

Bored and Brilliant: How Spacing Out Can Unlock Your Most Productive and Creative Self

by [Manoush Zomorodi](#)

In November, I attended a conference on treating couples at Harvard and Srinii Pillay, MD presented on "The Laws of Attraction: Using Brain Science to Work with Couples". His recent book "Tinker Dabble Doodle Try: Unlock the Power of the Unfinished Mind", which I liked better than the book "Bored and Brilliant". Both books make a powerful message on the importance of the need to disconnect (from doing and technology) to become more creative and present. In the couples that I have been treating I have asked them to build in unfocus every day. It is clear that when we feel less tired, we will have more compassion for our partners. It is suggested that we also become more creative and productive in life.

"Bored and Brilliant" demonstrates how important it is for us to let your mind wander wherever it wants to go, seeing things in a new way, making new connections with people and things around you, and allowing yourself to be surprised. We all need to remember to be in the now...so last week I was thrilled to find several clients outside our offices taking pictures of the fourth double rainbow over the Hudson River this month. If you are raising a child these days, the discussions on how over connected kids are to their technology is a discussion worth reading.

– Dr. Michele Winchester-Vega, DSW, LCSW-R

Bored and Brilliant: How spacing out can unlock your most productive and creative self, by Manoush Zomorodi, is a book that challenges the notion that the conveniences of technology allow us to live a more productive life. Instead, we are overloaded with stimulation and information from technology, which leaves us little time for our minds to wander, for silence and for time alone. Most of the book focuses on the impact of cell phone and digital media use and offers the reader a step by step challenge to alter their relationship with technology in order to interact with the world and themselves in a more open, creative and productive manner. The author provides numerous anecdotal and research based evidence to demonstrate to the reader that limiting our use of technology will open our minds up to see new perspectives, solve problems and think more creatively. I often challenge clients to learn to tolerate being uncomfortable and I also find that people will stay "busy" in an effort to avoid discomfort. The author also notes that limiting the use of technology will spark discomfort, but encourages her readers to push past the initial discomfort, as there will be benefits in the end. I like that the book does not suggest that technology is inherently bad or should not be used at all. Instead, the author notes that a mindful and balanced use of technology is an important aspect of living a full and truly connected life. – Katie Helpley, LMFT

This book is an excellent read and very relevant to our society today. I found myself relating a little too closely to the characteristics of being addicted to phones and electronics and worried that my children may be as well. I see too many clients in therapy who are unable to process their emotions, negative emotions have become some thing to avoid instead of work through. I loved that the author discussed the role of emotions and the importance of allowing our brain to process them. She quoted, "Every emotion has a purpose an evolutionary benefit". It is so important to teach people especially young people, how to cope with stress and discomfort and by constantly distracting ourselves behind a screen, we are putting ourselves in emotional danger. I highly recommend this book and while I haven't been brave enough to start the challenge in the book of putting my phone down, I hope to have the courage to do so in the near future. – Susan McVey, LCSW-R

For anyone who feels constantly connected to a device, "Bored and Brilliant" is a book for you. Many of us lose a sense of time while on our phones. Another common feeling is the compulsion to remain connected to our notifications. The author challenges readers to pause in order to take inventory of our unconscious distractions and habits. A would recommend this challenge to parents that want to model more intentional use of technology. It will have a positive impact on their children. I would invite any family to try the daily challenges outlined in the book and discuss it with each other.

The author, Manoush Zomorodi, is aiming to help readers to begin to use tech in a more conscious way. In therapy, people develop a stronger awareness of themselves and create more purposeful changes. Similarly, the strategies offered will force the reader to notice more of the impact of the distractions caused by various types of technology.

- Elena Morales, LMHC

The book "Bored and Brilliant" offers research and information about technology and how it has affected our ability to tolerate boredom. It goes through research and information, as well as real experiences from the author about how technology often interferes with creative thinking. The book goes into a seven step challenge to help change the readers relationship with technology. I have to share that reading "Bored and Brilliant" was an interesting experience for me personally. First, I found it a bit challenging to stay focused on the reading and ended up having to get the audiobook version in order to finish it. I had to chuckle at the irony in this because the author specifically speaks about how technology and the internet have caused us to lose much of our skill of "slow reading" or deep reading. The author explains that deep reading is a skill that needs to be practiced, however with websites, hyperlinks, blogs and social media we've become prone to skimming vs. deep reading, in a sense rewiring our brain. I took time to do the challenge and observe my own relationship with my phone as advised in the book. I found it extremely difficult to take a "fakecation" (to go without my phone for an entire day) from my phone because of my work, but did challenge myself to leave it at home at times I would have normally taken it with me. The research in this book gave me some great pieces of information to think about, especially in regards to boredom. Being a mom, I was most intrigued in observing how much of the ideas in this book play into my kids' life and their intolerance of boredom. I was able to use a lot of information from the research provided as a platform to have a discussion with my kids and encourage them to participate in the challenges with me. This book helped me to look at things differently, observe my behaviors and finally unplug a bit! I definitely recommend it if you feel you're experiencing a digital overload!

– Mary LeRouge, LMSW, CASAC