

Loneliness: What is it and how to get rid of it

By Sean Seepersad

Loneliness is a very complex, multidimensional phenomenon. Simply put, there is no one cure for loneliness, simply because there are many different types of loneliness. The loneliness of a widow, who just lost her husband, is different from the loneliness of a boy who is sick in bed and can't go outside to play with his friends. And just as there is no one type of loneliness, there is also no one solution as to how to cure loneliness. Different problems require different solutions.

One important dimension of loneliness is the frequency with which a person feels lonely. Some people rarely, if ever, feel lonely. Very often such people feel lonely because of some immediate situation, like a cold rainy day or going on a distant business trip away from family and friends. This type of loneliness is referred to as **STATE LONELINESS** because the loneliness appears based on the state or situation the person is in. In contrast is a more persistent type of loneliness. This type of loneliness persists regardless of the situation that person finds himself/herself in. Loneliness appears to be much more of a trait of that person. Accordingly this type of loneliness is referred to as **TRAIT LONELINESS**.

So what does state and trait loneliness have to do with how to get rid of loneliness?

Interestingly, state and trait lonely people cope with loneliness differently. State lonely people take much more of a proactive approach in dealing with their loneliness. They focus on what is causing their loneliness and try to solve the problem. They also try to use what is referred to as "active" coping strategies, including such things as exercising, listen to music, working on a hobby, etc. These things help to take their minds off of loneliness and make more positive use of their time.

In contrast are trait lonely people. Trait loneliness appears to be a more complex issue. From some preliminary results I have begun to collect over the internet, trait lonely people appear to fall into two categories. Firstly, there are trait lonely people who seem to have given up on trying to solve their loneliness problem. They withdraw from painful situations of loneliness and end up using "sad passive" coping strategies. These strategies do not attempt to solve the problem of loneliness but rather is an effort to try and deflect some of the pain of loneliness. Such strategies might be crying, over eating, sleeping more, drinking, watching TV, etc. Naturally since these coping strategies do not try to solve the problem or make positive use of their time, the loneliness persists over time. However, the situation with such kinds of trait loneliness may be more complex than simply not using the right kinds of coping. Research has also shown that trait loneliness to be associated with other negative components such as

low self-esteem, depression, suicide, etc. Some research even suggests that such trait loneliness may have some link to a person's past. There may be confounding problems in the past that might have resulted in a barrage of negative symptoms one of which is loneliness. To help alleviate this type of loneliness may require some degree of counselling to resolve some of these issues.

There also appears to be another category of trait lonely people. The main goal of these trait lonely people is ironically, to find that special someone for themselves. One of the founding fathers of loneliness research suggested that loneliness is "separation distress without an object." What does this mean? From the time we are born we form an attachment with our caregiver (usually our parents). The caregiver becomes an attachment figure who provides us with a sense of security and comfort. Ever notice a child when he/she can't find his/her mother? They cry, appear to be in serious distress and look for their caregiver everywhere. Is this not quite similar to lonely people? Some lonely people look for their attachment figure everywhere, and are in distress when they can't find that special person to love. But why is that?

There are several possible reasons. One is that the person already had that special someone and they left (death, divorce, moved to another area, etc.) Another reason is that a person lacks the social skills to make and form friendships. Such persons might be shy or socially anxious. Yet another reason maybe the culture in which we live. Especially in Western culture, society prides itself on individuality and personal freedom. Successful relationships however require some degree of compromise. Compromise may require encroachment on one's personal freedom which may not be desired. The end result maybe that you don't find that special someone simply because that special someone is more of a figment of our imagination than an actual real person. A last final reason for people who are trait lonely and yet looking for that special someone they cannot find, maybe due to the fact that they maybe unwilling to let down their defences. Usually when people are hurt in the past by people they love, they are more unwilling to be open to love the next time it comes around ("once bitten, twice shy"). However, to be in a relationship requires one to let down some of their defenses and be open to the possibility of being hurt again. Only then can true meaningful relationships form. But being open to love requires time, patience and perhaps "taking things slow." If you cannot be hurt, then you cannot be loved.

