artists are wonderful in moderation, but I fear we must escape them if we want any chance of forward progression. Hey, I love "Punisher" just as much as the next guy, but not a soul has ever listened to that whole album and thought, "You know what, I feel a lot happier now." It's so easy to fall into the pit of sad music, but it is positivity that prevails in the darkest times of our lives. Play music that inspires you to get up, be alive and move around. As Mac Miller once said, "A life ain't a life 'til you live it."

While writing this article, I was reminded of the beautiful word apricity: the warmth of the sun in winter. It is an ancient and archaic word, but one that provides a wonderful summation of how we survive the gray, melancholic days of this long year. We apricate. We must bask in the sunshine of our livelihood and derive joy in the simple measures that make us happy. It is vital that despite how easy it is to look down on ourselves, we know the single-digit degree days will soon be replaced by the warmth of sweet spring. Before you know it, leaving your dorm without a jacket will feel normal. The flowers will grow and we'll make as many wishes as we want on the dandelions. Before you know it, the world will be lovely. For now, apricate.

AMERICANS ARE WAITING IT OUT

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Since the beginning of President Donald Trump's second term, a strange mentality has been taking prevalence amongst Americans. It seems that amid oppression, tragedy and violence, citizens of the United States are becoming tired. Even though most Americans have every capability of protesting and going against what is happening in the country right now, they are not. Instead, they are waiting it out.

Most people might think that "waiting it out" is the best option. They understand the gravity of the actions taken by this administration, but also know that come January 2029, Trump will leave office, and the work to repair the scars of his presidency can begin. They assume that they can use their voting power to fix what has been broken, but underestimate the power they possess at this moment.

Who can blame them? It seems that as soon as anyone begins to fight back, they are suppressed again. When Renee Good's murder by an Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE) agent incited thousands of protests across the country, the reaction from the Trump administration was to label these protestors as "insurrectionists" and "agitators." Just recently, The New York Times reported that Texas Gov. Greg Abbott is threatening to punish students for staging walkouts to protest ICE. Whenever anyone tries to exercise their First Amendment rights, the government strikes back, doing anything to uphold suppression and subservience. They have made citizens afraid of consequences like never before.



President Donald Trump sitting at his desk. He is the 47th president of the United States.
PHOTO COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

So, we have fallen into this pattern. We become vibrantly angry when a fresh tragedy occurs and when the government is particularly suppressive. But when we are cracked down on, told how small our protests and words are, we roll over again and wait for the next tragedy to bring us back to life. We remind ourselves of the founding principles of this country; that we cannot accept such treatment when our ancestors did not. We are incited, we are hopeful — but we are ultimately struck down.

What those in power know is that when horrible things are presented in an unceasing barrage, people begin to lose their will to fight. They can do what they want and threaten others when they respond, because they know that people become tired. They become distracted by other things — personal events, media, work — and they let themselves be enveloped in the distraction. They decide to wait it out.

This is a dangerous cycle and a terrible mentality to become trapped in. It's fine to wait out the rain or the traffic, but not unacceptable behavior that places your rights and even your life on the line. We must escape the cycle of suppression if we are to come out of this with any dignity intact.

We cannot be tired. We cannot be distracted. We cannot wait for anyone to save us or help us, when we have every capability to do so ourselves. If you can, you should not just wait it out.

The great danger of this way of thinking that we have become trapped in is that so many Americans do not even know that they are caught in it. But no one can be forced to leave it. When five-year-olds are detained by immigration officers and innocent protestors are persecuted and killed, I cannot blame anyone for wanting to be distracted. It is exhausting to be constantly fighting for yourself and others, knowing that whatever you do may not be effective and that you may not be listened to.

When people wait things out, they think of the future. They keep what's ahead in the back of their minds while they solve their own problems and live their own lives. So, while anyone "waiting out" the presidency does so with a certain exhaustion, they also harbor a little hope. They know that ahead of everything happening right now, there is a chance we will come out of it.

We will. Whether you are waiting it out or actively protesting and thinking of America's problems every single day, you do so with the knowledge that the future is not absolute and not everything is hopeless. Do not be discouraged.