

Boredom in a Land of Plenty

It's a strange time to be bored.

The idea seems impossible when you consider the infinite access to ideas and information, entertainment and project, people and products we now enjoy. But boredom is still very real.

My kids get bored. I get bored. Everyone gets bored.

I suspect modern boredom isn't about a lack of things to do, but not finding interest in the things you're *supposed* to be doing, or wanting to do. Maybe guilt is the real cause of boredom.

You're supposed to want to do a certain range of things at certain times. Sometimes, those don't appeal. But when bored, it's rarely the case that you can think of absolutely nothing within your reach that would be unboring. More likely, you feel guilty that you aren't interested in what you think you should be. If you were a better person, you wouldn't be bored by X productive thing, so you pretend you're not bored by it and have internal tension.

I don't think escaping boredom is the highest good, but I don't think enduring boredom is noble either. You have an inner fire. Stuff that stokes it is worth pursuing. Sometimes you have to push through boredom to find something amazing, but often, boredom is a sign that you're not quite on track. Instead of feeling bad about it, listen to it.

It is perhaps true, as Chesterton said, that we aren't suffering for lack of wonders, but lack of wonder. But that doesn't mean you need to feel guilty for not being captivated by whatever you're doing. To enhance your sense of wonder, you can begin by listening to your lack of it and moving towards where you find it. Seek and cultivate wonder at the same time.