Check Your Progress

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T-Break Guide

A guide to help support you on a cannabis tolerance break

Hello. An Introduction

If you use cannabis, at some point, you should take a tolerance break. Like anything else, your body builds up a tolerance: you need more to get high. A T-Break could help you save money and also keep balance.

The hard news is that if you partake most days, a true T-Break should be at least 21 days long, since it takes around three weeks or more for THC to leave your system. (That's because THC bonds to fat, which is stored in the body longer.)

I created this guide because people would tell me that when they set out to take a T-Break, they only lasted a few days. Sometimes they felt ashamed because it was harder than they thought. There is no need to feel bad…

…but it can be hard to take a break. People usually find some aspect of getting high beneficial. Cannabis causes fewer harms than some other drugs and creates less cravings. For those very reasons, ironically, some people find it challenging to find a balance with cannabis: they might think that cannabis has *no* harms and *no* cravings. Everything has pros and cons. And cannabis, like a lot of things, can create dependency.

A T-Break is a good time to re-evaluate balance. If you want to stop completely, just continue the T-Break. Others may return to cannabis and can use this as a support while bringing down their tolerance and finding better balance.

Either way, a little support is a good thing. I hope you find it useful.
If you don't find this helpful, I would welcome your feedback.

With respect,

~Tom Fontana
tom.fontana@uvm.edu

How to use this guide

This guide has daily practices. Each week has a different theme:

Week 1 - physical
Week 2 - emotional
Week 3 - spiritual / existential

It may be useful to read a few a days at once because there are practical things about sleep and appetite that may be helpful right away.
There is a calendar in the back that you can use to check-off the days.
Plus, there are blank pages for your thoughts, drawings, etc.

Care has been put into the content and order, but you know what works for you. Feel free to make this is a choose-your-own adventure guide.

A note on wording:
The word "marijuana" has a long history in the United States.
Its roots are in racism and the war on drugs. So I say 'cannabis' or 'weed'.
I hope that is ok with you.

Also, I say 'partake' or 'use' to include smoking, vaping, eating, etc.
I hope that's ok too.

Day 0 – Preparation

Timing
Pick a date to start your T-Break. A 21 day stretch with some stability would be ideal. But there may never be a perfect time, and that's ok. Give it a little thought, but just pick something.

Try to pick a date that is sooner than later- today even. Try not to have a big lead up. (That leads to procrastination.) If you have a routine, don't increase it before your T-Break.

Stash and Paraphernalia
Don't have any cannabis around when you start. The closer it is physically, the more we desire to do it. If you can smell or see it, that's the hardest. So get rid of it.

Same with paraphernalia. If you are quitting, get rid of it.
If you are just taking a pause and you have some really nice glass, hide it away. (Or let a friend hold on to it.) Consider this a tidying up.
If you have cheap shit, throw it away.

With a little help from my friends
Identify who may be a support and tell them that you are taking a T-Break. If other people in your life partake, they may even want to join you on this break. Most friends will understand you taking a T-Break and will support you.

But there may be some people in your life who will question you and make this harder. Some friends may try and to get you back in the circle. You changing causes lowkey discomfort in them- and they will want you to go back to the routine that works for them.

Like putting away your piece, you may have to avoid them too.

Day 1 – Stay Busy

"The first days are the hardest days"
~Grateful Dead

Some people can go from always being high and into a T-Break with no issues. Good for them. The rest of us humans will experience some readjustment and discomfort: appetite, sleep, anxiety, irritability, etc. I hope that this guide can help and support you. Together, we will address each of these things.

The hardest moments will be the times of day when you usually partake. That's when your brain and body expects it. You'll get through it. But it helps to be busy.

Perhaps you have been wanting to workout or meditate more. Perhaps there is a show you've been looking to watch or a podcast you haven't had the time for. Maybe there is a hobby you've been wanting to get better at. Now's the time. Move, watch, learn, practice, whatever. Do something.

