

A MAGAZINE FOR THE LONELY

neveralone



Loneliness in Relationships

Why you may still feel alone even with the person you love.

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What is Loneliness?



-Quotes from anonymous people-

The feeling as if you don't belong or fit in anywhere, even if you are surrounded by people.

You are not always alone when you are lonely.

Emptiness

Not being in community with others

Feeling a need to be with someone

the absence of having someone love you

Unsafe

The inability to connect with others

Being without people

Isolating

A dissatisfaction with the connection between myself and others

Numbness

an absence of connection

To Be Lonely is...

Sadness

feeling unwanted

being unable to connect to society

Loneliness is when you feel like other people dismiss how you feel or how you think.

Isolated from others and the feeling of no connection to any person

Feeling isolated-- even when you are surrounded by people--because you can't truly be yourself without fear of judgment or feeling as if no one truly knows the real you.

Perception you have that you cannot connect with others

When you don't have special people in your life

Depression

lack of emotional support

Sadness of not having friends or company



A Scientific Test of Loneliness

Courtesy of Psychology Today
By Elena Blanco-Suarez Ph.D.

Loneliness is an epidemic. We are going through times of profound social change, and the Internet and other new social technologies are huge drivers of this epidemic, allowing us to remain in touch with others without actually having to connect with them. Humans, like it or not, are social mammals. We need to interact with each other, and as a society, we tend to organize ourselves in communities. Loneliness — another term for social isolation — is nothing new.

Google “epidemic loneliness” and you will find that many people have already asked such questions as: Can someone die of loneliness? This may seem over the top, but the question has been raised, and loneliness is in fact starting to be considered as a public health concern.

But what is the physiological mechanism of feeling lonely? And can loneliness actually kill us? Research has been published to shed some light on these issues. Researchers have found that social isolation affects the activation of dopaminergic and serotonergic neurons, which are key to our emotional well-being. Matthews and collaborators found that dopaminergic neurons in a brain region called the dorsal raphe nucleus were activated in response to acute social isolation and triggered the motivation to search for and re-engage in social interactions.

They studied mice that were either housed together or isolated, and tracked their reactions when they were introduced to a new mouse. Mice that had been isolated until that point showed remarkably high activity

in that brain region, which motivated them to interact with the new mouse in the cage. On the other hand, mice that were already interacting with other mice (i.e., the mice housed together) showed a lack of interest in the new kid on the block.

To measure sociability, they used a well-known protocol to study social interactions: the three-chambers test. In this protocol, the mouse is placed in a cage with three different sections. One of them is the so-called "social section," where another mouse is in place. We expect that the studied mouse (which starts from the central section of the cage) will spend more time exploring the social section and interacting with the new mouse, rather than isolating itself in the non-social section of the cage. Because, like us, mice are social mammals. By the power of optogenetics, the researchers played with the photoactivation of the dopaminergic neurons in the dorsal raphe nucleus.

They were able to switch the neurons "on and off" at will and study the changes. The researchers found that when these neurons were "on," the mouse spent more time in the social section of the cage, showing an increase in its motivation for sociability. Interestingly, they also observed aversive behavior when the dopaminergic neurons in the dorsal raphe nucleus were activated, but the studied mouse was deprived of the possibility of a social interaction (i.e., the new mouse in the social section was absent). In another experiment, the mouse avoided the section of the cage where it received light stimulation, having learned to relate light to the "lonely feeling." And due to the absence of another mouse, there would be no relief to its loneliness.

All of these results indicate that neuronal connections are potentiated following social isolation, which makes individual seek the social interaction that they lack. The researchers concluded

that the activation of the dopaminergic neurons in the dorsal raphe nucleus is only necessary for isolated individuals, since those are the ones that need social interaction the most.

They compare the craving of company in socially isolated individuals to hunger states that trigger the search for food. Since different neural circuits are involved in the consumption of food because it is yummy, or because we are hungry, they hypothesize that a similar situation applies to social interactions, and speculate that different neural circuits may be at play when the subject wants social interaction because it is either rewarding (yummy), or because they feel lonely (hungry). Sargin and collaborators came to similar conclusions after looking at serotonergic neurons instead of dopaminergic neurons in the dorsal raphe nucleus in response to social isolation. They identified the SK channels accountable for the alterations in serotonergic neurons after chronic social isolation. So when they blocked these channels, they could treat the anxiety-like and depressive behaviors in the isolated mice (e.g., eating disorders and decreased mobility).

Loneliness, as pretty much all of us feel, is controlled by the brain. Although loneliness is considered a negative feeling, science shows that it is actually something we need in order to overcome a situation that may put us at a disadvantage. Just like feeling physical pain, this is the way your body tells you there is something wrong. So, loneliness cannot kill us per se, but if it is not mitigated, it might trigger anxiety, stress, and depression, which are known to drive people to unfortunate outcomes.

