



Are You Bored Yet?, by Karen Maezen Miller

"I'm bored."

Schoolchildren can be afflicted with it by the second day of summer; workers by the sixth month on the job; spouses by the seventh year of marriage; and readers by the tenth paragraph. Or before.

Are you bored yet? Nowadays, boredom is considered a scourge. We blame boredom for the death of curiosity, learning, productivity, innovation, and commitment. Boredom is the antecedent to all kinds of distractions, disengagements, overindulgences, and infidelities. The worst crime is being boring, the joke goes, but we all know that the real crimes are likely to come after. In the name of boredom, we overfill our minds, our bodies, our senses, and our time. We flee what fails to amuse. Boredom breeds contempt, and contempt breeds calamity.

If boredom is such a menace, let's bring it out into the open. Can you show it to me? Like the other thoughts and feelings we use to torment ourselves, boredom is something we can't locate except in our own deadly pronouncement: "I'm bored." By the time we say it, we believe it, and believing is all it takes. This is where the story can get interesting.

When we're bored, we go looking for something new. And let's face it: we're nearly always looking for something new. It doesn't matter how much or how little we've got "how well we each manage our store of talents or prospects" we are somehow convinced that we haven't yet got "it," not enough to be completely satisfied or secure. We might think we need something as harmless as a cookie, a game, or a gadget or another career, lover, or child. We might call what we want higher purpose, wisdom, passion, or simply a change of scenery.

Until we are at peace with ourselves, the quest continues. Until we know that there is nowhere else to go, and nothing more to get, we are trapped in delusion. We cannot resolve delusion with more delusion, but we try, and in the search we drive ourselves further away from reality and into raving madness. Fighting boredom is a full-time occupation.

What does it take to liberate ourselves from the chase? What if we

could release the grasping mind that is always clawing after some precious new thing, even if itâ€™s only a new fantasy? That would be excruciating, or so we fear. Itâ€™s the fear of letting go that afflicts us, but letting go is pain free.

--Karen Maezen Miller [<http://www.karenmaezenmiller.com/>], in
Shambala Sun [<http://www.shambhalasun.com/>]

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