



Comfort Detox: Finding Freedom from Habits That Bind You

Erin M. Straza

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"For too long I have lived life on comfort mode, making choices for life engagement based on safety, ease, and convenience. It has left me very little wiggle room, just a small parcel of real estate upon which to live, move, and have my being. It's not quite the abundant life Jesus was offering." Whether we're aware of it or not, our minds, bodies, and souls often seek out what's comfortable. Erin Straza has gone on a journey of self-discovery, awakening to her own inherent drive for a comfort that cannot truly fulfill or satisfy. She depicts her struggles with vulnerability and honesty, and shares stories of other women who are on this same path. Straza also provides practical insights and exercises to help you find freedom from the lure of the comfortable. This detox program will allow you to recognize pseudo versions of comfort and replace them with a conviction to embrace God's true comfort. Discover the secret to countering the comfort addiction and become available as God's agent of comfort to serve a world that longs for his justice and mercy.

Comfort Detox: Finding Freedom from Habits That Bind You Details

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From Reader Review Comfort Detox: Finding Freedom from Habits That Bind You for online ebook

Laura says

Did you see the Super Bowl commercial with Melissa McCarthy? She gets a call from someone who tells her she needs to save the whales, and she gets all fired up to help. Pretty soon she's out on a jet ski trying to save the whales... until a whale flips in the air and sends her catapulting through the air. But she doesn't give up. No, she takes the next call to save the trees, and the polar ice cap, and even the rhinos, but each time her adventures end in comic mishaps until she finally settles on a way to be a hero without all the danger: she chooses to drive a more fuel-efficient vehicle.

In *Comfort Detox*, Erin Straza urges comfort-cocooned Christians to stop hoarding comfort without having to go full-blown Radical or Crazy Love. Straza's is more of a fuel-efficient vehicle option: a way to do your part for the kingdom without scrapping the life you're already living.

If it sounds like I'm criticizing her thesis, I can assure you, I'm not. I loved Francis Chan's passion in *Crazy Love*, but I'm currently pretty occupied raising my four kids. In my position, I can't exactly sell everything I have and give it to the poor (Luke 18:22), but that doesn't let me off the hook. I can still offer the comfort of a cold glass of water in the name of the Lord (Matthew 10:42) to those in need. But I can only do that if I'm open and looking for those opportunities.

While I didn't often connect with the Part 1 ("Comfort Gone Rogue"), her ideas really picked up steam in Part 2 where Straza breaks down the ways that our need for comfort often draws us to sources of artificial or temporary comfort instead of drawing us back to the Comforter. Later, Straza explains that once we've received comfort, we may only be experiencing half the blessing of that comfort if we simply hoard it for ourselves: "It's possible that the act of giving away comfort from the very afflictions we've endured brings an even greater solace. Comfort is actually multiplied in the giving and reduced in the keeping."

Straza exposes her own comfort addictions and the many small but significant choices she's made to allow the pain of others to penetrate her defenses. Her examples are relatable but not intimidating. Perhaps she doesn't go far enough to challenge us out of our comfort zones in some places, but I never doubted her honesty, her earnest desire to be a source of comfort, and her clear vision of what ought to be.

This is a book for those of us who start to feel a little bit of "compassion fatigue" after seeing all the places and people that need help. Like Melissa McCarthy, we may have even tried our hand at whale-saving or tree-hugging only to realize how little one person can do against such insurmountable, unstoppable forces. For us, Straza lays out a plan at the end of each chapter to help us confront our own comfort addictions and begin opening ourselves up to the needs of others.

I was particularly moved by quotes from Henri Nouwen that reminded me that my own wounds can be a source of healing for others especially if I exhibit "a constant willingness to see (my) own pain and suffering as rising from the depth of the human condition which all men share." I am moved to be more earnest in my prayers for others, more compassionate, and more obedient to the opportunities that arise to share the burdens of others. It may not be jet-skiing through the arctic waters to save a whale yet, but who knows where such openness and compassion will lead?

Dorothy Greco says

Straza's book goes after one of culture's largest sacred cows: comfort. I appreciate her insight, her straight shooting, and her willingness to speak truth about our tendency to choose comfort over challenge, risk, and sacrificial giving.

Here are 2 examples:

"There is too much to do and too much brokenness in this world for any of God's people to sit idle, amused by life pursuits that benefit only ourselves."

"We are modern-day Esthers. We have a place in the palace, a seat at the table of influence. There is much good we can do if we practice the habit of leveraging that influence to benefit others rather than feathering our own nests."

John says

Comfort Detox is part contemplative and part a call to action both personally and communally. It took me almost a month to finish because I had chew on many chapters for a few days before I continued. This book is an important part of the ongoing conversation of spirituality and the role of materialism, egocentrism, and identity.

Straza relates her own journey to basic ideals mixed with a lot of well-thought quotes from the Christian community to create a journey for those that want to see the world and identify with Kingdom of God in a practical but very openly spiritual way. I emphasize journey because nothing here is formulaic.

