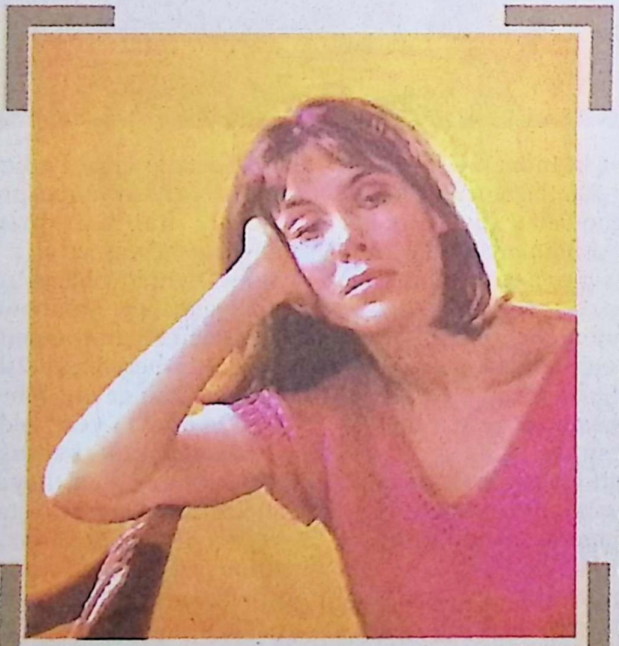
Boredom

Learning to Cope

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IF you suffer from boredom, you may find value in the following list of practical coping strategies. The list has applications to both situational boredom and chronic boredom.

- Make a systematic attempt to introduce more frequent and regular changes into your life. These should be changes that you can implement readily without too much effort. Here is an example: over a period of several weeks, Anatole R. called an old college friend he had not talked to for years, took a short vacation to a place he had never been to before, and visited for the first time a large, well-known used-book bookstore about 100 miles away from his home. The general idea is that if you are in something of a rut, try to break out of it.



- Find something important to do. Much boredom is associated with the idea that one's work or other activities are meaningless. Your life should not be seen as an endless round of routine with no long-range purpose. Rediscover meaning in your work, or consider making a career change. You might consider offering your services as a volunteer to a hospital or a school.
- Learn something new. Take an evening course at a community college in almost anything that presents a challenge and a mild psychological threat. By a psychological threat is meant something at which you just might fail. You will be forced to rise to the occasion, to use your intellect. The introduction of different ideas into your life helps to counter boredom.
- Take a child to a movie. Kay G. took her seven-year-old granddaughter to see the Walt Disney version of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Kay saw the film in the 1930s and remembered it with fondness. She would have not enjoyed seeing it alone. However, taking her granddaughter to see it allowed her to share a memory and re-experience the story vicariously through a child's eyes.
- In general, learn to use fantasy in a constructive, creative way. Madame Bovary acted on her romantic fantasies in a destructive way. Instead, think of your fantasies as a kind of second psychological life, as a source of rich gratification. You do not have to insist that they materialise in the real world; the individual with a healthy personality makes a clear distinction between fantasy and reality.
- Recognise that feelings come and go. Some boredom is natural. Learn to tolerate it. Go on with your daily activities in spite of the boredom, and it will often lift and vanish.
- Think of boredom as coming from your child self. Imagine that you are the parent of an actual child who says, "I'm bored. There's nothing to do." How would you answer? Apply the answer to yourself.
- When you are bored, do not just sit and stare. Get up and engage in some motor activity. It can be almost anything from taking a short walk to sweeping a kitchen floor. Motor activity is antagonistic to boredom. It is much more difficult to be bored when you are moving. You cannot will away your boredom, but you can will