The next time you feel lonely, think about your dorsal raphe nucleus. The neurons there are just trying to help you out; listen to them. Find your social interactions, and give those neurons a break.

THE SOLITUDE OF
NIGHT

IT WAS AT A WINE PARTY—
I LAY IN A DROUSE, KNOWING IT NOT.
THE BLOWN FLOWERS FELL AND FILLED MY LAP.
WHEN I AROSE, STILL DRUNKEN,
THE BIRDS HAD ALL GONE TO THEIR NESTS,
AND THERE REMAINED BUT FEW OF MY COMRADES.
I WENT ALONG THE RIVER—ALONE IN THE MOONLIGHT.

Li Po



Feeling lonely?

10 songs that understand what that feels like.

- 1. Boulevard of Broken Dreams**
By Green Day
- 2. The A Team**
Ed Sheeran
- 3. Empty**
Juice WRLD
- 4. lovely**
Billie Eilish and Khalid
- 5. The Sound of Silence**
Simon & Garfunkel
- 6. Everybody Dies In Their Nightmares**
XXTENTACION
- 7. Drowning Shadows**
Sam Smith
- 8. the lonely**
Christina Perri
- 9. Someone You Loved**
Lewis Capaldi
- 10. Eleanor Rigby**
The Beatles

Want to hear more? - Visit the Spotify playlist "neveralone"

Quiz: Are you Lonely?



The UCLA loneliness scale was created in 1978, but more recently updated in 1996. The quiz is a way to measure one's loneliness and isolation personally. Follow the directions below to take the quiz on your own and score yourself to see where you fall on the scale.

For each statement, please indicate how often you feel that way with the letter scale.

O - "I often feel this way

S- "I sometimes feel this way

R - "I rarely feel this way"

N - "I never feel this way"

1. I feel in tune with the people around me

O S R N

2. I lack companionship

O S R N

3. There is no one I can turn to

O S R N

4. I do not feel alone

O S R N

5. I feel part of a group of friends

O S R N

6. I have a lot in common with the people around me

O S R N

7. I am no longer close to anyone

O S R N

8. My interests and ideas are not shared by those around me

O S R N

9. I am an outgoing person

O S R N

10. There are people I feel close to

O S R N

11. I feel left out

O S R N

12. My social relationships are superficial

O S R N

13. No one really knows me well

O S R N

14. I feel isolated from others

O S R N

15. I can find companionship when I want it

O S R N

16. There are people who really understand me

O S R N

17. I am unhappy being so withdrawn

O S R N

18. People are around me but not with me

O S R N

19. There are people I can talk to

O S R N

20. There are people I can turn to

O S R N

ADD UP YOUR SCORE

4 for each O, 3 for S, 2 for R, 1 for N

Scores between 30 and 40 are considered a normal experience of loneliness.

Scores above 60 indicate a person is experiencing severe loneliness.

WHY PEOPLE FEEL LONELY IN RELATIONSHIPS

Loneliness is an emotion with a complex definition. This is because it can be caused by many different things such as technology, age, or even relationships. For my project I researched the effect loneliness has on romantic relationships. As I furthered my research I got the opportunity to ask the question "Have you ever felt lonely?" I discovered that loneliness can be found in many relationships if not all at one time or another.

Below are some of the responses I received.

13-17

- When you don't have special people in your life
 - I feel lonely when I'm home alone and I have no one to talk to
 - I was looking to make the other person happy intentionally risking my own happiness
- Right after my best friend told me he never wanted to talk to me again, I shared everything with him and he just cut me off because of his mental health issues
- During times of conflict in relationships, during times where my mental health states were struggling
 - Sometimes in arguments, loneliness will occur for me, self doubt, insecurity, etc. not feeling trusted, or safe enough to open up (which makes me feel that I had to keep things to myself, leading to the feeling that there's nobody there for me to talk to)
- When the person you love being around the most doesn't feel the need to be around you, or talk to you

18-49

- I feel lonely when my needs aren't being met.
- Usually it happens when I am in a big group of people and not feeling like I fit in-- I feel like an observer to my own life
 - Early in our relationship, when I was with his family, I would often feel excluded like I wasn't a part of the "club." It was really challenging for me to visit his family and I would spend a lot of time trying to sneak away to call my friends
- Towards the end of a relationship, when both people know the relationship isn't working, but neither are ready to let go yet.
- At times when my family is at work or school and I miss them - wishing they were home

50+

- Not being in community with others
 - Not being understood, not really listened to
- Because my spouse does not understand what it is I am going through, and even though I share, they can't put themselves in my shoes
 - Away from home and friends when in college or in the army
 - When my husband was away for military duties

Loneliness in Relationships



WHY PEOPLE FEEL LONELY IN RELATIONSHIPS

Courtesy of Time Magazine

By Candice Jalili

Being lonely is not just an emotion reserved for those who are single or alone. But there are ways to work through it.

