**Boredom**

**Good week for: Adult education, after Allan Stewart of Australia received his fourth college degree, a master’s in clinical science, at the age of 97. Stewart said he’d finally completed his education, but added, “I said that after my last degree and then I got bored.” *(The Week magazine, May 18, 2012)***

**Bad week for: North Dakota, which U.S. Census Bureau data revealed to be the state with the most bars per capita, with one bar for every 1,600 residents of the sparsely populated state. “It’s not surprising at all,” said bar owner Jason Stein. “There’s not much else to do to here.” *(The Week magazine, June 7, 2013)***

**Hobbies of any kind are boring, except to people who have the same hobby. *(Dave Berry)***

**Lars: “So, what do you plan to write about on your blog, Lance?” Lance: “All the stuff that’s too boring for my diary.” *(J. C. Duffy, in The Fusco Brothers comic strip)***

**While baby-sitting my 8-year-old granddaughter Elizabeth, I asked if she’d like to play a board game. “No, thanks,” she sighed. “I’m already bored.” *(Suzan L. Wiener, in The Saturday Evening Post)***

**Dear Grandma: Camp Awannagohome is fine. Speaking of fine, did you know there’s a substantial financial penalty for picking the state wildflower? At least that’s what the park ranger who’s forwarding my ticket to you says. I’m really bugged by all the annoying little pests that have infested my cabin and are constantly buzzing about. And the insects are annoying too! Grandma, I’m so anxious to get home and spend time with my loved one. And when I get bored with my TV, maybe I can spend some time with you, too! Gabby. *(Steve Breen, in Grand Avenue comic strip)***

**Never is one more active than when he does nothing, never is he less alone than when he is by himself. *(Cato)***

**What causes boredom? Psychologists claim these four things:**

1. **Great amounts of uncommitted time with no plan for using it in a stimulating manner.**
2. **Repetition. Doing everything in life in a habitual way.**
3. **Approaching anything in a way that is less than creative.**
4. **A moral or philosophical life pattern that does not allow for continuous change. *(Jim Ockley)***

**In my high-school years, I had always considered history a boring subject. But at the conclusion of one college American-history class, the professor – a stately dignified older man – announced that we would reenact the Battle of Bunker Hill. The next day found us all out on the campus, running up and down hills behind our distinguished leader, picking up acorns and pelting them at one another, and shouting, “The British are coming! The British are coming! Fight for freedom!” I’ve loved history ever since. *(Sylvia Veal, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Perhaps you think that boredom is just an unpleasant state of mind. But it's more than that. Boredom is a state of mental and emotional tension that results when what we are doing lacks motivation and purpose. What's the cure? Imagination, says Dr. Normal Vincent Peale. “Almost every day I hear people say they are bored with their work,” he said once. “Such people lack imagination. Nothing need be humdrum. You can find excitement in any job.” *(Bits & Pieces)***

**Nelson: “I’m bored.” Grandpa: “Bored? There’s no reason to b bored. Dorothy Parker said, ‘The cure for boredom is curiosity. There is no cure for curiosity.’” Nelson: “Who’s Dorothy Parker?” Grandpa: “There you go. See? I just cured your boredom.” *(Brian Crane, in Pickles comic strip)***

**Doing nothing is the simple, radical and nearly impossible cure for boredom. But it is too hard for most of us to do. We would rather pursue an active approach, currently popular, which advises: “Don’t just sit there, do something.” There could hardly be worse advice to follow. If you want to taste real depression, keep stimulating yourself whenever you feel a lull. Avoid sitting down unless your hands are busy knitting, your ears are glued to the radio, your mouth is nibbling or talking. *(Sam Keen, in Reader’s Digest)***

**As Dad takes a nap in the chair, Billy says to him: “If you’re bored, Daddy, we could play catch.” *(Bil Keane, in The Family Circus comic strip)***

**I've always been bored with just making money. I've wanted to do things, I wanted to build things. Get something going. I'm not like some people who worship money as something you've got to have piled up in a big pile somewhere. I've only thought of money in one way, and that is to do something with it. I don't think there is a thing that I own that I will ever get the benefit of, except through doing things with it. *(Walt Disney)***