Some people are fine around friends who are high when they are not. That is your call. But joining them in a smoke sesh where weed is the only focus? That's a lot to ask of yourself.

Consider having things to do that you can invite friends to. If someone invites you to smoke, invite them to a movie. It is a good idea to have things planned to do with friends. It is also a good idea to have things planned for when you are by yourself. It helps to keep your body and mind busy.

Day 2 – Sleep

"Now I lay me down to sleep…"
~A bedtime prayer (also, Metallica)

Lots of people who partake do so before bed. THC in your system during sleep impacts your sleep cycle. (More on that later.) On the upside, being high before bed helps people fall asleep. Unfortunately, some people come to have difficulty falling asleep without it.

This T-Break offers a chance to create new routines. "Bedtime" is a concept that you probably have not thought about in years. But falling asleep is as much about your bedtime routine as it is about being tired.

The quote above is mostly because I wanted to reference Metallica. But *also* because it may conjure some old-timey notion of a kid going to bed. Kids tend to sleep well when they have routine. Pajamas, bath, books, and bed. The whole sequence is designed to tell the body that it is time to sleep.

If you are having trouble falling asleep, look at your routine. If you don't have a bedtime routine, you can make one. Here are a few tips. Wear pajamas every night (fancy footy ones or old comfy clothes.) Do something involving hot water: a bath, shower, face-wash or cup of herbal tea. Use the blue-light lifter on your screen. (Blue light is a simulant.) And turn off devices 30 minutes prior.

Sleep experts say that your bed should be used only for sex and sleep. If you live in an apartment or dorm, your bed often becomes your table, your desk, and your couch. If sleep remains an issue, consider how you use your bed. It might help to stay off your bed until it is time to sleep.

Thank You

This guide would not be possible without the insight, editing, and support of so many people. Most especially, the students who have shared their stories and experience:

BC, KP, BD, SL, MB, MK, AT, MW, SK, JS, CH, CS, AW, BP, EP, BL, AC, GI, GO, RJ, JF

Special editing thanks to student and star Kaisy Wheeler- you have a gift. (And you hate when I start a sentence with "and")

Thank you to colleagues in the field, who have been generous in spirit and mind: Amelia Arria, Brian Bowden, Diane Fedorchak, Jason Kilmer, Nancy Reynolds, Peter Rives, Andrea Villanti.

The idea for this format came from the Student Well-Being Center at Notre Dame. Thanks ND.

And thank you to the University o*f* Vermont and to my co-workers in LivingWell for supporting this work. Y'all are kick ass awesome.

Beyond 21 – Tips and Resources

If your break is now done

Please keep a few things in mind before you partake. T-Breaks work. Your tolerance is now lower. Make sure that you…

- start low and go slow: cut back by half or more
- know that you have the skills to take a successful tolerance break
- plan to take breaks periodically

If you are keeping it going

Here are a few ideas and resources…

- *If you've liked the routine of daily practice*… you might either start this over or open to random pages. For a community of people taking a break, check out r/petioles on Reddit

- *If you are considering stopping cannabis completely*… check out Marijuana Anonymous' (MA) 12 questions. For a community of people who abstain, check out an MA meeting or r/leaves

- *If you like seeing your numbers*… check out the Grounded app. It counts your t-break time and shows the money you saved.

Day 3 – Food

"If you want a quality, act as if you already had it"
~William James

Some people experience a lack of appetite when they cut back on cannabis. This is more likely if you often got high before meals. Cannabis tends to simulate appetite. When used regularly, your appetite may have become dependent on cannabis to get it simulated. Here are a few tips….

Act *as if* you are hungry and eat on a schedule. (Acting "as if" is a concept from Adlerian psychology, poached by Cognitive Behavior Therapy. It's the idea of "fake it till you make it". You act *as if* something is true, until it becomes true. The fact that this works shows the power of confidence…and that confidence can be created.)

Try not to skip meals. Eat at regular times and in regular amounts. But definitely don't beat yourself up about not finishing something. (Eating something is better than nothing.)

