

COOG NEWS

YOUR WEEKLY SCOOP

MBA/MS EDITION
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Trending...



Don't Beat Your Boredom, Embrace it!

By Ashley Fontaine

How many times a day do we engage in habits like scrolling social media or checking our email, simply because there's a quiet moment that isn't filled with anything else? Waiting for the bus, eating breakfast, in line at the pharmacy, even sitting on the toilet ... phone in hand. We generally think of boredom as a negative emotion, but boredom is not the enemy.

In the wrong context, or if we don't know how to appreciate and embrace boredom, it can lead to behavioral issues like mindless snacking and bad driving. But in the right doses, boredom can be good for your mental health, spark creativity, and help you solve problems. There's a reason that all those good ideas come to you in the shower!

So how can you create space for boredom so your brain can get creative and make new connections between ideas?

Use a real alarm clock

Basically everyone you know uses their smartphone's alarm to wake them up, right? With super-powered mini computers serving so many purposes, it's easy to get seduced into using its other functions when you haven't even gotten out of bed yet. Before you realize it, 30 minutes have passed in the time warp of Facebook scrolling, and the time you had available to enjoy your coffee and walk your dog have disappeared.

Go old school with an alarm clock that is just that—an alarm clock and nothing more.

Establish a morning practice

Create a routine that sets your mind right to kick off your day. It can be as short and simple as you want—just make it intentional and make it regular. Write in a journal, stretch, go for a walk, read inspirational quotes, meditate for two minutes, do a visualization—or some combination of things that help you feel centered and grounded. Whether your morning practice is five minutes or an hour, the quiet and electronics-free space you create for yourself can invite boredom, in a good way.

Quit “multi-tasking” (it's not a thing)

Trying to multi-task can make us feel mentally drained, ineffective, frazzled, and frustrated. Hopefully you've heard by now: the science is in that multi-tasking isn't real. It's an illusion. You can't do two (or more) complex tasks at once, and certainly not well. When we attempt to multi-task we actually toggle rapidly between activities, and end up doing all said activities less well than we would if we focused on one at a time.

Pick a phone-free night of the week

All the buzzes, dings, and flashing alerts on our phones that tell us the world is trying to communicate with us put us in a space of reactivity. Worse, when your phone is right there, it's almost impossible not to check it. Why? Because every time you get a notification and you look at it, your brain gets a little hit of dopamine that reinforces checking your phone as a reward.

Give your brain a break: turn the sound and vibration off of your phone and leave it at the front door when you get home. Try it just one night a week and see how you feel. This is one of those times where “out of sight, out of mind” can work in your favor.

Do an autopilot activity

Have you ever jumped at the chance to do some sort of repetitive, “easy” task—stuffing envelopes for a donor mailing, for example—after a day of particularly mentally strenuous work? In the right circumstances, these sorts of autopilot activities can feel soothing.

The same concept applies outside the office. When you want to create a positive opportunity for boredom at home, consider doing an autopilot task like folding laundry or hand washing the dishes.

Article originally published on [idealist](#).

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Upcoming Company Engagement Opportunities

- Details: See [PDF](#) for companies, dates and topics

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- Date: 10/26-10/29
- Details: See featured sessions and RSVP link [here](#)

Volunteer Fair-Virtual Event

- Date: 10/29 from 10:30am-3:00pm
- Details: RSVP in Gateway

TRIO Electric Company Info Session: Meet the CEO

- Date: 11/4 at 4:30pm
- Details: RSVP in Gateway

RCC

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