

A Guide to Dealing with the Growing Tiredness & Boredom of the New Normal

This pandemic is no longer an exciting (but scary) novelty. We're a couple months into this lockdown and crisis, and it's starting to wear on many of us.

We experience it as boredom, tiredness, exhaustion. We experience it as ongoing burden, and can't wait for it to be over. We lose patience, and want to do anything else but this.

That all makes sense. It's also exactly why we have difficulty sticking to habit changes, to long-term deep commitments, to ongoing projects and long-running challenges.

It's one thing when things are new, novel, exciting, fresh. It's a completely different thing when things are boring, dull, tiring, burdensome.

What would it be like to work with this difficulty inside ourselves, and shift it?

What would it change for us if we didn't have to get tired of long-term challenges, or feel them as boring difficult burdens? What would it shift if we could develop the joy of patience?

Just a few possible benefits of shifting this:

- We can endure long challenges, for months and even years.
- We can shift habits long term, instead of dropping new habits after a couple of weeks.
- We'll have more patience for people who usually tire us out or get on our nerves.
- We'll be less drained by things that weigh on us or bother us over the long term.
- We'll have a greater capacity for endurance, fortitude and patience overall.

I'd say those are benefits worth working toward!

And the good news is, with the boredom and tiredness we're feeling from the lockdown and pandemic, we have the perfect practice ground. **This is the time to practice, right when we're feeling like not facing this difficulty.**

So how do we do that?

Let's first look at why these kinds of situations try our patience, and then how to work with them during the current situation.

Why These Things Try Our Patience

If we think about it, there's nothing in most situations that we face that makes them

inherently difficult or annoying. **We create the difficulty.**

For example, let's say you had to sit in a room with no devices, nothing to read, nothing to do ... for two weeks. Most people would find this tedious, boring, tiresome. (Not everyone, but most.) Why though? There's nothing wrong with an empty room. It's not worse than any other situation — except that we make it worse, by deciding that it's not fun, not exciting, not interesting.

That's our decision. We create the experience of boredom, burden, difficulty.

The good news is that if we create the experience, we can change it. We have the power to not be bored, impatient, burdened, annoyed, frustrated.

The shift comes from letting go of the thoughts we have about the situation, which are creating the difficult experience.

"But it really is boring/frustrating! It's not just my thoughts about it!"

No, it's not. In reality, it's just life. The world, and life on earth. It's just molecules and energy. We create the narrative that it's bad or good. We can let go of the narrative.

If we let go of the beliefs and narrative and thoughts about the situation ... it's not good or bad. It's just life. And in fact, we can create a new view: that it's a miracle to be alive, to witness the universe like this, to be interconnected to other living beings in so many ways; that it's something to be grateful for. Or just experience the experience, without thoughts and narratives.

It's up to us. We can practice with these thoughts and experiences.

Using the Crisis to Practice Patience

So with this in mind, let's use this current crisis to practice patience.

Whenever you're feeling restless, bored, tired of the situation, frustrated, unhappy, exhausted by it all ... delight in the opportunity to practice!

Let yourself find the beauty in the practice.

Look at the situation around you, and ask, "Why is this frustrating or tiresome? Why don't I like it?"

See what thoughts come up. "I just want it to be over. I just want some human contact. I just want to go to my favorite restaurant. I don't like having to stay home."

Notice that a lot of those thoughts are about what you want or don't want. What you like or

don't like. This is about us getting our way — and we always want our way.

What would it be like to not need to get our way, but to love things just as they are?

Look around, and see the beauty in this moment. See the incredible miracle of life and the world around us. Feel the connection to all other human beings, to all living beings, in everything you see.

Or just experience the moment without the thoughts. Just the sensations of this moment.

When you're feeling frustration, it's also an opportunity to experience the sensations of frustration, without judging them. What does it feel like in your body to feel frustration? Can you just experience that?

Over and over, the feelings will come up. We can just experience them, without judging. We can just experience this moment. We can see the beauty in this moment.

These are practices of patience. And with practice, we can increase our capacity.

Or we can practice frustration with not getting what we want.

What will you practice today?