Loneliness is described by many as a very painful thing. Helping to know what causes your loneliness will help you get rid of it. I hope that the above descriptions of some of the types of loneliness will help you on your path to get rid of it. To get more information about loneliness or to help me further my research about loneliness please visit my website <http://web.aces.uiuc.edu/loneliness/>

Cure for Loneliness

Written by Chuck Gallozzi

People are lonely because they build walls instead of bridges

A reader writes, "My son, a university student, confided to me that he has problems with loneliness. Can you comment on loneliness, coping with being alone, and finding one's path and values in life?"

Our reader was keenly perceptive to ask about both "loneliness" and "finding one's path" in the same question. It takes great insight to realize there is a link between both subjects. Loneliness is not a curse, but a blessing. It is the very tool that helps us discover who we are and what path to follow.

You see, our yearning to be accepted and to delight others with our presence forces us to discover where we fit in and what role to play. The purpose of loneliness is self-discovery, as was pointed out by Hermann Hesse (1877 ~ 1962) who wrote, "Loneliness is the way by which destiny endeavors to lead man to himself." So, when we recognize the pangs of loneliness, instead of running from it, we need to ask ourselves what we can learn from it.

If we have a feeling of emptiness, it is because we are not focused on a purpose for living. It isn't necessary to go on an endless search for meaning. All we have to do is stop, reflect, examine our interests and options, and choose a path. All paths lead to the mountaintop. As long as we are on a path, we will have a sense of direction. And all paths lead away from loneliness, for loneliness is stagnation, passivity, and inaction.

So, you see, loneliness is nothing more than a call for action. When we heed that call, we move forward. But when we refuse to act, there is the danger of prolonging our loneliness. Left untreated, we begin to feel trapped and helpless. When we continue to leave it unattended, there is a chance of slipping into chronic loneliness and depression. The message is clear: when loneliness strikes, action is called for.

Facing our loneliness and taking suitable action needs clear thinking. Unfortunately, some people are held back by distorted thinking and a negative attitude. By distorted thinking, I mean the belief that one's loneliness is caused by an unfair world, cruel people, or tragic circumstances.

Rich or poor, young or old, we are all given 1,440 minutes a day to use as we choose. Whether we take advantage of the gift of time or squander it, we will reap the consequences. What can be fairer than that? This should dispense with the argument that the world is unfair.

The charge that our loneliness is caused by others refusing to reach out to us is equally false. If we are demanding, critical, needy, ungrateful, boastful, nosy, hurtful, spiteful, stingy, and selfish, is it any wonder that we have no friends? As Joseph Fort Newton (1880 ~ 1950) said, "People are lonely because they build walls instead of bridges."

Blaming poverty, lack of education, age, illness, and other whims of fate for one's lack of friends is another false charge. Regardless of one's disadvantages and handicaps, there are always others that are worse off, yet successful. So, it is not our circumstances, but our attitude that decides our fate. And it is always within our power to change our attitude.

From the psychological view, we can say that loneliness is a yearning to be reunited with our lost self. As a young child, we were happy to be the person we were. But then our caregivers and others intervened, pointing out our faults, flaws, misdeeds, defects, blunders, and transgressions. We came to dislike who we were. So, we were torn apart from our original happy self, a person that we may continue to miss and long for. Loneliness, then, is being unhappy with oneself, for as Wayne Dyer says, "You cannot be lonely if you like the person you're alone with."

As soon as we learn to like ourselves, we will no longer be uncomfortable when alone, and our loneliness will fade away. What's more, when we are at ease with ourselves, others will find us comfortable to be with, so attracting new friends will come naturally. But how do we learn to like ourselves? It's easy: be good; do good, and you will feel good. And feeling good is just another way to describe happiness or self-contentment.

Volunteering is a wonderful way to end loneliness. Think of all the lonely people in hospitals and old age homes that would be delighted to spend time with you. Besides offering the opportunity to make new friends and learn new things, volunteering makes you feel good about yourself. So, keep in mind the words of Tennessee Williams (1914 ~ 1983), "When so many are lonely as seem to be lonely, it would be inexcusably selfish to be lonely alone." Besides volunteering, think about support groups, clubs, meetings, sports, and other activities. It's hard to be lonely when you're busy!