Even though you may not feel hungry, your body still needs the food. If you don't eat, you will feel more tired, irritable, and anxious. So, act as if you are hungry. Your appetite will return.

Cannabis simulates appetite…until it doesn't. For a small sub-set of people, after years of partaking, they develop a severe stomach pain called Hyperemesis Syndrome. This is likely due to a buildup of THC. Hot water can help with the pain. They should pause on weed and consult a doctor.

Day 4 – Cravings

"Me can't get enough of these"
~Cookie Monster

Maybe cannabis was a big part of your life. Maybe not. Either way, it did something for you. Perhaps it helped you feel less anxious or less bored. When taking a T-Break, many people initially feel more bored/depressed, or more anxious/irritable.

It is a triple impact: you are avoiding a thing that once helped, you may be experiencing withdrawal, and you are dealing with cravings.

These first days are hard. Actually, today- day 4- may be the hardest. Some people quit at this point. Don't. It will start getting easier. Until it does, try these things:

When you are feeling an intense craving… distract yourself

- Busy your body: change location, do laundry, exercise, move
- Busy your mind: blast music, draw, create, call/text someone

When you are feeling moderate to low cravings… center yourself

- Mediate: ride the craving… notice it, let it go
- Reflect: what are you feeling? Physically what is happening?
- Identify: look for patterns in cravings (time, place, feelings, etc)
- Learn: what helps you ride them out?
- Plan: no blame, no shame… just plan for the next craving

Day 21 – Celebrate

"You who see,
go tell the others"
~Audre Lorde

Congrats. You've taken a successful T-Break!

Give yourself some credit for doing this. (Like…not too much credit: you took a tolerance break- you didn't save the whales.) But for real- it is not easy to do. Well done.

Before you partake, please visit the last page for a few tips.

I hope this guide was a help to you. Please consider giving feedback:

- if the guide helped, then I would love to hear from you.
  Let me know what worked

- if this guide was a miss, I'd love to hear from you even more.
  Let me know what bombed. We can make this better.

Like most things, maybe it was a mix of both.
Let me know your experience: *tom.fontana@uvm.edu*

Thank you.

Be well,
~Tom Fontana

Day 20 – What Next?

"Tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today"
~Malcolm X

Almost there.

Each day was a theme about what might come up during your T-Break. We moved from the immediate to the future. We went from problems to possibilities.

How'd it go? Were there themes in this guide that helped? Others themes that fell flat?

As a recap, take some time to think about how this process went for you. Revisit themes that might have been a hit or miss. Are they still?

What next?

What was your original purpose?

- If it was to reduce your tolerance… you've done it
- If it was to see if you could do it… you've done it
- If it was to see how you felt without THC- well…how do you feel?

(If it was to get clean for a pee-test…you are likely good, but if you were a heavy daily partaker- you might need 5 weeks to be completely safe. The exact science still eludes us.)

It is probably a good idea to make T-Breaks part of your routine: a weekend every month, or a month every year. As a community, I hope we come to promote this aspect of balance. Take a moment to plan your next break now.

Day 5 – Sleep II

"Sleep is the best meditation"
~Dalai Lama

We sleep in stages with 90 minute cycles. REM sleep- when we dream- is a light stage. Deep sleep is physically restorative; REM sleep is mentally restorative.

THC, like alcohol, brings people to deep stage sleep quicker. That is why people feel like cannabis helps them fall asleep. But THC holds people in deep sleep all night. Physically, this is fairly restorative. The problem is that THC disrupts REM sleep. Since THC holds people in a deep stage- and REM happens in light stage- REM cycles get skipped.

If you smoke nightly, you go into REM rebound: you dream early and inefficiently. Many people who get high before bed think that they do not dream. When starting a T-Break, you may experience vivid dreams: that's you coming out of REM disruption. It will settle soon.