The beauty of the book is that it openly engages the reader where they are as it slowly deconstructs the comforts we hold onto that are unhealthy and addictive and deter us from living in our full identity.

I cannot recommend this book enough. I even write Straza about my experience and with questions during the process and she aptly replied with thoughtful discourse. This is a must read for people that want to experience a new level of self awareness that doesn't only help our identity but offers change to a hurting community beyond ourselves.

Olivia Ard says

I wasn't sure what to expect from *Comfort Detox*, but it turned out to be just what I needed. Erin is a gifted writer and her personal experiences combined with knowledge of scripture and thorough research yields a powerful exploration of comfort and the role it plays in our lives. As Christians, we know that God is our only source of true comfort, but so often we allow ourselves to become desensitized to the pain of the world around us and the work that needs to be done by indulging in temporary comforts of the flesh and mind. This book changed how I view the world and my definitions of "want" and "need." I've been recommending it non-stop since before I even finished it.

I received a complimentary copy from InterVarsity Press via NetGalley in exchange for my honest review.

Lori Neff says

Helpful resource. Honest and "real".

Lydia Strickler says

Comfort Detox challenges the reader to realize that we are addicted to comfort, holding on to convenience, safety, and perfection. The more comfortable we become in life, the less likely we are to dare to follow Jesus into His kingdom work. Author Erin M. Straza invites the reader to gather "your people" to work through coming to grips with our addiction to comfort and to shred it to find comfort in God alone. Her advice is good as the book has many stopping points for consideration that would be best understood when discussed with those we trust. Erin speaks through personal experience and uses the Scripture to challenge us to practical action.

While I received the book through a launch team, the opinions are my own.

Summer says

This was a beautifully written book by a very talented writer. I was impressed with every sentence and paragraph Ms. Staza wrote. She truly has a gift for words.

Reading this book will give you gentle encouragement to be a better person.

The only flaw in this entire book is that the examples Ms. Straza gives are so small and trifling they are going to make you cringe. She's trying to make the point that you don't have to make grand gestures to do something kind, but my goodness. Not ALL of the examples are cringe-worthy but enough of them are to make me feel like I had to include the caveat. At least the reader will not feel intimidated!

Liz Wann says

Erin has been a mentor to me. We connected through Christ and Pop Culture (where I do some writing). She is the managing editor of the Christ and Pop Culture magazine, which is for members only. And she has a podcast through CAPC, with Hannah Anderson, called Persuasion. This is one of my favorite podcasts, because these two women are deep thinkers, culturally savvy, and don't spend too much time chatting and giggling (as do some podcasts for christian women).

Now Erin has launched into the book publishing realm to release Comfort Detox: Finding Freedom From Habits That Bind You, through Intervarsity Press. She starts off with what she calls "The Shredding", which for her was a defining moment in the red light district of India. This shredding was a humbling experience and a severe mercy that devastated her, but woke her up to the sorrowing world around her. And out of "The Shredding" came what she terms, "The Question", which was, "What am I doing?" Erin finally faced this

uncomfortable question when she came home from India. This is where her comfort detox began.

Erin does a great job explaining what she means by a comfort detox: it is rewiring our brain by rewarding it with true comfort, instead of the false comforts of this world, and thereby replacing old habits with good ones. She brings thorough analysis of the culture around us and the craving for comfort, and specifically unpacks a few ways our culture attempts to satisfy this craving. Three broad categories for old, world-conforming habits are: convenience, safety, and perfection. These three areas are ways we seek comfort. But Erin points us in a new direction.

Her new direction is true comfort. And Erin unpacks the idea of God being our comforter. This where comfort is redeemed. As Erin says, "I have pursued the comfort of things, when all along comfort is a person." She goes on to say that God designed us to crave comfort, but it was meant to find ultimate satisfaction in him. And the comfort from God does not stop here, but is joined together as we comfort others with the comfort we have received, which in turn equals more comfort for us. Instead of collapsing inward, we must turn outward. This way, as Erin says, we'll receive a full measure of comfort. She says, "True comfort enables us to turn outward - toward God for the comfort we need and toward others who need what comes only from God."

Erin reminds us that comfort is a mindless habit, and that the gospel overpowers the old habits of living for convenience, safety, and perfection and replaces them with "life-giving habits we need in order to walk free from the destructive habits that bind us": compassion, trust, and humility. She then ends the book with three chapters dedicated to the ways true comfort is set loose in our lives. First, we experience gospel freedom, then we are engaged with the sorrowing world around us, and finally we will be captivated by God's kingdom purposes.

This book is a true treasure full of creative insight and deep biblical thought. Erin writes as she speaks (which, if you're a writer, is a compliment). She writes clearly, thoughtfully, and vulnerably. It's obvious she feels and cares deeply, and she inspires you to do the same.