“It’s very common that people find themselves in long-term relationships feeling lonely,” says Niloo Dardashti, a New York-based psychologist and relationship expert.

People in a relationship can be lonely because something isn’t working in the relationship itself or because they look to their partner to fill a void that they’ve been carrying within themselves, according to Dardashti.

Whatever the culprit, here, a few experts explain why you might be feeling this way and provide ways to address the root of the loneliness you may be experiencing.

Why do some people feel lonely in their relationship?

One reason for feeling lonely could be that your relationship is not working as well as it once did. A 2018 Pew Research Center survey found that 28% of people who are dissatisfied with their family lives feel lonely all or most of the time. And the number of people who are unhappy at home is rising — the most recent General Social Survey conducted in 2016 by NORC at the University of Chicago recorded the highest number of unhappily married couples since 1974.

This sense of loneliness can often take place when a couple has lost their emotional connection, says Gary Brown, a licensed family and marriage therapist in Los Angeles. “Even in the very best of relationships, there





two hours a day on social media were twice as likely to feel lonely than those who spent half an hour on those sites.

But sometimes, feeling lonely could predate the actual relationship. A 2016 study published in *Nature* found that loneliness can be a heritable trait and that there are certain people who may be genetically predisposed to feel greater pangs of loneliness throughout their lives. And Dardashti warns that getting into a relationship as a means of curing pre-existing feelings of loneliness will never truly work. "People hope for this other person to be the solution to their existential aloneness in the world, but normally that's not [the case]," she says. "There's not this person who's going to take [away] that alone-ness."

are going to be those times when one or both partners may have drifted apart and feel somewhat distant and estranged from one another," he says.

An unwillingness to be vulnerable can also contribute to feelings of loneliness within romantic relationships, according to Jenny Taitz, a clinical psychologist and author of *How to Be Single and Happy*. "One contributing factor to loneliness is not talking about your feelings or sharing things that are maybe a little less safe and risky to share," she says. "You could be close to someone but they might not know the more personal things about you."

Social media could also play a role. According to Taitz, comparing your relationship to ones you see on social media can generate a sense of loneliness. "Let's say it's Valentine's Day, for instance, and you had a nice dinner.

But then you go on social media and other people got really beautiful jewelry or flowers," she says. "That will automatically make you feel lonely." When you compare your relationship to those on your social media, she says, you wind up creating an "unpleasant distance" between you and your partner. It's through this distance that feelings of loneliness start to arise. And the more time you spend on social media, the more lonely you can feel.

A 2017 study published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* found that people who reported spending more than

"PEOPLE HOPE FOR THIS OTHER PERSON TO BE THE SOLUTION TO THEIR EXISTENTIAL ALONENESS IN THE WORLD, BUT NORMALLY THAT'S NOT [THE CASE],"

JENNY TAITZ



How do you know if the loneliness stems from you or your relationship?

It can be difficult to determine the root of your lonesomeness. But the first step should be to talk to your partner about how you feel, says Joshua Rosenthal, a clinical psychologist and director of child and adolescent treatment at Manhattan Psychology Group. If, during the conversation, your partner is able to point to concrete examples of ways they regularly try to make you feel emotionally fulfilled and yet you still can't shake feeling lonely, "it's probably more something within, rather than coming from the other person," he says.

If that is the case, take a closer look at your past relationships to determine if the feelings you are experiencing are a pattern rather than isolated to this particular relationship, Rosenthal says. Do you typically feel lonely as soon as the novelty of a new relationship wears off? "Maybe it's how you would feel in any relationship [after] the beginning stages," Dardashti suggests. "That's a question to come back to. What is it in yourself that's creating this dynamic?" According to both Rosenthal and Dardashti, if you talk to your partner and they're also experiencing feelings of loneliness, it's likely that the relationship is the culprit. "Chances are, if you're feeling lonely, the other person is feeling lonely too," says Dardashti. A 2009 study published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* even found that loneliness can be contagious.

If you and your partner both feel lonely, Dardashti says it's important to look at these feelings within the context of your relationship. Do you find that the feelings of loneliness are more common when you're with each other? Do you find that you're lonelier now than you were before entering this relationship? Do you find that there was a time when you were more fulfilled by your partner than you are now? If the answer to these questions is a resounding yes, then this could be a sign that something isn't working within your relationship, according to Dardashti. Often, it could just be that the two of you have grown apart, she says. "If you used to feel like there was more of a connection there and therefore less loneliness, then that's a sign that maybe you guys are sort of drifting in different directions.



