



BOREDOM BUSTER

A very common complaint that many people make when learning to live without the thrill involved with obtaining and using substances is learning to cope with boredom. In reality, boredom is just a state of mind and with practice and a little effort, boredom can be overcome. Consider some areas to look at when trying to overcome boredom:

Appreciating the Freedom and Peace of Mind—As crazy as it sounds, there can be an upside to boredom which occurs when you realize that it's better to be a little bit bored yet stable and safe than feel excited yet chaotic and stressed. Consider the following:

- How does it feel to not have to worry that you have something on you that could get you into trouble, every time you see a police officer?
- How does it feel to know that you can be drug tested at any time and pass? (For example with the legal system or at a job interview)
- How does it feel to look your family members (your partner, your parents, your children, etc.) in the eye, knowing you have nothing to hide?
- How does it feel knowing that you no longer have to chase after a substance anymore? (For example you don't have to plan where to get the money, how to get the substance, or figure out what to do about getting sick, etc.)
- What other areas can you say that you now appreciate about the freedom of life without getting high?

Grateful Gains—When you stay away from the substance abusing lifestyle, even if it feels boring at first, you can be grateful for what you may be gaining in life. Consider the following:

- How have your family relationships improved since you started making progress?
- How have your personal, social, and romantic relationships improved?
- Have you gotten back anything that you had previously lost when you were living the wrong way?
- Since you have been working on changing your substance use habits, how much money have you saved?
- Have you noticed yourself getting anything taken care of that you used to avoid when you were getting high? (Bills, housework, homework, hobbies, etc.?)



GO BACK and REFLECT- Pick one or two answers from this exercise so far that mean the most to you. Which did you select and why?

1.

2.

REFRAMING BOREDOM- So maybe life without getting high is less exciting overall, but from the previous questions, hopefully you can see that there are still some serious benefits to a life without substance abuse. Instead of letting boredom be a reason to go back to getting high then consider how you can decrease boredom without going backward:

Go back to what worked before you started – Did you have any old hobbies or other interests that you used to do before getting high started to get into the way? (For example fishing, sports, reading, art, music, etc.) –

Work with what you have - Consider your family members, spouse, children, siblings, parents, neighbors, non-using friends, etc. Are they into anything interesting that you could ask them to become a part of?

Exercising – Exercise is not only good for the body but also for the mind. What interesting forms of exercise might you be interested in pursuing?

Learning – Getting high probably took up a good amount of time that you could have used to better yourself. Instead of sitting around getting bored what could you spend time learning about, studying, or practicing? (For example, taking a course, reading, learning a language or a musical instrument)

Working – Is there something out there for you that interests you that can be more than just a job, but a way to stimulate your mind? Are there projects around your home that might interest you?

Helping others – This can be very rewarding. Do you know anyone that you could visit, support, or help in your spare time (For example, your grandparents, a neighbor, someone with a disability, volunteer work, etc.)

Expanding – This answer may require more thought and introspection than the others. Perhaps your mind is clearer now and you are up to this challenge. What ideas can you come up with that may expand your focus about your purpose in life? What comes to mind when thinking about making your life more meaningful and rewarding? Who can you talk too in order to help you in this area? If this task seems overwhelming, what small steps can you start to take today to improve in this area?