H. Kates says

It has been a long time since I read something as relevant, powerful, and impactful as Comfort Detox. From "The Question" to "The Shredding," Erin Straza takes a holistic approach to the human experience that appeals to all walks of life. The first part of the book is a heart-wrencher, and I wound myself weeping as I realized how my own "comfort addiction" has sapped my spirit. Timely, eloquent, and powerful, the author encourages you to embark with Jesus on a spiritual journey--both through yourself and the world around you.

Straza uses pertinent scripture all throughout the book, weaving in seamless commentary with Biblical-based truth. It is truly a joy to read Good News like this, but she goes beyond surface platitudes to the issue of the heart--acedia, or the dulling of our spiritual selves. I was both comforted and compelled by her insights; they made me look back and search my heart to WHO I believe Jesus is and WHAT it means to be a Disciple. Today's society is all about feeling good and achieving the accolades to do so. Straza gently reminds us of the Spirit's role as eternal comforter and what it means to be a vessel of that comfort to others.

The vulnerabilities of this book truly make it fantastic. It is refreshing to find an author so eager to share the lessons of her own life, reverting to the amazing truth that Jesus shared His entire life with us. The heart of this book is honest. Old, young, broken, and outwardly "together"--it speaks to anyone who is or has ever

been a human being. With colorful, real-life anecdotes and Biblical illustration, Straza shares a message pertinent

Have you ever wondered what role grief plays in your life? What it means to "feel good again" and why that is so elusive in our rich and extravagant society? What it means to be at peace, even in the most tumultuous circumstances? Comfort Detox comes with my highest recommendation. With everything in our society making false promises to fix and fulfill us, this book was meant for such a time as this.

JLynn says

Should be a memoir

This book should be a memoir, rather than meandering into Christian living. It's not meaty enough to be teaching. The title is a little deceiving too, because I thought the author would talk more about specific ways we go to comfort idols rather than God and give suggestions to reorient to the Comforter. (Detox)

The author basically wants the reader to think about others, get out of "small life" thinking and "feel all the feels." She lost me at that statement--"feel all the feels." Really? If you want to read a book that is more helpful on comfort, idols, living intentionally, loving others, etc. read Radical by David Platt. It seems she enters his lane without the meat or experience to pull it off.

Jasanna Czellar says

I'm very much a fan of this book. It's a very level look at confronting our balance of comfort desire, whether in Jesus or in other things. It does not condemn being comfortable, but draws out whether we are idolizing that or not. It also pushes you to embrace not run from discomfort when it comes in the form of a hurting friend, a tragedy, etc...to be tools used by Jesus to comfort others with the comfort with which we've received. There are a few bits and pieces I disagreed with the author's approach on, but on the whole, I felt it was a very good look at comfort. There are challenges at the end of each chapter and resources for you to use in your own life on her website. It also very much encourages reaching out in your community to show Jesus' love and mercy. Definitely recommend! This book will stay on my shelf and be read again.

April Yamasaki says

A good book for Lent or any time that addresses North American privilege and addiction to comfort. In contrast, comfort detox means "putting off old ways to make room for the new"; choosing "compassion over convenience, trust over safety, humility over perfection."

Annie says

Every Christian should read this book. It's convicting and challenging in all the best ways. There are practical challenges at the end of each chapter to help you detox from comfort, turn to the Comforter and use

comfort to change the world. The author writes passionately and deeply, including stories along the way. I only wish the chapters were broken down into a more digestible way. This is not just another self-help, feel-good book. This book will challenge you to change the way you live your life.

Claude says

I can't speak highly enough about this book. I've seen so many books tackle complex issues like comfort, perfection, and convenience either with an overemphasis on pragmatism or tips that don't deliver or an overemphasis on motivating you to change through guilt. (Never works!) Straza doesn't fall for those traps -- instead she takes the harder and better road, analyzing our addictions to comfort, nuancing the ways these play out in our lives, and presenting Christ and His Kingdom as our solution. In a lot of ways this book is about emotional health and in parts reminding me of *The Relational Soul* and *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*.

The unique strengths of this book though are the focus on comfort in its various, subtle forms, the applications for action at the end of each chapter, and Straza's vulnerability in letting us into her own comfort detox. Really liked the concepts she uses as well (the Shredding, the Question, etc.) which she managed to pull that off in a helpful and non-trite way. The book demands a slow read if you want the most of out of it and would be best to read with a friend or with a group.

Collin Huber says

I got about halfway through *Comfort Detox* when I realized I was reading it too fast and had to slow down or I'd miss the conviction that comes across every page. Erin provides a surgical journey into the concept of comfort and how it captivates our attention, often distracting us from the mission of God. Rather than eschewing comfort altogether, she sets it within its biblical framework—a gift from God (who is Himself Comfort) to be stewarded in service to others. Each chapter closes with practical application steps in order to take an active role in the process of replacing selfish comforts with the kingdom-minded comfort of God. It's a timely read that has much to offer the body of Christ.