I Forgot My Phone

A short film on how technology affects relationships and adds to that feeling of loneliness

By Charlene deGuzman and Miles Crawford



<https://youtu.be/OiINa46HeWg8>

I Forgot My Phone

51,806,195 views • Aug 22, 2013

👍 179K 💬 13K ➦ SHARE ≡+ SAVE ...

With more than 50 million views, this film highlighted a big issue in society today as technology use becomes more prevalent. We are so used to picking up our phone to check a notification, we don't realize how it may make the people around us feel. More specifically, in romantic relationships, when you scroll through your phone while on a date or even when you are just hanging out together, it is like putting up an invisible wall. This can lead to one or both partners feeling unacknowledged or lonely. Take a minute next time you're with your loved ones and put your technology away and see how much better you feel.



Text or Talk: Is Technology Making You Lonely?

by Margie Warrell
Courtesy of Forbes Magazine

As social media reshapes how we connect, we have to rethink what we need to feel fulfilled in our relationships, and realize that no amount of tweets, texts or Facebook status updates can provide it. While social networking is a great tool, there's a profound difference between an online social network and a real one. Despite the fact there will always be someone, somewhere awake to "like" our latest status update - however witty or banal it may be - when it comes to friends, quantity doesn't equal quality.

Recent studies have found that despite being more connected than ever, more people feel more alone than ever.

Surprisingly, those who report feeling most alone, are those you'd expect it from least: young people under 35 who are the most prolific social networkers of all.

Another recent study found that 48% of respondents only had one confidant compared to a similar study 25 years ago when people said they had about three people they could confide in. So as we have built expansive social networks online, the depth of our networks offline has decreased. So it seems that because technology makes it easier to stay in touch while keeping distance, more and more people find themselves feeling distant and never touching. Or at least not enough to avoid us feeling increasingly alone.

Yet genuine intimacy demands vulnerability and vulnerability requires courage. It requires that we lay down the masks we can so easily hide behind online, and reveal all of who we are with others - the good, the bad and the sometimes not so (photo-shopped) pretty.

Social media allows us to control what we share. It appeals to our vulnerability and vanity. We can pick and choose which photos we share and craftily edit our words to ensure we convey the image we want others to see. Yet it also provides the illusion of friendship that, in real life, may be shallow, superficial and unable to stand the demands, and pressures genuine friendships entail.

Digital communication can never replace in person, face-to-face contact in building relationships – personal and professional. As a study by Harvard Business Review found, team performance went up 50% when teams socialized more and limited email for more operational only issues. But whether loneliness leads people to the Internet, or the internet to loneliness, it seems that many of us turn to the internet to avoid simply being with ourselves. As Sherri Turkle author of *Alone Together* wrote, until we learn how to be okay with solitude, we are not going to be able to connect deeply with others. Social networking provides a means of escaping confronting aspects of ourselves and our lives we wish were different, better, more glamorous and less mundane. It's an all too convenient tool for avoiding sometimes harsh realities and playing pretend (to ourselves and others) with our life.

Online websites promise avatars that will allow us to love our bodies, love our lives, and find the true romance we dream of. But at what cost to the real life (marriage, body, friendships) we have to face when we close our computer down? Even the most brilliant and mesmerizing avatars cannot compensate for what is missing in real life.

Don't get me wrong; online technology is not some "necessary evil." Far from it. It's a magnificent tool for staying in touch with people across miles, time zones and years. We've all witnessed it's power in rallying people behind noble causes (think KONY 2012), overthrow governments (as we saw in the Arab Spring last year), enable people in isolated corners of the globe to plug

into resources and information they could never otherwise access (think North Korea), and provide opportunity to conduct business more efficiently than ever before. But like all tools, we have to learn how to use it well, and not let it use us. We cannot become dependent on it to do things it simply cannot do – like fulfill our deep innate need for intimacy, genuine connection and real friendship. All needs which can only be fulfilled through sometimes-uncomfortable conversations, in which we share openly what is happening to us and engage authentically with what is going on for others.

As we rely on technology to communicate more efficiently in an increasingly global world, we mustn't lose touch with the physical community around us or forget that human element within any relationship can never be replaced by technology. The more we rely on technology in our lives the more mindful we must be to turn it off and spend time with people, without our gadgets beeping at us to return texts that really, aren't worth our time to reply to. While it might be stating the obvious, if you want to connect with people more, you need to be in converse with people more - openly, authentically and with a vulnerability that may sometimes make you uncomfortable.