Finally, develop a positive attitude. Do this by reading inspirational material. A wonderful piece to start with is "Desiderata," which was written in 1927 by Attorney, Max Ehrmann (1872 ~ 1945). If you follow its instructions, you will not only end loneliness, but also find your path and values in life. Here is "Desiderata" (Latin for "those things to be desired"):

"Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth

quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even to the dull and ignorant; they too have their story. Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexations to the spirit.

"If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.

"Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals, and everywhere life is full of heroism. Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is as perennial as the grass. Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth.

"Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness. Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

"Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be. And whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace with your soul. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be careful. Strive to be happy."

For more articles on loneliness, see:

<http://www.personal-development.com/chuck/loneliness.htm>

and

<http://www.personal-development.com/chuck/loneliness2.htm>

How to Cure Loneliness

By Remy Lo, eHow Contributor

Loneliness has the power to destroy your social life and your self-confidence. Although this feeling is readily associated with the aftermath of breakups and with unpopularity, lonely feelings can strike at any time and don't discriminate based on your social standing. Curing loneliness involves making a consistent effort to address underlying issues and to initiate positive change. Don't wallow in self-pity while you dream of the day when your lonely feelings will subside. Take control of your situation by confronting your feelings and working to better your emotional health.

Instructions.

1. Discover the reasons why you feel lonely. Uncovering your true feelings may require some soul-searching, but can be beneficial to curing your loneliness. Considering when you first started feeling lonely and what intensifies your loneliness can help you understand why you feel the way you do.
2. Understand that there is a difference between being alone and being lonely. Although these two states can be intertwined, they can also be exclusive of each other. For example, just because you experience an unpleasant breakup, doesn't mean you have to feel lonely. Don't let other people make you feel ashamed for being single. Realize that it is better to be alone than to be stuck in an unhealthy relationship.
3. Disclose your feelings to a trusted friend. Sometimes expressing your negative feelings can provide instant relief from frustration and loneliness. Having your voice "heard" can alleviate feeling as if no one cares about you or your emotions. Choose a well-adjusted friend who has strong listening skills to reduce any insecurity about discussing your intimate feelings.
4. Build your self-confidence to cure loneliness. Although it's fine to crave regular social interaction, avoid using social activity as a substitute for dealing with your feelings. Understand that you should feel comfortable being alone and that you are worth healing. Knowing that you have value can alleviate feelings of loneliness and even attract others to you.
5. Reach out to others in constructive ways. A simple change of scenery can help restore positive feelings. Stop sulking about being lonely and start changing your social situation. Going out with friends to a restaurant or club can lift your spirits. Inviting friends over can boost your morale and show you that happiness is possible.

surround yourself with positive people to avoid being lured into destructive activities and behaviors.

Read more: How to Cure Loneliness | eHow.com

http://www.ehow.com/how_5110113_cure-loneliness.html#ixzz0xiwzT8HU

Tips & Warnings

Immersing yourself in both group and individual activities can help cure loneliness. Connecting with your spirituality may be a beneficial way to help cure loneliness. Volunteering for a cause both accomplishes good work and helps you think of people (or animals, or issues) beyond yourself..Never beg others to spend time with you. This makes you seem desperate and can scare people away from you. Never turn to drugs and alcohol as a cure for loneliness. These negative behaviors only worsen your emotional health.

Read more: How to Cure Loneliness | eHow.com http://www.ehow.com/how_5110113_cure-loneliness.html#ixzz0xixprcg!

**Are you lonely? --
Here's the cure!**

Articles from David Berg and the Family International - www.deeptruths.com

Compiled from the writings of David Brandt Berg

Everything was perfect for Adam in the Garden of Eden! Everything except...what it was he couldn't quite find words to describe. He certainly had no complaints. God had lovingly provided everything for him in this heavenly paradise. Everthing was beautiful, wonderful, except...there was this strange empty aching feeling deep inside.



The Lord understood that deep emotion. And He had allowed it to show Adam that he was never going to be truly happy with these beautiful things that the Lord had created until he had someone like himself with whom he could SHARE them. And so God decreed that "It is NOT GOOD that man should be alone; I will make him a companion."--Genesis 2:18. And not long after that, Adam got his Eve!

