



Killing Time

This is a bizarre and worrying expression. Life is supposed to be precious and every moment savoured. Being bored is a sign of 'things' not being right. Here's a Google explanation: **Being bored is often a sign of a lack of engagement or meaning in one's life. It can indicate that a person is not fully present or is feeling unfulfilled in their current tasks or environment. Chronic boredom may also signal underlying issues such as anxiety or depression, suggesting that the individual may need to seek ways to connect with their inner experience and find more purpose in their activities**

I'm fairly busy with running a multi-national publishing company (ha!) but there are too many dangerous moments. I admire people who can keep engaged and are not distressed by leisure time. I suppose it's a first world problem, considering that in many other countries, and in previous generations, life was survival – keeping warm and fed in a hostile environment, not to mention staying alive, avoiding the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to.

But *killing* time? It's such a violent expression for something so precious. It highlights something about our psyche and the way we perceive our brief stay on Earth. If you really try and filter out dubious distractions and false prophets, what's left is what we determine life to be for ourselves, and that isn't always obvious. If it is, then you are lucky. For me, there is always a nagging sense that whatever I do is not what I am supposed to be doing, that wherever I am is not where I am supposed to be, and whoever I am with, I am not supposed to be with. This is an anxiety creating mode of thought and I wish it would just go.

I'm not sure that the current social obsession with mental health actually resolves any of its issues. In fact, I suspect that it makes us all question our own states of mind. And who on this Earth can truly be said to have perfect 'mental health', to understand mortality and be at one with every second of their lives? Not me, not many of us. If it's you, assuming anyone reads this, then that's a marvel. Given the quantum uncertainty of existence, the vastness of space, the unpredictability of moment to moment life, the irascible, fearful nature of humankind and the sheer weight of nonsense thrown at us day after day, how is it possible to retain balance and embrace time rather than kill it?

By killing, we mean waste, but even wasting it is a crime. How do we define wasting or killing time, though? Being still and contemplative? That has its beneficial side. By doing dumb or foolish things? Perhaps life is so ad hoc and meaningless that it asks to be wasted, that foolishness is the norm. And yet I am conscious of something amiss when I watch almost any broadcast entertainment, not reading, not writing or not working like Boxer in Animal Farm.

I could never be a guru sitting atop a mountain contemplating existence. I've read Augustine and Marcus Aurelius but I can't keep their wisdom in mind. It seeps through like sand in a sieve. But gosh, look, all this rambling, all this contemplating of nothing and I have not only come to the final line, I have run out of space and, appropriately, out of...