REM disruption caused by cannabis likely impacts your daytime as well. The top 3 effects of REM deprivation are 1) irritability, 2) anxiety, and 3) feeling tired. These are the same things that many students and professionals report getting in the way of success.

People often describe feeling less "cloudy" when they take a break. That is due to better sleep and REM. Perhaps you are feeling these positive effects too.

Day 6 – Routine

"The things you own, end up owning you"
~Fight Club

There is a difference between 'getting high' and 'being high'. Being high is what you experience *after* you partake. It is chemical.

Getting high is the experience *before and as* you partake. It is personal and perhaps social. It develops over time. People create their own routines and preferences. Techniques can turn into art forms, and people begin to feel like a master of their craft. Since we all need to feel mastery, this can be hard to give up.

Consider if you have a 'smoke-hole': that spot where you always sit; that little table with your stash, grinder, and favorite piece. A space like this has gravity. Some people get sucked in so far, that their world becomes just 6 feet wide, revolving around their mini-fridge, a remote, game controller, speakers, and setup.

For some people, cannabis becomes an identity- their brand. They might be the connoisseur who learns every stain. Or that guy who takes the biggest bong rip. Or the girl who rolls the best joints. This is all kinda silly… but kinda real.

If you really enjoy partaking, it is ok to be good at it. But when you list the things that you are best at in life, cannabis probably shouldn't be in your top 3. We get good and what we practice. When you get high, you spend your time on that and not other things.

With the time and perspective you gain while taking a break, measure how wide your world is. Consider what routines are worth returning to- and what routines are better left behind.

Day 19 – Connecting Down

"I don't care about anyone not liking me,
you bitches barely like yourselves"
~Cardi B

Yesterday's theme of connecting up was a bit metaphysical. Today's is more grounded.

We need connection to the people around us. Those connections are roots that feed us, anchor us, and secure us in a storm. We grow connected to the people who are there for us when we need them.

Cannabis is one way to make connections to other people. But how can we know the difference between real friends and weed friends?

If those connections grow beyond cannabis and become grounded in something deeper, then those are true friends. If those connections do not grow past the cannabis, then those are weed friends.

Take a look at your friendships. Do you hangout with people who don't use cannabis? Consider how you spend time with your friends who do. If you do lots of things together- talk about lots of things, and just sometimes get high together… those are likely real friends. However, if you mostly get high together- talk about how high you are, how high you've been, and the next time you'll get high… those are weed friends.

Who have you felt connected to during this T-Break? That should give you some sense of who is truly there for you. Use that info.

Day 18 – Connecting Up

"Gunna keep on trying
till I reach my highest ground"
~Stevie Wonder

Infinity exists in multiple directions. There is the infinitely large, and the infinitely small. An infinity above, and an infinity below.

Below us is the earth. Our roots stretch out and anchor us. They grow and connect us to others. Above us is the sky. Our hearts and minds can reach up and connect us to an infinity above.

Do you believe in that infinity?

(Forgive me if not. Many folks believe in some version that infinity: the energy around us, God, or spirits. I am not assuming that because you use cannabis and were interested in a T-Break, that what you really want is a guide to enlightenment. But it is worth addressing here since there is a power in connecting to something greater than ourselves.)

This theme isn't so much about cannabis. It is more about you and the connection to something inside, above, and all around you. Your connection to this infinity is well worth contemplating:

- When do you feel most connected?
- Is there space in your life for quiet and reflection?
- What activities and relationships support you in this?

Day 7 – Celebrate

"Treat yo'self"
~Parks and Rec

Week 1 complete!

You have accomplished what most people consider the hardest part. Many people feel like it gets easier from here. Well done!

As we addressed yesterday, getting high requires time. It also takes money. Consider the money you've saved this week not smoking. It is now time to spend it: treat yo'self.

After these 21 days, if you continue your break, you can save that money for something big. But during this T-Break… spend it.

What are you going to spend it on? Music, movies, food (now that your appetite is back?!) Maybe treat yourself to fancy pajamas, for your new bedtime routine. Whatever. It's your call.