**Grandpa: “I’ve discovered the key to getting the most out of life.” Man: “Oh? What’s that?” Grandpa: “Only do things that are really boring. That way time slows down to a crawl, and it feels like you’re living longer.” Man: “I see. So what boring things do you have planned?” Grandpa: “I’m sitting here with you, aren’t I?” *(Brian Crane, in Pickles comic strip)***

**I can think of nothing more boring for the American people than to have to sit in their living rooms for a whole half hour looking at my face on their television screens. *(Dwight D. Eisenhower)***

**Everyone is a bore to someone. That’s unimportant. The thing is to avoid being a bore to one’s self. *(Gerald Brenan)***

**My family is really boring. They have a coffee table book called “Pictures We Took Just to Use Up the Rest of the Film.” *(The PassTime Paper)***

**They brought him delicious dishes, even the things he liked best on earth. Smith was having a wonderful time eating, sleeping, and calling for more good things. But presently he wanted something more. He called for games. They came in profusion. Then he called for books and read with excitement and pleasure. He called for anything that struck his fancy and received it in abundant measure. But at last the final boredom caught up with him, and he shouted, “I want something to DO!” The attendant appeared and said, “I am sorry, but that is the only thing we cannot give you here.” By this time Smith was frantic for something to do and in his terrible frustration cried out, “I’m sick and tired of everything here; I’d rather go to hell!” “Where do you think you are?” asked the attendant. (Bits & Pieces)**

**The first thing to do about boredom is nothing. Don’t turn on the TV! Don’t get a hobby! Don’t take a trip! Don’t buy something! Instead, follow the wisdom once inscribed at railroad crossings: Stop. Look. Listen. Pay attention then to all that is happening. The single most important tool needed to escape the imprisonment of the ego is awareness, or mindfulness. Learn to concentrate. Become a great observer, a fair witness of your inner life and of the world around you. This simple yet difficult prescription will not cure you of boredom forever, since tedium is an inevitable part of life. But it will lead you on a journey to which your old limits will be stretched, until you can live more fully in the world of wonder. *(Sam Keen, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Mom: “Where are you going with that spoon?” Michael, referring to his fish in the small aquarium, says to Mom: “We’re gonna stir up Fred. He looks bored.” Mom: “Stirring him up is not a good idea, Michael. Just watch him, OK?” Michael: “Aww!” Mom: “He likes to swim around his bowl, looking for food, enjoying the view.” Michael: “I know. I just want him to do it faster!” *(Lynn Johnston, in For Better or For Worse comic strip)***

**The Frisbee was invented by a man who was bored with his job. Fred Morrison noticed in 1947 that the newspapers were full of stories about flying saucers, so he decided to go to his garage and cash in on their popularity. He developed a plastic disk with curled edges and called it a Pluto Platter, but the name was changed four years later when Morrison was approached by the Wham-O Manufacturing Corporation. They settled on Frisbee, and in 1957 the first batch was produced in California. Since then, Wham-O has turned out 100 million Frisbees. But it also had another big winner: The Hula Hoop, originally designed by a health instructor in Australia as an exercise device. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 99)***

**If you can do something with your eyes closed, it’s time to find something new. *(Kathie Lee Gifford, in USA Weekend)***

**As the single mother of a teenage son, I was open to tips on successful parenting. I heard that stressing that I had given birth to him might earn me some respect. So, during one argument, I said, “Remember, son, I bore you.” “Yes, Mom,” he shot back, “sometimes you do!” *(Nadine Bussard, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Only those who want everything done for them are bored. *(Billy Graham)***

**“What did Noah do?” I asked one girl, who was six. “He collected a lot of animals,” she replied. “That was his hobby?” “Yeah.” “But didn’t he have a special collection?” “Yeah, Bible animals.” “It was two of each, right?” “You know the story?” “I do.” “So why are you asking me?” “Well, that’s sort of my job on this show. And tell me, do you know why Noah took in two kinds of animals?” “To keep ‘em from getting bored.” *(Bill Cosby, in Kids Say the Darndest Things, p. 30)***