7 STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING A REAL SOCIAL NETWORK

1. **Unplug** - Turn off your computer, put down your iPhone, step away from your iPad, and take time to engage with people, in person, with face-to-face communication.
2. **Become a better listener** - Too often we talk to much and listen too little.
3. **Engage in your community** - Get involved in your local community or neighborhood.
4. **Practice Conversation** - If you are out of practice at meeting people take small steps.
5. **Find Like Minds** - Join a class or find an interest group.
6. **Reconnect with long lost friends** - Pick up the phone and call an old friend who you have lost touch with.
7. **Invite people over** - Some of the best conversations happen over a coffee or casual meal.



Ways to Overcome Loneliness





4 WAYS TO BEAT LONELINESS

by Chris Libby
Courtesy of livehappy

Staying connected with others could add years to your life.

In a world with more than 7 billion people, it's hard to imagine that loneliness—a loss of connection from people and self—could be a problem. But new research indicates loneliness and social isolation may now be bigger health hazards than obesity or smoking, and the problem is likely to get worse.

About 42.6 million U.S. adults over the age of 45 suffer from chronic loneliness, according to a 2010 AARP study. Jeremy Nobel, M.D., of the Harvard Medical School in the Department of Global Health and Social Medicine, points out that the problem isn't about spending time alone, which can have mental health benefits. People can feel lonely in a crowd or even in a marriage. He defines loneliness as having a gap or a feeling that something is missing. It's an "emotional connection that you desire that is not present to you," Jeremy says. "And it turns out that discomfort is toxic at a neurophysiological level."

How did we get here? Jeremy believes increases in divisiveness and technological convenience are partially to blame. "One way I often describe it is that you might have 600 friends on Facebook," Jeremy says, "but who is bringing you dinner if you are sick?"

Lonely people are less likely to be involved in social events, have fewer friends and deep relationships and could even face an earlier death than their social counterparts.

Happy Connections, Happy Health

Eric Kim, Ph.D., a research fellow in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, says social connections can help you bounce back from life's curveballs. His research shows that social cohesion, even at the neighborhood level, is linked to better health outcomes and behaviors, especially with older adults. Those contacts can share very useful information, such as recommending a great physician.

"They help you in very practical ways," he says. "If you just had surgery, they can bring in the mail-



-or groceries and even provide emotional support." Relationships can also have negative effects, he points out, but if we have positive connections, it can go a long way to improving quality of life.

The study "Interpersonal Mechanisms Linking Close Relationships to Health" finds that close relationships are crucial to health and well-being, as well as longevity. Social connections help buffer stress, lower cortisol and reduce risk of illness. Being socially connected can also help in areas of personal growth including finding love and intimacy.

Digital Doldrums

A recent survey commissioned by online messaging business solutions provider LivePerson discovered that nearly 70 percent of young people would prefer to communicate digitally. Another study from the Center for Research on Health Care at the University of Pittsburgh says that people who spend at least two hours a day on social media are twice as likely to show signs of social isolation than those who only spend 30 minutes a day.

Possible emotional triggers of jealousy and exclusion can be spurred by continuously looking at the carefully staged lives of others. Jennifer L. Taitz, Psy.D., a board certified cognitive behavioral clinical psychologist and author of *How to Be Single and Happy*, says that spending more time online reduces actual face time with other people. "When we feel tired and it's freezing outside, it's certainly much less effortful to lie on the couch and swipe through social media to catch up on the latest news, both in the world and in your personal circles," she says. "That said, keeping up with people in this passive way takes a toll on our sense of connection. To feel close, we need to put in time, energy and courage."

Below are a few tips to connect with the world around you.

1) **CARING FOR OTHERS**

Caring for others can be done in many ways! Things such as volunteering at local retirement homes or animal shelters, visiting your grandparents, checking in on your friends, or even bringing home flowers for your mom. This can show your care for others and create new connections that could make you feel less lonely.



2) **TOUCH OVER TECH**

Instead of having a conversation via text or phone, create plans to go out with those people instead! You can also find new experiences such as similar interests groups in your area. This is a great way to meet new people with the same likes and form new relationships.



3) **SELF-CARE**

Self care is one of the best ways to help in beating the feeling of loneliness. Doing things that make you feel good is very important for your mind and health. Actives like face masks, meditating, going out, painting, reading, or working out are all great ways to help you reset your mind and tap into yourself. The most important question to ask yourself is "what do I need" and from that answer see what you can do for yourself and how you're feeling.



