

Reasons why my diet never works and it's okay!

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It is that time of the month again when I have fallen facedown from my diet plans - that, too, on a chocolate chip pancake. Spirits crushed and mouth salivating, I recollect the moment when I had pledged an oath to myself to go on a cleansing diet as I chomp on my second bite. A promise I had made for fulfilling my destiny of getting that summer body, overlooking the fact that summer had gone. But then again, summer never really does leave this country, does it?

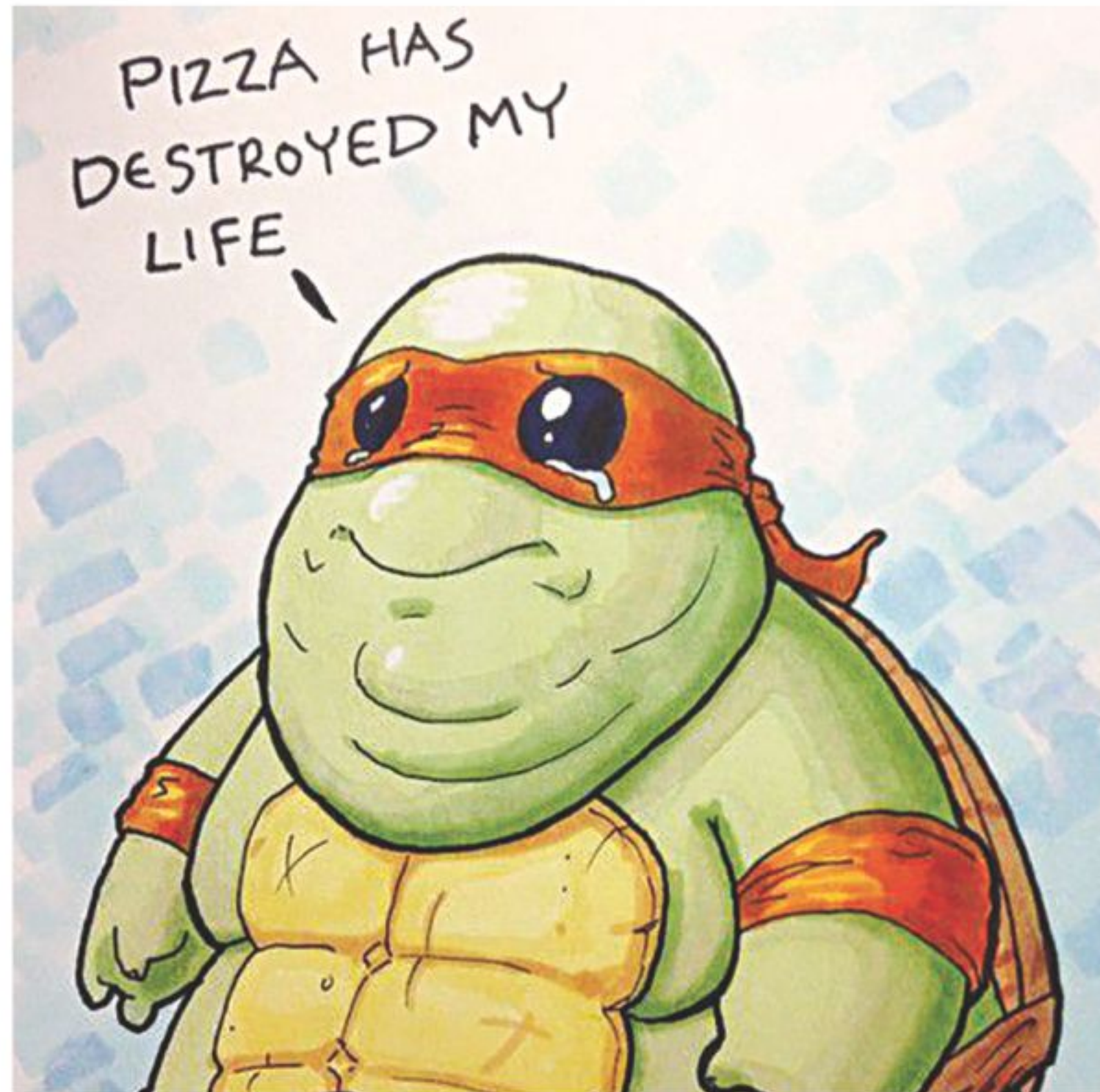
As I munch on, a sudden revelation floods me coinciding with the oozing chocolate flood in my mouth and I finally know why my diet never works. *dramatic Hans Zimmer score ensues*

1. IT IS AN ACT OF REBELLION

Against all size-related notions that are demeaning and attacks body images, my failure in the ability to diet may be an underlying protest in the face of all those aunties saying "Ayhay! Diet koro, tumi toh one kbeshi gain kore felecho, bhurio hocche" and then rush to tell my mom about my suitor-less fate. It also stands as a metaphoric objection to everyone hailing weight loss of a person as a positive change but never weight gain. Why though? I mean the latter takes time and energy too.