**Nelson: “I’m bored.” Grandpa: “How can you possibly be bored, Nelson? Look around . . . there are lots of exciting things you could be doing.” Nelson: “What are you doing, Grampa?” Grandpa: “Me? I’m picking fuzz balls off my sweater.” *(Brian Crane, in Pickles comic strip)***

**My 4-year-old, Jeremy, is often bored when his older sister Rachel is at school. One day he wandered forlornly into the kitchen and said, “Mommy, I’m boring.” *(Sharon Mitchell, in Country magazine)***

**Pickles: “Kids today don’t know how to entertain themselves. If nothing exciting is happening right now they think they’re bored. I don’t think I’ve ever been bored a day in my life.” As the man who he is talking to next to him falls asleep, he responds: “Boring, yes, but never bored.” *(Brian Crane, in Pickles comic strip)***

**Duncan, Oklahoma: ‘Bored’ killers: Two teenagers were charged this week with first-degree murder in the death of an Australian baseball player, having allegedly admitted to police that they killed the 22-year-old “for the fun of it.” Officers say that Christopher Lane, who was attending East Central University on a baseball scholarship, was out jogging when the 15-year-old and 16-year-old randomly gunned him down. “They saw Christopher go by,” said police Chief Dan Ford, “and one of them said, ‘There’s our target.’” They allegedly followed Lane in a car, before shooting him in the back and driving off. When asked for their motivation for the shooting, one of the boys apparently said, “We were bored and didn’t have anything to do, so we decided to kill somebody.” A 17-year-old was charged with being an accessory to the murder. “It is heartless,” said Peter Lane, Christopher’s father, to Australian broadcasters. “To try to understand it is a short way to insanity.” *(The Week magazine, August 30, 2013)***

**The nice thing about being a celebrity is that, if you bore people, they think it’s their fault. *(Henry Kissinger, Nobel Peace Prize, 1973)***

**Garfield: “Ah, the boring life.” Man: “Quick! Garfield! I need a belt, a fishbowl, and a fire extinguisher!” Garfield: “I sure miss it.” *(Jim Davis, in Garfield comic strip)***

**Warning signs that a lover is bored: 1. Passionless kisses. 2. Frequent sighing. 3. Moved, left no forwarding address. *(Matt Groening, Simpsons creator)***

**The capacity of human beings to bore one another seems to be vastly greater than that of any other animal. Some of their most esteemed inventions have no other apparent purpose – for example, the dinner party of more than two, the epic poem, and the science of metaphysics. *(H. L. Mencken)***

**We see a lot of free movies on TV we wouldn’t pay to see in theaters, which proves Americans don’t mind being bored if the price is right. *(Changing Times, The Kiplinger Magazine)***

**Dad: “How was your nap?” Billy: “Boring.” *(Bil Keane, in The Family Circus comic strip)***

**Neurosis is being stuck in one way of seeing, feeling and acting. Most of us adopt some neurotic type in which we limit ourselves. We become habitually dependent, isolated or hostile. Day after day, we bore ourselves and others by using the same old one-tenth of our potential. When you become a role – doctor, lawyer, housewife – and define yourself by it, you construct an identify that is certain to get tedious. *(Sam Keen, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Grasp your opportunities, no matter how poor your health; nothing is worse for your health than boredom. *(Mignon McLaughlin, journalist)***

**Son: “I don’t know how you can stand those boring novels!” Dad: “Actually, these are exciting! They’re mysteries with food themes!” Son: “Food mysteries?” Dad: “There’s a whole series: ‘Hamburger Heist,’ ‘The Devil’s Food Diaries,’ ‘The Meatball Massacre,’ and this one is ‘The Creampuff Caper’!” As the son starts to read the novel, Mom enters the room and asks him: “Since when did you start reading boring novels?” *(Dean Young & John Marshall, in Blondie comic strip)***

**Ever so many of us live within the imperative mood, with “oughts” all around us. We feel that we should do this, should do that, should be perfect. But inside we hate those shoulds. Even while we’re doing what we think we should – cleaning the house or mowing the lawn or whatever – we resist inside. And this is perhaps the main conflict that makes us feel bored. *(James Lincoln Collier, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Said veteran party-giver Elsa Maxwell: “If you owe a bore a dinner – send it to him.” *(Quoted by Anita Summer, in Reader’s Digest)***