4) **RECONNECT**

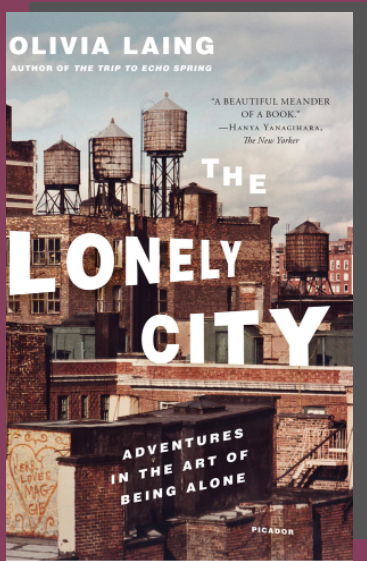
Sometimes all it takes to help you with loneliness is reaching out and connecting with family or old friends. It can be intimidating trying to find new connections so why not rekindle the old. Think about who you have lost touch with and take a minute to reach out, it could be just the thing they need too!



Books that can help with loneliness

For anyone feeling lonely

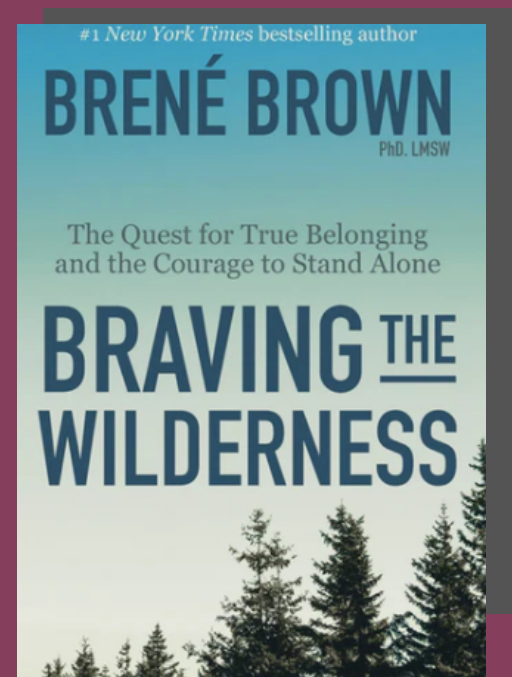
'The Lonely City' by Olivia Laing



Through the lens of artists known and lauded for their handling of loneliness — Edward Hopper, Andy Warhol, David Wojnarowicz — Laing walks us, and herself, down a path of self-reflection regarding why we fear being alone and the ways in which we can reclaim the feeling.

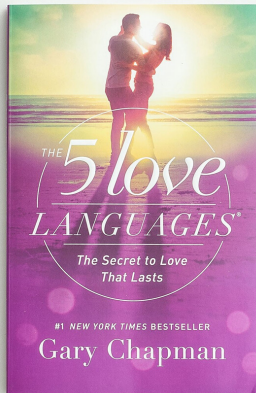
'Braving The Wilderness' by Brene Brown

Brene Brown is the queen of making you get emotional on public transportation. In *Braving the Wilderness*, Brown takes on the concept of belonging — and how devastating it is, in our society, when you feel a lack of acceptance into a group. Spoiler: you don't have to belong to a single place or group. You can define self-worth all on your own.



For those feeling lonely in a relationship

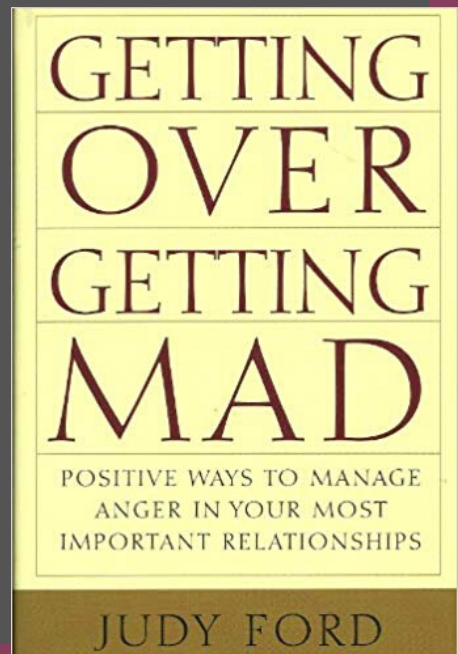
'The 5 Love Languages' by Gary Chapman



There are five love languages: Words of Affirmation, Acts of Service, Receiving Gifts, Quality Time, and Physical Touch. Each one is important and expresses love in its own way. Learning your partner's and your own primary love language will help create a stronger bond in your relationship.

'Getting Over Getting Mad' by Judy Ford

You've been in relationships, so you know that fighting and arguments are sometimes part of the deal. But most of us don't get any advice on how to deal with anger, and this book helps you productively deal with anger and conflict.



5 Ways to Overcome Loneliness in a Relationship



TOGETHER ALONE.

COURTESY OF PSYCHOLOGY TODAY
BY ANDREA F. POLARD PSY.D.