So God didn't intend for people to be lonely or to live alone. He intended for us to live, love and share our lives TOGETHER with OTHERS in FAMILIES. "God sets the lonely in families."--Psalm 68:6. So, with the great fragmentation of family life that has taken place in modern-day culture, it is hardly surprising that loneliness is a greater problem than it has ever been since the beginning of history!

With "the love of many growing cold", as Jesus predicted it would in the Last Days (Matthew 24:12), loneliness is on the increase. And it is no longer just a problem confined primarily to the aged. It is also a serious concern among children and teenagers. In the U.S., a recent study showed that the main complaint among urban elementary school children was LONELINESS! The medical profession can attest that more and more doctors now view loneliness as actually being DANGEROUS to one's health! Research shows that people who live alone require medical treatment much more frequently than do married people.

Loneliness also can bring on self-destructive behaviour such as increased smoking and drinking, and can make people more prone to risk-taking behaviour such as reckless driving. The suicide rate of people who live alone is FIVE TIMES HIGHER than "the norm".

But the cure for loneliness is not a pill, & certainly not suicide, but rather another PERSON! The lonely need companionship, someone with whom he can share his life. No one has trouble understanding why Adam couldn't live alone in Paradise, but in today's World people somehow tell themselves they can make it alone!

This myth of independence, which we see exalted every day in advertising and other media, makes it appear that to admit we need each other is a sign of weakness. We are told that individuals should look out for THEMSELVES first and foremost, and, above all else, live for "ME FIRST", not caring about others.

So, is it any wonder that so many people today are lonely?--Especially in cities, where city life has been aptly described as, "Millions of people being lonesome together". Just having a lot of people living

AROUND you won't necessarily relieve loneliness, because loneliness comes from being INSULATED from others, not only ISOLATED. Loneliness, sad to say, is often self-inflicted.--People build walls around themselves and then complain of their loneliness. They build WALLS instead of BRIDGES! How do we "cure" loneliness? The solution is simply summed up in this little proverb: "To love others makes us happy; to love ourselves makes us lonely." Consider this true story:

There was a very lonely woman once who was always seeking a new lover, a new love, but never finding one that satisfied or lasted or that relieved her loneliness. Why? Because she was always seeking to GET love, to RECEIVE love,

to BE loved! But when it was suggested to her that perhaps she needed to learn how to GIVE love, and to love UNSELFISHLY for the benefit and happiness of ANOTHER, after years of searching, this struck her as an entirely new idea that had never occurred to her before! She went out and soon found what she was looking for all the time--true love!--By trying to find someone SHE could make happy by GIVING her love to THEM!

So there's the key, the simple solution to loneliness!--The same as it's been since Man was first created: If you GIVE love, you'll GET love! If you're sincerely concerned about OTHERS and show THEM love, they'll be concerned about YOU and show YOU love! Of course, as Christians we can share with them the Love of ALL loves from the Lover of all lovers, Jesus Himself!--And as Christians, that is HOW we should love and reach out and help others, by telling them about JESUS, Who alone can satisfy that DEEPEST yearning of every human heart for TOTAL love and COMPLETE understanding! For we know that only in JESUS will anyone find COMPLETE and PERMANENT fulfillment, as HE is the ONLY One Who can truly satisfy that empty lonely feeling that we ALL sometimes feel, no matter HOW many friends or loved ones surround us.

The Lord has created a special place in our hearts that only HE can fill. For although the BODY is of this EARTH and is satisfied with the THINGS of this Earth, the human SPIRIT, that intangible personality of the real you that dwells in that body, can never be completely satisfied with anything but utter union with the great and loving SPIRIT Who created it.

Of course, Jesus wants us to love and be close to others, but that first place in our hearts must be reserved for HIM! As the old song says, "Only Jesus, only Jesus! Only He can satisfy!"--And even when we have someone dear and close to us physically, there will always be that certain deep feeling inside that can only be satisfied by giving HIM our whole heart and drawing closer to HIM! 14. Actually, this is another side to loneliness!--There are times when it may even be good for us to feel somewhat lonely. There are times when the Lord allows us, His children, to feel a little lonesome in order to enrich and deepen our relationship with Him!