Try to reflect. If it is your style, in the space below (and there is more in back) draw or write about your experience this past week

_____
_____
_____
_____
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Day 8 – Withdrawal

"Sometimes when I'm high, I feel high in reverse"
~Juice WRLD

In general, the withdrawal effects from a substance are the opposite of the effects that the substance creates. For example: caffeine simulates the brain… so withdrawal creates headaches. This is also true with side-effects. A side-effect of opiates is constipation… withdrawal involves pooping (a lot).

Consider what it feels like when you are high. If being high makes you feel more relaxed, then right now you might feel a bit more jumpy or irritable. If being high felt calming, you might now be feeling more anxious. And, if as a side-effect, being high helped you feel more connected to people, you might now be feeling more lonely. This week, we are going to look at these.

One other thing: there seems to be something cumulative about THC. We know that it builds up in our system. There seems to be a point at which cannabis stops working for some people…or even, a point when they report getting high in reverse. (Feeling anxious when high, even when that never happened before.)

This may come after a long period of heavy use. It may feel as if something has changed. Cannabis goes from being a special occasion--> to routine --> to maintenance. Cannabis begins to have less and less impact, then none… and then maybe, opposite.

If that is not your experience, then I am glad. But with the increases in THC concentrations, this is just something to keep in mind. It invites partaking in moderation. It certainly suggests that a true tolerance break (like you are doing now) is a good thing.

Day 17 – Escape

"Any time someone gives you drugs, the purpose is to subdue. Always. Whether it is from a dealer, a friend, your mother or your government"
~Northern Adams

I'll never forget this particular conversation that I had with a student. She talked about why she loved being high: it allowed her to escape into the dream version of her life, which her real life was so far from. As a child of immigrants who sacrificed so much, she felt an obligation to fulfill their dreams for her life. Getting high was her escape from their life path that she felt stuck on.

I could see the pressure of her situation and had no problem understanding why she would want cannabis' escape. Then she shared her conflict: she was beginning to realize that cannabis' temporary relief made her current path just bearable enough, which caused her to avoid the harder path towards her actual dreams.

Being high allows people some people to live in their own private world. Some of this is OK. But too much, too often, feeds disconnection. There is a difference between relief and self-medication: it's the timing.

If life has made someone walk across hot coals, let's not judge them for using medication afterwards to tend to their wounded feet. But if someone is still standing on the hot coals, the misuse of medication will decrease their ability to find a way off.

I'm not suggesting that your life- or your feet- are on fire, but for some people, this is real. No judgement from this end, but consider the degree to which cannabis (or any drug or behavior) is aiding you in the pursuit of your dreams, or subduing you with false escape.

Day 16 – Connecting In

"Knowing others is wisdom;
Knowing yourself is enlightenment"
~Lao Tzu

This is a trigger warning for all you cynical bastards out there:
I'm about to say some things that may be affirming.

As a counselor, I've talked with hundreds of people. The more I do, the more I come to respect people. We all make mistakes. (In fact, some of us do a lot of dumbass things.) But it is rare to find a person motivated by evil. Hearing people's stories means witnessing struggle and strength.

You should know your own story. You should see your strengths and struggles. Yet many of us are more disconnected from ourselves than is healthy. That is no accident. There are systems in this world designed to create disconnection: patriarchy, supremacy, poverty, etc.

However, the hard truth is that it's on you to see and fight those systems. And it is on you to discover and love yourself.

Life can be exhausting. People may use substances as a way to escape. Some substances whisper escape; others scream it. And at first, with moderation, drugs can be an escape. But *misuse* is always a trap. Misuse recreates the systems and cycles that disconnect people from themselves and others. Avoid misuse. Do the work of knowing yourself. You are worth it.

Day 9 – Irritability

"But I'm aggravated without it
My saddest days are without it
My Saturdays are the loudest
I'm blowing strong"
~J Cole

Since starting this T-Break, you might be experiencing disruptions to your sleep, your appetite, or to your mood. Just one of these things would make someone irritable. But perhaps you have experience a few or ALL of them. You may be feeling more irritable.