"Only in relationship can you know yourself, not in abstraction and certainly not in isolation." —Jiddu Krishnamurti

While alone time can be a welcome break from the noise of life, a truly wonderful chance to recuperate and concentrate, loneliness is always a downer. We can rationalize away loneliness when we are indeed alone. It seems to be a grounded response. There might even be hope for the future. On the other hand, feeling lonely in the presence of a life partner is the type of loneliness experienced in underground dungeons where "tomorrow" makes little sense. It is painful to feel estranged when looking at the one with whom we share a bed. Coming home full of impressions without being able to impart them to a partner who stands right before us is but a cruel tease.

What is there to do? First, both partners can implement simple behavior changes that might go a long way, such as switching off screens and inquiring about the other after waking up and coming home. (See "10 Zen Things to Save Your Marriage.")

Second, we can learn to listen and see to it that the other feels heard. This is easier said than done. Lavner, Karney, and Bradbury have found that communicating well does not predict satisfaction in a couple, but that a satisfied couple communicates well.¹ This means that even after improving our

"communication style, we might not necessarily feel more intimate with our partner. A feeling of kindred spirit cannot be reduced to skills and good behavior, just as love cannot be achieved working off a checklist. This makes the subject difficult to tackle. (This post is not meant to instruct, but to inspire.)

When a couple seeks therapy, I do not lead with questions such as, "Do you communicate well?" or "What have you done lately for your partner?" Instead, I ask both partners if there is still love in their hearts. I can teach methods and help process experiences that seem stuck. But I cannot make people care about each other. If only a modicum of love has survived past "heart-ships," we can put it under a magnifying glass and build up from there. Should you experience painful and ongoing loneliness in your relationship, you might want to ask ...

1. Is there still a glimpse of love in me?

Most people enter a relationship with love in their hearts. Instead of starting with the other and his or her shortcomings, focus on yourself first. Try to remember what you loved and how it felt. Be specific. You might want to write about your love without mentioning how you have disconnected from this experience since then. Preferably, your partner wants to participate in this exercise and write her or his own love letter, but the first step is to reach into your own heart.

2. Ask yourself where your love has gone.

Love can hide behind judgment, sadness, and fear, to name but a few obstacles. We are not capable of loving another when we are habitually judging ourselves over every shortcoming. When you are hard on yourself, you are likely to be hard on your partner once the honeymoon period is over. On the other hand, you might have entered the relationship with sadness or fear. In the beginning of your relationship, your excitement might have overridden your characteristic experiences. If this is the case, do not blame the other for their reoccurrence, but explore them with kindness, if necessary with a psychotherapist.

3. Are you addicted to external stimulation?

Bombarded with information and accustomed to instant gratification, we might not know how to receive subtler messages of love. Who has time for complexities? Most of us do not recognize our addiction to "easy." We just feel bored and blame the other for not being more exciting. Satisfying relationships need time and dedication. While acknowledging one's own propensity for boredom is a good beginning, learning the art of meditation is better. Don't be intimidated by the word "meditation.

" It is just stilling the mind and paying attention to the present moment. There are many ways to meditate, such as walking in gardens and forests, gardening, sitting for the sake of sitting, listening to water fountains, birds, and other music. Become still in yourself and notice the ordinary gifts of life. Happiness is being here.

4. Do not feel guilty about feeling lonely.

It is common to blame oneself for one's loneliness. I have heard countless times how "Nobody owes you anything!" and "You should not feel lonely when the universe gives you so much." Don't let yourself be shamed for your honest experience. Loneliness is an enormous cultural issue, and you have every right to address it within your relationship. (See "10 Tips to Help You Get Past Loneliness.")

5. Let your partner know how lonely you feel.

It is bad enough to feel lonely in your relationship. As long as there is no abusive behavior, do not hide your loneliness from yourself or your partner. It is crucial information. Sometimes it is impossible to be on the same wavelength, but when you can freely express your disappointment over this fact, you might emerge from the experience as two people swimming in one ocean.



Activity- reset outdoors



"Reset Your Natural Balance"

by Meghan Connors

We all know loneliness can be detrimental to our health, relations and all the different aspects of our lives. However the concept of being alone doesn't always correlate with those things. Being alone but being okay with it, or even purposely putting yourself there, is something known as solitude. Solitude is something many people strive to achieve. The definition of it varies from person to person, but overall it can be defined as the ability to be on one's own and be at peace or be able to enjoy the experience.

Many different things can help one achieve or begin to achieve this state such as meditating, journaling, or praying. Another way that people find solitude is through the outdoors. A great way I started this journey was through the company "reset outdoors." The company is led by a team of psychologists and expert hikers and they take you, your group, family or any other capacity of people and help lead you in a timed amount of solitude. Here's what one hiker had to say about the experience.

