Outline for what you want to write in the cover letter

Can your friends share their cover letters?

Stuck in the weeds

I need to step back and think more deeply

Endorphins

Work smarter not harder

Use to do list

Eat good food watch fun things

Use an app called 'focus to do'

Avoid spending time pretending to work

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## Bad Habit Number 1: Fake-working

Fake-working is when you \*think\* you are working but actually you aren't

Example: I'd endlessly browse Google Scholar/ JSTOR or I'd write unimportant, non-urgent emails \*thinking\* I was working.

Second, I started a "self-accountability journal."

If after a work session I struggled to write precisely what I'd accomplished I knew I'd fake-worked. With the help of a regular to-do-list and a self-accountability journal, I broke the bad habit of fake-working.

Today is October 1st. Most of the time, I plan my entire month by the end of the previous one. I have not had the time (literally!) to do so, therefore I'm going to have to spend some time doing so today. Beginnings of months tend to be good times to start new habits.

### How I broke the bad habit of fake-working:

First, I started maintaining a daily to-do-list. To make it work, I broke down a big project like my dissertation into very small, doable tasks. And I used precise language to write about these tasks.

Work on dissertation: Vague (how long? how much?) and overwhelming. Write 250 words: Precise and doable. Writing 250 words a day helped me finish my dissertation in 12 months. You can read about it here

## Bad Habit Number 2: "Should-ing" Myself

Unlike the bad habit of fake-working that I was able to detect myself, should-ing was very tricky to figure out. I didn't even know I was should-ing myself until my mental health counselor pointed it out to me.

What is should-ing? Should-ing happens when you think about your past and tell yourself, I should have done X, I should have done Y, etc. etc. I should have taken notes the first time I read these articles. I should have taken courses in 19th cent. colonial history.

### How I broke the bad habit of should-ing:

Should-ing yourself harms your mental health in various ways. It makes you overlook the effort you had already put in. Instead of celebrating your hard work, you start resenting it. You do it often enough and should-ing will kill your self-esteem

Actually I couldn't. At least initially. My counselor had to sit me down and tell me quite firmly that I would not use the word "should" during our conversations. It took a lot of intent and mindfulness to do so.

But once I broke the habit of should-ing, the results were exponential. I felt happier and much more confident about my work.

Hopefully, this thread will help you detect if you're fake-working and/or should-ing yourself.

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