**We often pardon those who bore us, but we cannot pardon those whom we bore. *(La Rochefoucauld)***

**The cure for boredom is curiosity. There is no cure for curiosity. *(Dorothy Parker)***

**If you see two people talking and one looks bored … he’s the other one. *(Rocky Mountain News)***

**Zoe: “Daddy, will you play checkers with me?” Dad: “Okay, sure.” Zoe: “Checkers! Checkers! I get to play checkers! Checkers! Checkers! Checkers! Checkers!” Dad: “Okay, Zoe, all set. You go first.” Zoe: “This is boring.” *(Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott, in Baby Blues comic strip)***

**Zoe: “I’m bored!” Mother: “Why don’t you play with Hammie?” Zoe: “Okay.” Suddenly Zoe whacks Hammie in the head. Mother: “I meant, play nice!” Zoe: “Why didn’t you say so?” *(Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott, in Baby Blues comic strip)***

**One way to prevent conversation from being boring is to say the wrong thing. *(Frank Sheed)***

**Marginal Note: Punctuality is the virtue of the bored. *(Country magazine)***

**In 1916, DeWitt Wallace went back to St. Paul to work as a mail-order manager for a greeting card company. Bored with his job, he immediately enlisted in the army when World War I broke out. In France, half his battalion was killed and Wallace was hit with shrapnel in the neck, nose, abdomen, and lungs. He spent the rest of his stint in a French hospital. While there, he filled the time by reading American magazines. As an experiment, Wallace began rewriting some of the articles, shrinking them in length while retaining as many of the author's original words as possible. He came to the conclusion that most could be shortened by at least 75 percent without losing their flavor or meaning. By the time Wallace returned to the States in 1919, he had perfected the technique of “condensing” popular literature. In 1920 he put together a sample copy of what he was already calling The Reader's Digest. (Jack Mingo, in How the Cadillac Got Its Fins , p. 105)**

**The world is full of wonders, riches, powers, puzzles. What it holds can make us horrified, sorrowful, amazed, confused, joyful. But nothing in it can make us bored. Boredom is the result of some pinch in ourselves, not of some lack in the world. (Toni Flores)**

**If you’re in a good relationship, chances are you’re bored out of your mind. *(Chris Rock)***

**I had the most boring office job in the world – I used to clean the windows on envelopes. *(Rita Rudner)***

**Long ago at Rugby School in England, a bored student in a football game picked up the ball and ran with it. Fellow players lit out after him and made a game out of it – a game named Rugby in honor of the school where the bored boy first ran with the ball. (L. M. Boyd)**

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**A certain power of enduring boredom is essential to a happy life. The lives of most great men have not been exciting except at a few great moments. A generation that cannot endure boredom will be a generation of little men. *(Bertrand Russell)***

**Boredom is a vital problem of the moralist, since at least half the sins of mankind are caused by the fear of it. *(Bertrand Russell)***

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**After a long, dry sermon, the minister announced that he wished to meet with the church board after the service. The first man to arrive was a stranger. “I think you misunderstood,” said the minister. “This is a meeting of the board.” “If anyone here is more bored than I am, I'd like to meet him,” said the man. *(Rocky Mountain News)***

**Bored people, unless they sleep a lot, are cruel. *(Renata Adler, author)***

**If you really want to work your way out of a pattern that has you down, consider a more thoughtful approach. Eastern philosophies and meditation practices offer a perspective on boredom that we as Westerners are only beginning to appreciate: they consider boredom a source of refreshment and enlightenment rather than an enemy. We find the world boring, they say, because we cling to the same roles, defense mechanisms, inner dialogues, habits, routines. Gradually we put wonder to death by holding on to our secure, orderly repertoires. We close off novelty and refreshment because the unknown and the strange are too threatening. *(Sam Keen, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Grandpa: So, you’re still bored, huh?” Nelson: “Yeah.” Grandpa: “Here, go take some photos with this camera. That’ll give you something to do.” Nelson: “What should I take photos of?” Grandpa: “How about things that are boring? And you’d better not be pointing that thing at me.” *(Brian Crane, in Pickles comic strip)***