"The experience was not what I had thought it was going to be, but nevertheless my expectations were blown away. Going into it all I had was an image in my head sitting back to back with a tree not being able to see anyone and for some reason hearing water. I was excited to be able to really take this time for myself and reflect on nature. Connor and

his team were great. I thought we were going to get there and go on our merry way. When he actually talked to us with his other team members it was nice to know what we were going into before we did."

Reset outdoors is a great way to start your journey of finding solitude, needing a reset of your mind, or anything you may be seeking. You can visit them at <https://www.resetoutdoors.com/#gets> started to start your journey today.

A Challenge

AN EXPERIMENT TO DO ON YOUR OWN TO AID
LONELINESS

BY MEGHAN CONNORS

After doing a lot of research on the effects social media has on the feeling of loneliness, I came up with a challenge anyone can try to see if that's a factor for you too.

Spend a day without social media. This can be done on a day with or without school or both! Doing this would include things such as using your phone for only messaging, phone calls and other utilities besides social media. Apps that would not be in use would be things such as Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, Tik Tok, VSCO, and many more.

During the challenge look around and observe others that are on social media or on their phones for things besides messaging, calling, etc.

During and after the experiment assess how you felt.

Possibly ponder these questions...

- Did not going on social media make you feel more lonely throughout the day?
 - When and why?
- Did this experience make you aware of how much you or others use social media?
- Did not using social media make you feel more connected to others around you? Or possibly make you feel left out?
- Would you consider cutting back your social media use in the future?

EDITOR'S LETTER

It Is Okay To Be Lonely When You Are Not Alone

Once we were assigned this project, loneliness in relationships was the first idea to pop into my head. As we have been learning throughout the year, loneliness can be found almost anywhere. One theme that seemed to stand out in my mind from our books was the different relationships that impacted each main character and what it did to their state of loneliness. After seeing how it influenced fictional characters, I was curious to see how it affected real people. Since there is such a wide range of different relationships, I narrowed my focus on romantic relationships since my survey and articles gave me the most information in this area. After settling with my topic, I began to construct an outline and resources I would need.

My first step was to reach out to different age groups and get a better understanding of if they had ever felt lonely in general and/or in a relationship and why. I received some of the best answers I could have hoped for. I started to research what other people had discovered about the topic. As I started



searching, more articles about loneliness in relationships appeared than I could have expected. They covered topics such as why it may happen, how it can be fixed, and different factors to look at. These were all issues I wanted to cover and was able to do so with my research. Each article brought to light reasons why couples may feel loneliness and most of those reasons could be related to my survey answers as well. As I started to collect information a vision was formed in my head to spread awareness about this feeling to others. Since loneliness has become part of the conversation in society than ever before, I wanted to be part of it. What if I could create a piece of work that could be universally shared with people, regardless of their knowledge or background of the word or feeling of loneliness, and help them understand it better. After visiting Muhlenberg and hearing about my options, I knew right away creating a magazine would help me best achieve my goal.

I wanted my magazine to have an overview of loneliness and how it can be better understood. It would have a section defining what loneliness in relationships means, and a section about ways to overcome loneliness in general and in relationships. As I began gathering information I realized that articles I found fit perfectly into my research better than anything I could have written in the time I had. Other topics came to the surface as I researched further such as the common theme of technology and how that affects all types of loneliness. I was extremely excited when I discovered the video I used in my project because I feel as if that perfectly captured everything I had been reading about. I also was able to use a lot of what we worked with and learned in class in my magazines as well, such as the UCLA loneliness quiz and our reset outdoors trip. I wanted this magazine to be interactive with the reader as well as informative. From resources like my survey, articles, and activities created, I wanted this to be a magazine that can be easy to look

through so you could find articles quickly, but also an intriguing read to discover more about yourself and relationships.

Overall, I feel I learned an immense amount about relationships and loneliness and how different factors can affect each relationship differently. However, I do feel like my work got sidetracked from my original plan of wanting to incorporate social media as a factor, that idea turned into more of technology use in general and its effect on overall loneliness. One thing that became clear was that it is okay to have some loneliness in relationships. Since you are still an individual person but you're just choosing to share your life with another individual it doesn't automatically eliminate the feeling of being lonely. Also, feeling lonely can be felt in all types of relationships, not just romantic ones. Feeling lonely does not always mean you have a bad relationship but, you do need to be open to your partner, friends, or family about how you're feeling if you do experience it. I have learned a lot throughout this class. Having the opportunity to express what I have learned in a creative format, while also being able to pursue a topic that I was curious about, helped me get excited and want to dive into this project headfirst and find out as much as I could about the L word-*loneliness*.

