

The long Easter weekend is upon us, and with it many children are anticipating a diabetes of chocolate, while their parents are anticipating an emergency room of home improvements and the possibilities for recuperation afforded by a return to the workplace next week. To the Christian faith of course Easter is a time for renewal, for hatching plans to make tomorrow better. [New research published today](#) by Amanda Krause and me shows that people's propensity to renew and plan for tomorrow also affects how they organise their music libraries.

Psychologists have long been interested in the notion of time perspective. Future time perspective is an awareness that thoughts and behaviours in the present have implications for future well-being: children who score high on future time perspective would be prepared to spread out their chocolate consumption to avoid feeling sick, and adults with this future orientation would make time for proper safety precautions before getting out the power tools this weekend. Present time perspective is the reverse, describing a preference for instant gratification over saving some of the chocolate eggs for next week. It's easy to measure, by simply asking people whether they agree with statements like, "I don't do things that will be good for me if they don't feel good now" or "I believe that a person's day should be planned ahead each morning".

In our research, Amanda and I found that people who score high for present time perspective are more likely to use playlists to organise their music library. They make playlists for use while in particular locations, or for particular purposes such as helping them fall asleep at night: their music libraries help them to respond to particular needs that they experience in the moment. Moreover, people who place relatively little emphasis on the here and now are more likely to construct playlists for use while exercising: they understand that they won't be able to construct a playlist while simultaneously slogging up a rainy hillside, and instead they prepare some pumping music well in advance.

People also use playlists more in some circumstances than others. We are most likely to create dedicated playlists for parties and exercising, whereas we instead prefer to choose music on the fly while commuting or doing household chores. In the case of parties or exercising we can guess well in advance what kind of music will be needed, and we plan the music accordingly. While we are commuting though we need to select particular tracks in the moment so that they can best serve as an antidote to the stresses, boredom, or other specific challenges of the day. Similarly, while we are vacuuming or ironing we are free to take a time out in order to pick just the right track for the here and now.

## Time perspective, Easter chocolate, and music playlists

Written by The Conversation USA

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We are active consumers of music, who use it to get the most from the particular listening situation. Sometimes this needs careful advance planning and sometimes we get the most from music by going with the flow of the moment: in both cases though, music choices are driven by our inclination and ability to think forwards in time.

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### Disclosure

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