**Young surgeons practice skills for months on end, such as tying knots in a confined space or saturing. The refining of these skills is the surgeon's main method of improving total performance. Many of us get interested in a field, but then the going gets tough, we see that other people are more successful, and we become discouraged and quit. But it is often the boring, repetitive sharpening of our skills that will ultimately enable us to reach our goals. (Alan Loy McGinnis, in Reader's Digest)**

**A great many people these days complain that their work is boring. The tendency is to blame the job for lack of challenge. What usually makes work drudgery, however, is one’s attitude – not the work itself. No task need be boring, for the simple reason that every job contains within it a hidden challenge. That challenge is this: How can it be done better? Could anything be more boring than sweeping floors? Murray Spangler, a department store janitor in Canton, Ohio, wasn’t bored, even though the dust made him wheeze and cough. Many men would have given up and quit. Instead, Spangler set out to find a better way to clean floors. “Why not eliminate the broom,” he wondered, “maybe something that would suck up dust . . .?” Spangler’s question led to a crude but workable vacuum cleaner, which he induced an old friend in the leather business to finance. The friend’s name was H. W. Hoover. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**Ziggy says to the fish in the small aquarium: “Well, if you’re bored, try swimming counter-clockwise for a while!” (Tom Wilson, in Ziggy comic strip)**

**A bore is a fellow talker who can change the subject to his topic of conversation faster than you can change it back to yours. *(Laurence J. Peter, in Peter’s Quotations)***

**Somebody’s boring me; I think it’s me. *(Dylan Thomas)***

**Boredom is rage spread thin. *(Paul Tillich)***

**When we learn to tolerate boredom, we find out who we really are. *(Naomi Alderman, author)***

**A healthy male adult bore consumes each year one and a half times his own weight in other people’s patience. *(John Updike)***

**“I’m bored” is a useless thing to say. You live in a great, big, vast world that you’ve seen none percent of. *(Louis C.K. from Louie)***

**The secret of being boring is to say everything. *(Voltaire)***

**The best way to be boring is to leave nothing out. *(Voltaire)***

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**Doctor: “Lola, you really need to watch your cholesterol.” Lola: “I tried that. It was boring. So I went back to watching cable. *(Steve Dickenson & Todd Clark, in Lola comic strip)***

**Smith died and regained consciousness in the next world. He looked out over a vast expanse of pleasant country. After resting comfortably for a while in a delightful spot, he began to get a little bored. He called out, “Is there anybody here?” An attendant, appropriately dressed in white, appeared and said gravely, “What do you want?” “What can I have?” asked Smith. “Whatever you want.” “May I have something to eat?” They brought him delicious dishes, even the things he liked best on earth. Smith was having a wonderful time eating, sleeping, and calling for more good things. But presently he wanted something more. He called for games. They came in profusion. Then he called for books and read with excitement and pleasure. He called for anything that struck his fancy and received it in abundant measure. But at last the final boredom caught up with him, and he shouted, “I want something to DO!” The attendant appeared and said, “I am sorry, but that is the only thing we cannot give you here.” By this time Smith was frantic for something to do and in his terrible frustration cried out, “I’m sick and tired of everything here; I’d rather go to hell!” “Where do you think you are?” asked the attendant. (Bits & Pieces)**

**The tomahawk was the war axe of various North American Indians. The word comes from some form or other of Algonquin “otomahuk,” meaning “to chop down.” When warring tribes tired of hostilities, they would, with great ceremony, bury the war axes. Thus, “to bury the hatchet.” Of course when they got bored with peace, as they always did, they would, with equal ceremony, dig up the hatchet and go at it again, hammer and tongs. *(Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, p. 257)***

**The working man is bored because he is no longer required to work to his capacity. Much of his thinking is done by computer, and much of his physical work is done by machine. As the challenge of work declines, so does his interest. If he is not in a job that is interesting and challenging, he may spend decades in a state of complete boredom and frustration. *(Jim Ockley)***

**Seeing how you bore yourself is the first step in opening the door to your unexplored potential. Watch how you habitually act and you will begin to allow different experiences to happen. Your tedious world will get bigger and more interesting. *(Sam Keen, in Reader’s Digest)***

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