

Beyond Boredom: understanding and conquering the “b” word

facilitated by Lisa Van Gemert
Gifted Youth Specialist
Mensa Foundation lisav@americanmensa.org
Mensa Foundation www.mensaforkids.org
American Mensa www.us.mensa.org

Let's Connect!

-  <http://giftedguru.com>
-  lisa@lisavangemert.com
-  facebook.com/GiftedGuru
-  pinterest.com/brightkids
-  [@gifted_guru](https://twitter.com/gifted_guru)
-  linkedin/in/lisavangemert

Boredom Basics:

What is boredom?

- can't pay attention
- aware you can't pay attention
- blame environment

What makes something boring? (first three, Toohey, last, Van Gemert)

- predictability
- monotony
- confinement
- unmet expectations

Who gets bored?

- boredom proneness scale <http://uwf.edu/svodanov/boredom/bps.htm> (see below)
- To find out your own proneness to boredom, add up the total of the scores you gave each question. The average score is 99, and the average range 81-117. If you scored above 117, you become bored easily, and if you scored below 81, your boredom threshold is very high.
- don't be a mood monitor (recognize and move on)
- depressed dopamine levels (malfunctioning sense of time)

Boredom Conqueror To-Do List:

- get a hobby
- decide if it's telling you to keep away from something
- develop strategy for tasks involving repetition
- avoid information overload
- make sure it's not low-level distraction
- watch for physical signs (yawning, face on palm, stare, elbows on flat surface, anger)
- Tom Sawyer the task



- FISH! resources here <http://bit.ly/fishforschools> and <http://bit.ly/W7t5ox> (has free sample lessons)
 - play
 - be there
 - choose your attitude
 - make their day
- attach a value
- self-reflect (from Alex Lickerman, M.D.)
 - How can my current circumstances help me develop myself?
 - How can my current circumstances help me contribute to the happiness of someone else?
 - How would the wisest person on earth look at my current circumstances, and what would he or she do in my stead?
- try Sternberg's adaptive intelligence idea
 - change me? (adaptation)
 - change environment? (shaping)
 - leave environment? (selection)
- find meaningful work (Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow*)
- exercise
- mindfulness (find exercises here <http://bit.ly/bear-mindfulness>)
- labyrinth
 - printable finger labyrinth: <http://bit.ly/printablelabyrinth>
 - idea for using in class: <http://www.csee.org/products/127>
 - purchase finger labyrinths: <http://www.relax4life.com/prodindex.htm>
- give it a soundtrack
- chunk/slice it
- check the temperature
- put money in the game/find the meaning
- time it
- Zentangle® (zentangle.com)

How to Draw a Labyrinth:

Draw a cross

Now draw an "L" in each of the 4 quadrants

and place a dot at each angle of the "L"

Place your pencil at the top of the cross, and draw a curve connecting the next line to the right.

Now move to the top of the next line on the left, and connect it to the next dot on the right.

Continue connecting each line and dot, always moving from top left to next on right.

Labyrinth at Chartres



Boredom Proneness Scale

The statements can be answered using a true-false response (the original format used) or with a 7-point format from "1" (highly disagree) to "7" (highly agree) used in recent research.

- _____ 1. It is easy for me to concentrate on my activities.
- _____ 2. Frequently when I am working I find myself worrying about other things.
- _____ 3. Time always seems to be passing slowly.
- _____ 4. I often find myself at "loose ends", not knowing what to do.
- _____ 5. I am often trapped in situations where I have to do meaningless things.
- _____ 6. Having to look at someone's home movies or travel slides bores me tremendously.
- _____ 7. I have projects in mind all the time, things to do.
- _____ 8. I find it easy to entertain myself.
- _____ 9. Many things I have to do are repetitive and monotonous.
- _____ 10. It takes more stimulation to get me going than most people.
- _____ 11. I get a kick out of most things I do.
- _____ 12. I am seldom excited about my work.
- _____ 13. In any situation I can usually find something to do or see to keep me interested.
- _____ 14. Much of the time I just sit around doing nothing.
- _____ 15. I am good at waiting patiently.
- _____ 16. I often find myself with nothing to do, time on my hands.
- _____ 17. In situations where I have to wait, such as a line I get very restless.
- _____ 18. I often wake up with a new idea.
- _____ 19. It would be very hard for me to find a job that is exciting enough.
- _____ 20. I would like more challenging things to do in life.
- _____ 21. I feel that I am working below my abilities most of the time.

- _____ 22. Many people would say that I am a creative or imaginative person.
- _____ 23. I have so many interests, I don't have time to do everything.
- _____ 24. Among my friends, I am the one who keeps doing something the longest.
- _____ 25. Unless I am doing something exciting, even dangerous, I feel half-dead and dull.
- _____ 26. It takes a lot of change and variety to keep me really happy.
- _____ 27. It seems that the same things are on television or the movies all the time; it's getting old.
- _____ 28. When I was young, I was often in monotonous and tiresome situations.

Quotes used in presentation:

Millions long for immortality who don't know what to do with themselves on a rainy Sunday afternoon. - Susan Ertz

Boredom can be a lethal thing on a small island. - Christopher Moore, *Island of the Sequined Love Nun*

Death: Do you know, that in a universe so full of wonders, they have managed to invent boredom?
Terry Pratchett, *Hogfather*

Boredom is the conviction that you can't change...the shriek of unused capacities. - Saul Bellow, *The Adventures of Augie March*

I've noticed that my best ideas always bubble up when the outside world fails in its primary job of frightening, wounding or entertaining me. - Scott Adams

Our labour preserves us from three great evils - weariness, vice, and want. - Voltaire, *Candide*

Resources:

Boredom: A Lively History by Peter Toohey

You can actually participate in research on boredom here: <http://bit.ly/boredomresearch>