It is not comfortable… but you're OK. If irritability is not gone already, it will likely be gone soon. Go easy on yourself. (If you've been a jerk to friends, you can apologize.) You're good. You've got this.

Of course, not everyone experiences the same things. If some of the themes in this guide do not apply to you, feel free to take anything that works and leave what does not.

If you are feeling irritable or overwhelmed right now, hold on.
To keep with the J Cole song from above, he says, "meditate, don't medicate".
There are lots of types of meditation: the right one will work. The wrong type may actually unsettle you. Experiment with guided vs free; movement vs still.
Checkout 'mindfulnessuvm' on SoundCloud

Also, consider trying to locate emotions inside you. We hold feelings in our body. Where do you keep anxiety? (stomach, head, neck?) Where do you keep tension and irritation? (jaw, shoulders?) Knowing the physical location of our feelings helps us recognize and exist with them.

Day 10 – Anxiety

"My attraction to drugs is based on immense desire to annihilate awareness"
~Anais Nin

Anxiety is the worst. Cannabis seems to help. In fact, research is starting to tell us more about how. Unfortunately, research also seems to show that when people consistently use cannabis before their brain is done developing (≈age 27), it seems to worsen anxiety and depression in the long run.

When anyone starts using cannabis regularly, they become more sensitive to feeling anxiety when they are not high. The same amount of anxiety that they once tolerated now feels overwhelming. They are then more likely to get high again to deal with it. This is totally understandable. It just tends to make things worse in the long run.

It can be hard to sort out the extent to which cannabis helps with anxiety, and the extent to which cannabis worsens it. This is further complicated by withdrawal. For example, say someone sets out to take a one week tolerance break. Say they get really anxious around day three, start smoking again and feel better. They might view that as proof that cannabis helps with anxiety: "when I stopped, I felt really anxious; but when I started again, I felt better. Cannabis cured my anxiety." But anxiety itself is a withdrawal symptom from cannabis. What they demonstrated was dependency.

It is worth considering all this for yourself. It may be that cannabis is totally helping; it is possible that it is hurting. Most likely, however, it is a bit of both. Figuring out this mix in your life will help you find and maintain balance.

Day 15 – Outsourcing

"Avoid using cigarettes, alcohol, or drugs as alternatives to being an interesting person"
~Marilyn vos Savant

Have you ever heard someone talk about alcohol as 'personality in a bottle'? Or say that they are more funny, or better at flirting or dancing when they are drunk? That's outsourcing. We are attributing the positive effect that we feel inside to something outside of us. With cannabis, it is less common, but still happens plenty.

We act like it is the alcohol that knows the jokes or the dance moves. We act is if a substance miraculously grants us previously absent skills. That's not what happens.

When someone describes a substance as making them feel "whole", "loved" or "comfortable in my skin"- those are flags for addiction. It does not mean they are guaranteed to have a problem, but as humans, if that's the only time they feel good, they are going to want to do it all the time.

In a less intense way, when someone feels like a substance makes them a better version of themselves (insert 'happy', 'relaxed', 'funnier', etc) then they are likely to want to use that drug for those reasons. This is something worth paying attention to in ourselves.

The problem with outsourcing is that the drug gets all the credit. We end up thinking that alcohol made us funny, or cannabis made us insightful. We think that we are better off altered and it diminishes our self-worth.

But those are your jokes, your thoughts, and your dance moves. The substance just gave you an excuse (and therefore, the confidence) to try them. You deserve the credit. Own what's yours. Stop outsourcing.

Day 14 – Celebrate

"$ave dat money"
~Lil Dicky

Week 2 complete!

Time to celebrate. There will be a time for the sage advice of Lil Dicky to save. But for now… spend it.