2. BECAUSE PIZZA. 'NUFF SAID!

If you cannot relate to this point, then you live in a sad, sad world, my friend. Who wants to go count calories when you can count your pizza crusts during offers in restaurants? Also, nothing in the world beats the feeling of warm pizza in your stomach, not even getting into a pair of skinny jeans. Bolognese pizzas give me the joy that people fail to. Plus, I usually order a diet coke so you can tell I have got everything under control.



3. DIETING IS SAD BUT KACCHI BIRYANI IS NOT

Ever wonder why models never smile? It's because they are hungry. Period. Also, with good reason. They don't get to indulge in French fries or scoops of ice-cream followed by the tragic episodes of life which I honestly get a lot *stuffs sneaker into the mouth to prevent a mental breakdown*. Thus, I need all the comfort food in my tummy after another of those life's heartbreaking curveballs and during these hours of coping, I cannot deal with another reason for depression: the absence of biryani.

I mean if an aloo on a plate of biryani, resting in a 'paint me like one of your French aloos' position doesn't bring you happiness, then give it here, weirdo.

4. HANGOUTS GET BORING

The essence of a good hangout is good food. Ordering a green salad strips away most of the enjoyment from the friendly ensemble. Also, the fact that my not-so-thoughtful friends deliberately and noisily slurping away the molten cheese in the burger patties and moaning at their gastro-nomic pleasures for my suffering doesn't exactly work as a motivator. Morons.

5. LIFE'S TOO SHORT

Okay this is going to sound a bit grim and may come as a shocker to some of you but we are all going to bite the dust sooner or later, so why not have bites of cheesecake while we are still up and running? I'm not so confident about the availability of buffet offers in the afterlife but I'm sure I can go on a very strict diet for a pretty good amount of time once I'm dead. This uncertainty fills me up with dread which unfortunately results in some more cheesecakes.

6. THE UNICORN THEMED SELF-ACCEPTANCE

Sometimes you just need to put all the hard-core dieting aside, go in front of the mirror and appreciate the person that you are. I tend to do that more that it is necessary and umm...healthy. There are butterflies and rainbows everywhere and I feel aware of the wonderful person that I am inside and out and I conclude with an earth shattering philosophy: the bigger I get the more of me is there to love.

So I have just decided to stick to small proportioned conscious eating, a healthy amount of exercising and weekend-indulgence. Now that is doable. If all else fails, there is always a larger size.

Iqra suffers from wanderlust, dreams of discovering the Loch Ness Monster and occasionally complains about Economics. Tell her to get a life at iqra.kashmir53@gmail.com or www.facebook.com/iqra.l.qamari

The problem with short semester breaks

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One of the biggest downsides of the structure of academic calendars of Bangladesh's private universities stems from its trimester system. While it's great to be able to tackle 3 semesters every year, the short semester breaks (and shorter breaks during major holidays) are hardly a worthy trade off.

Semester breaks are more than just an opportunity to catch up on much needed sleep after gruelling through semesters that are often too brief to cover the actual load of the coursework to begin with. Let's not forget the stress of finals week. Semester breaks could provide the opportunity to both students and faculty to participate in and benefit from activities that are usually impossible while semesters are in session.

The average duration of a semester break is between 2-4 weeks, with the higher range being pretty rare. The last time I got a month off was probably 3 years ago. Two weeks is enough to catch up on sleep but that's pretty much the most I can make out of it. Given that registration for courses, application for scholarships and similar formalities need to be carried out during these breaks, a week is knocked off from the break by default. Ultimately, it's little more than a study break before a new semester starts. The problem here is that this leaves little room to recharge and return energized to tackle the rigours of a new, often tougher



semester. Somewhere down the line, this begins to take a toll, which is often remedied by students rushing to finish early just to be able to get out of the cycle.

Another opportunity cost comes in terms of developing skills. In order to be able to gain any work experience, students here are forced to juggle part-time jobs or internships along with class and exam schedules. Summer internships or jobs aren't a thing because summer breaks are non-existent for university goers. Similarly, if a student is studying a major which leads towards research work in the future, it's almost impossible to be

able to completely immerse in it while juggling the stress of academic work. If it were possible to have proper semester breaks, students would benefit from having some job experience or be able to focus on developing skills outside of their academic requirements. Needless to say, the opportunity costs stack up for most students. Ultimately, this impacts personal growth. Many students graduate with little to no experience in their relevant fields and universities often don't provide a buffer either. Not only are they left to navigate the cut throat competition of the job market alone, they are

also not provided with the skills needed to network, grow or scope out alternate paths.

The University Grants Commission has laid forth initiatives to make the semester system uniform across the country. Whether this will remedy these problems remains to be seen but let's hope that it has a positive impact on university life.

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