

## **Filling in the boredom with things that don't cost much money**

This is quite a long document, you may not want to read it all at once, it is designed to help you over four weeks not five minutes!

### **Fear of Boredom**

Many people rely on going out at the weekend to sporting events, movies, shopping and other activities to burn off some energy. With the recent government lockdown many people will be struggling to find ways to fill in the time. Many people will be counting down the long days for the lockdown to be over. Some will be dreading this time and wondering how they will make it through.

There is a great book called, Flow by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (pronounced, Mee-High Check Sent Mee High) I'll explain a couple of the key points from the book.

There is also a Youtube video of him talking about the book:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TzPky5Xe1-s&t=2s>

### **Not everyone feels boredom**

He says there are some people who love what they do so much that the time just flies by. For example, an artist can spend all day painting and to them it seems like just a few minutes have gone past. He calls this state, "flow." Over his career he has studied many people who can get into this state. He found there are things that anyone can do to develop this skill.

One way to get into this state is to get good at something, such as learning a new skill. He says, if the challenge is too easy, we get bored, if the challenge is too hard, we often give up. We need the right level of challenge. For example, if someone knows nothing about cooking, starting off with a three-course meal would be too much, likewise, if someone is an expert chef, making pancakes will seem boring.

He says people that get into this state of flow are always trying to get better at something they like. This challenge of always trying to get better at what we are doing can make life really enjoyable and the time passes quickly.

### **How to overcome boredom**

One of the best ways to beat the boredom is to learn a new skill or several new skills. This is not just for children; adults can do this too.

The internet is full of amazing things you can learn that don't cost money. If you do an internet search for tutorials on the following subjects you can learn about some amazing things.

Learn a language, there are people all over the world who are in lockdown, who may be willing to teach you a language for free, try searches for pen pals or sites to make friends from other countries.

Other new skills to learn that don't cost much money include:

- Learning to cook or bake
- Learning DIY skills

- Origami
- A new fitness routine
- Youtube has CPR tutorials (these are not as good as an in-person course, but they are could save someone's life)
- Life hacks, are great tips and tricks to make your life easier. Google something like life hacks for
- Learn an instrument
- Indulge in creating poetry or art
- There are some great lectures and educational videos online. Many universities have put on Youtube some free and really interesting lectures.
- There is a really interesting TED talk on the ways trees communicate, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Un2yBglAxYs>
- The ways that bees live and operate can be fascinating.

On my website I have lots of information about the importance of sleep, <http://www.beingattruehero.com/sleep.html> and other psychology topics, <http://www.beingattruehero.com/othertopics.html>

*Please be aware, the website has information about trauma and suicide prevention which is not appropriate for younger children.*

### **Learn amazing software**

There are many free versions of Software available online. This is called open source software. Open Source means, the creators have decided to give it away for free. Photoshop is an expensive image editing program, but there is a free version called the Gimp, <https://www.gimp.org/>

There are thousands of free tutorials on YouTube to teach you how to master this program. Just search on YouTube for "Gimp tutorials"

Many people now produce podcasts there is a free version of sound editing software called Audacity, <https://www.audacityteam.org/>

Have you ever wanted to make 3d graphics, there is a free program called Blender 3d, <https://www.blender.org/>

All these programs have online tutorials that are free and there are many more pieces of free software available from the Free Software Foundation, [https://directory.fsf.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](https://directory.fsf.org/wiki/Main_Page)

### **Free Books**

There are many classic books that are now out of copyright so they are freely available as e-books or audio books. Do an internet search for free classic audio books or free classic ebooks.

The Christchurch libraries have free ebooks and audio books that you can access.

Learn about inspiring people. There are many great websites and videos on Youtube with information about inspiring people such as:

- Martin Luther King Jr
- Mother Teresa
- Abraham Lincoln
- Nelson Mandela
- St Therese of Lisieux
- Pier Giorgio Frassati

### **Children's activities**

Try searching for "Children's activities that don't cost money," "rainy day activities," "songs to teach children..."

### **Getting better at meeting new people**

Many of us find it really hard talking to someone we don't know. You could use your time in lockdown to brush up on your social skills.

Debra Fine wrote a great book called The Fine Art of Small Talk which helps people build conversation skills, so you can easily talk to strangers, she has several good videos

[:https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XVvUkk7WiMI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XVvUkk7WiMI)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5GnzZOO8bfM>

With your newly formed social skills maybe you could call someone who might be on their own during lockdown and brighten their day.

### **Teaching someone else**

As well as learning things from other people, you could put on social media, "I know about ... I am happy to teach anyone this while we are in lockdown."

### **Working through difficulties**

There are many people who don't try new things because they are not good at them to start with and they don't want to get it wrong. The joy of learning comes from trying something, finding it doesn't work so well then getting better.

Sometimes when people are bored, they don't feel like starting anything. Sometimes it is a case of choosing something and starting it even if you don't feel like it. It gets more enjoyable as you go on.

Pushing a car from a complete stop is the hardest part, but once you have some momentum it gets easier. In the same way learning a new skill can feel tough at first, it can seem like you will never get it. Soon you will find you understand things that you didn't when you first started, then you get better and better and then you start to enjoy it.

**Michael Hempseed**

[www.beingattruehero.com](http://www.beingattruehero.com)