Maybe you want to cook a meal for friends and play them a track off your new mix tape that your creativity and hustle produced. Or maybe you just want to celebrate alone. That's fine. (Alone is not the same as loneliness. Alone can be wonderful; loneliness is what sucks. Appreciating being alone is usually a good sign.)

It's up to you. Enjoy

Reflect. If it is your style, in the space below (and there is more in back) draw or write about your experience this past week

Day 11 – Boredom

"There are no boring things, just boring people"
~your grandma

Damn… Grandma was harsh when she said that. And wrong. There are definitely a lot of boring things out there. And cannabis can help make boring more fun. It is worth understanding how.

Being high makes boring more interesting by lowing your sense of what is interesting. This is similar with food. Food often tastes better when people are high, but we act as if getting high changes the molecular structure of food. We act as if we're the same, and the food has altered; and as if we are the same and the boring thing is now more fun.
But things have not changed: you're just high.

On any single occasion, this distinction does not really matter: if it tastes better, that's great; if it is less boring, that's fun. But boredom- as a mental state- is essential. It can spur creativity, imagination, and problem solving.

As getting high become the solution to boredom, we become less skilled at learning from boredom and dealing with it. Getting high too often makes it harder to tolerate the regular routines of life.

If you return to getting high after this break, you might occasionally devour a meal high or find a not so funny movie hysterical. Enjoy it, but try and steer away from using cannabis as a cure for boredom.

Day 12 – Loneliness

"It's the loneliness that's a killer"
~Henry Samuel / Seal

Irritability, anxiety and boredom all have a complicated interplay with cannabis: it can help reduces these in the short term, but makes them worse in the long term.

Loneliness is not connected in the same way. Cannabis does not directly cause or cure it. But I wanted to address loneliness here because it is so real for so many of us. Indirectly, cannabis may have helped keep loneliness away. During this T-Break, especially at this point with the noise of irritability diminished, perhaps you are feeling loneliness creeping.

Loneliness is a hard feeling to describe. It is connected to depression, but not the same thing. Anxiety may be a fear of exposure: that we might be seen and judged. Loneliness may be a fear that *no one* will see who we really are, and that no one would want to.

Cannabis may help some people bond. Mostly we feel good about this. But occasionally, we start to question if anyone really knows us, or if anyone cares. Some of that may be paranoia from cannabis- you may just have been too high. But some of that is doubting the authenticity of those connections. (We will talk about 'connection' in Week 3.)

You are not alone. Not everything is fake. But like anyone, you could probably stand to strengthen and deepen your connections a bit more. Now, during this T-Break, is a great time. Your authenticity (in your beauty and flaws) is what makes you real to others. That is the heart of connection and the antidote to loneliness. Try and let yourself be seen.

Day 13 – Creativity

"Write drunk, edit sober"
~Hemingway (though, probably not)

The quote above is attributed to the great writer, Ernest Hemingway. He probably never said it, but it's a great line. Interestingly, it did not apply to him. Although Hemingway *was* known to enjoy a drink, his friends, family and scholars all say that he did not write drunk. But this notion persists, for Hemingway and beyond, because there is a myth about drugs and creativity.

Being high has long been associated with being more creative. Perhaps it is true for some people. Whether by placebo (simply believing it may make it true) or by chemical alteration (the brain does operate differently when high), some artists may make better art when altered.

Others do not. Sometimes artists listen to a recording of the music they played while high- and what felt like connection and improv while high- turns out to suck when heard sober.

There is no doubt that substances alter reality and this connects to creativity. But the myth that someone can get fucked up, pass out, and will wake up with a hit (from Keith Richards to Chance the Rapper) dismisses the talent and hard work that art necessitates.

I'm not going to speculate on the true source of creativity. Nor will I dismiss the connection of altered states to it. But art takes talent, and talent is enhanced by skills. So, if you are into creating… get to work on your skills. This T-Break is a good time to do it. (Like we established in Day 1: stay busy)

Challenge: Be creative right now. On the margins of this book- or the blank pages in back- doodle, color, write lyrics, anything…