

PEDAGOGICAL INPUT

for the adventure of family life



19_Children must be allowed to be bored

Which parents have not heard this sentence from their children: "I'm so bored!" This situation often causes stress for the parents. Children moaning when they are bored is not easy for many parents to bear. Many try very hard and make offers the children usually reject. Or the children can then watch TV, use their mobile phones or their computers. Then they are usually quiet. But does this approach make sense?

Many children and young people today are overstimulated.

They are busy everywhere: in kindergarten, at school, in various courses. They are driven from one activity to the next. As soon as they are home, they want to be kept busy by their parents. But this constant external stimulation prevents them from gaining access to their own wishes and ideas. They lack the stillness, the contact with their own inner self to find out what they actually want, what they like, what is good for them. Constant entertainment makes children addicted. It disables contact to one's own self, to one's own creativity. Children who "work through" one offer after another become consumers, dependent on others to tell them what to do.

Have peace of mind the next time your child gets bored.

You don't have to do anything. You can calmly look your child in the eye and tell him kindly: "Ah, are you bored? Then I'm curious to see what you can think of to do in the next 20 minutes."

Bored people feel restless. But that goes away. After a while the child will get creative and maybe build a plane out of chairs and fly around the world. Or it turns into a cat and talks to neighbouring cats about annoying dogs. Through boredom we find our creativity. We independently discover how we want to occupy ourselves. This strengthens creativity and independence. This strengthens the child's personality. Both are qualities that help it throughout life.

This also has to do with mindfulness.

When we start listening to ourselves and exploring what we want, what is good for us, we learn to listen to our inner voice and perceive our impulses. This, too, is a quality we need as adults if we are to take good care of ourselves.

Psychologist Vanessa Lapointe puts it very nicely: "Children need to sink into their own boredom so the world around them becomes quiet enough to hear themselves." This knowledge also relaxes parents. Thus, you can continue reading your newspaper in peace, even if the child next to you is sighing with boredom, knowing how important this experience is.

Lapointe writes in an internet blog: "When my husband was young, his family lived in a rural area with plenty of room to roam. He tells stories about digging holes, hiding treasures and tinkering with little inventions during every spare hour. I can picture him clearly, immersed in this work, lost in the world of his imagination, but more importantly, in HIS world. Knowing this about my husband, is it any surprise that he is now a mechanical engineer? He still builds and tinkers and invents. That's who he is - it's the essence of what drives him. The boredom of his childhood – the space he was given to just be – lives on in him today and has a huge impact on his personality."

Astrid Lindgren, creator of the legendary Pippi Longstocking, recognised that in moments without a plan, new thoughts or encounters often arise. She said: "Then you have to have time to just sit and look in front of you."

Jesper Juul also welcomes boredom as a couple: "It would be even better if you were bored together: You'll find yourself suddenly talking and telling each other things that only come up when 'entertainment mode' is off and you've gotten over the restlessness. This is the point where real intimacy becomes possible. You can also try this with your partner."

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