It reminds me of the story of the famous Christian songwriter, George Matheson. He was deeply in love and soon to be married, when he was told by his doctor that he was losing his sight and would be a blind man within six months! He was heartbroken of course, but he didn't think it fair to his sweetheart not to tell her and give her the choice whether she still wished to go ahead with the marriage or not. He felt that if she really loved him she would still want to live with him and take care of him.

So he went to her house that night and they sat on the couch holding hands and chatting about this and that, until finally he plucked up the courage to tell her, "Honey, I have some very, very sad news. The doctor tells me that by our wedding date I will be completely blind!" All of a sudden he felt her hand quiver and loosen its grasp. Then icily, coldly, it was withdrawn from his as she turned

away and burst into tears and said, "Oh, I'm so sorry, George... but I COULDN'T be married to a BLIND man!"

Crushed, and heartsick, his whole world falling apart, he walked despondently back to his home where he sat down alone at his desk and thought about how the only thing that he had left in the whole World now was JESUS. Then he took a piece of paper and his old quill pen and he wrote the famous hymn that has since been a comfort to millions, "Oh Love that will not let me go"--JESUS!

"Oh Love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee,
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be!"

That's the wonderful thing about being a Christian!--You'll never again be completely alone because you'll ALWAYS have JESUS! Even when everything else is passed away, you'll STILL have JESUS! When all others forsake you, there'll STILL be JESUS! When the loves of this World and your friends or lovers desert you because they're not willing to become Christians, you'll still have JESUS! Jesus promised, "I am with you ALWAYS, even unto to the END of the World!"--Matthew 28:20. When the WORLD has nothing left for you, you'll still have JESUS!--And Jesus is ALL you really NEED!

So there are two main reasons why the Lord allows Christians to be lonely: Number One, so you will look to JESUS for your DEEPEST satisfaction and companionship. And number Two, so you will reach out to OTHER lonely hearts with Jesus' Love and comfort! There are so many OTHERS around you who are just as lonely and longing for love as YOU once were, and just waiting for you to make the first move!

So step out by faith and talk to someone today about Jesus and God's Love and help THEM to be FULLY satisfied and COMPLETELY happy FOREVER, not just with HUMAN love and companionship, but with the Love of GOD, because God IS Love and He will satisfy your & their need for love FOREVER!--1John 4:8.

So love someone TODAY! Find out what wonders love can do! You'll find a whole new World of love you have only dreamed of! There are wonders of love that you yourself can enjoy along with other lonely hearts-if you will only try!

Remember, however, the purpose in showing the Lord's Love to others is NOT just to win them to YOURSELF so that they can merely satisfy YOUR personal needs for companionship, but to win THEM to the LORD, Who is the ONLY One Who can TRULY satisfy the DEEPEST longings of their hearts! So let them know clearly that it is the LORD'S Love IN you that makes you show such love and outgoing concern for them; otherwise, they may be tempted to put all their emphasis on their relationship with YOU and leave the Lord OUT of the picture.

The result: They will STILL be lonely when you're not around and not find TRUE fulfilment.--And if you are not strong in the Lord and in His Word, and you ALLOW them to do so, it could even eventually cause YOU to fall away from putting the Lord first in YOUR life!

So make sure that YOU put the LORD first in your life, and then THEY will TOO!-- Otherwise, your relationship could wind up being just another case of two lonely people trying to fulfil their selfish desires and needs in each other, and will end in disappointment. 2Corinthians 6:14 warns us, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers."--In other words, don't allow yourself to get into a relationship with someone who only loves you physically, but wants nothing to do with the Lord. Make it CLEAR that the LORD and His WORD are FIRST in YOUR life-that they can't pull you away from HIM!

The KEY is to get them hooked on the LORD and on the WORD like YOU are, if you want them to keep things in their proper perspective. TRUE happiness-- yours AND theirs--comes from sharing the Word and the Lord with others. So if you truly want to help someone, make sure to ground their life on the right foundation. Amen?

We hope these words of love will help you find the love YOU need to make YOU happy and no longer lonely, and that OTHERS will find happiness through your love too! God bless and keep you and make you a blessing with His Love! Remember:

All the BEST things in life are SHARED!--LOVE isn't put in your heart to STAY, Love isn't LOVE till you GIVE it away!