**Loneliness**

## He that sent me is with me; thy Father hath not left me alone. (St. John 8:29)

**My mother was flying from Wichita to New Orleans to help me after the birth of my daughter. She was bringing with her a 3/12-foot-tall Raggedy Ann Doll that had been mine when I was a child. The doll wouldn’t fit in her suitcase, so Mom simply stuck it under her arm. At the airport she sat holding the doll while she waited for her plane. One passenger stared at her for a moment, and then spoke up. “Afraid of traveling alone, are you?” he asked. *(Collette Miller, in Reader’s Digest)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**Aged by sadness and loneliness: Feeling unhappy or lonely could speed up the aging process more than smoking or even some diseases, a new study suggests. Everyone has a “biological age” that is a measure of wear and tear on the body, and it can differ from actual age. Using data collected from nearly 5,000 Chinese adults, scientists built a so-called aging clock. This analyzed 16 biomarkers, along with things like blood pressure, body mass index, and lung function, to provide a biological age. When the researchers used this model to assess an additional group of Chinese adults, those who smoked had a biological age 1.25 years higher than a healthy control group, and those with a history of stroke, liver disease, or lung conditions had a biological age about 1.5 years higher. But the biological age of those who reported strong feelings of unhappiness and loneliness was even higher. “Taking care of your psychological health is the greatest contributor that you can have to slowing down your pace of aging,” study co-author Fedor Galkin tells The Guardian. “Your body and soul are connected – this is our main message.” *(The Week magazine, October 14, 2022)***

**Loneliest time of your life probably is between ages 18 and 25, psychological researchers conclude. They say loneliness declines steadily after that and that said decline extends on into retirement, interrupted only at times when separation or death creates crisis. *(L. M. Boyd)***

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**America's loneliness epidemic: Loneliness is at epidemic levels in the U.S., and could rank alongside smoking and obesity as a major threat to public health, new research suggests. In a survey of 20,000 adults conducted by Ipsos for the health insurer Cigna, nearly 50 percent said they sometimes or always felt alone or left out, CBSNews.com reported. Forty-three percent said their relationships weren't meaningful, and 27 percent said they rarely or never felt understood. While loneliness is often associated with aging, the survey found that the worst affected were in fact young Americans between ages 18 and 22. Social media use -- which some research has suggested can be isolating -- had no obvious impact on perceived isolation. "I could have a thousand or 10,000 friends on Facebook," says Cigna chief medical officer Douglas Nemecek, "but it's the meaningful in-person relationships that I have with other people that actually keep me from becoming lonely." Previous research has shown that loneliness is associated with many physical problems, including inflammation, a weakened immune system, heart disease, and mental decline. One 2010 study found that being lonely has the same affect on mortality as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Nemecek said the study's findings regarding young people were particularly alarming. "It's something that we, as a society, need to explore," he says. *(The Week magazine, May 18, 2018)***

**Sometimes I think we Americans are the loneliest people in the world. To be sure, we hunger for the power of affection, the self-acceptance that gives life. It is the oldest and strongest hunger in the world. But hungering is not enough. *(Sherwood Anderson, American author and poet)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**An 11-year-old pianist performs weekly concerts for lemurs, hippos, zebras, and other animals at a Thailand zoo while dressed in a bright green alligator costume. Seenlada Supat was concerned the animals were lonely while attendance is low because of Covid-19. "I'm playing music to soothe the animals and give them company," she said. She wears the costume to blend in with her audience. Some animals clearly seem "to be enjoying the music," said the zoo director; curious lemurs often hop on the keyboard. "I don't mind," said Seenlada. "It's as if they're playing music with me, too." (The Week magazine, June 18, 2021)**

**One day last summer, hiking with my children through the hills of north Georgia, I came to a cabin clinging to a rocky ledge. Behind a picket fence a white-haired mountain woman was working in her garden. When we stopped to admire her flowers, she told us that she lived there all alone. My city-bred youngsters regarded her with wonder. “How,” asked one, “do you keep from being lonesome?” “Oh,” she said, “if that feeling comes on in the summertime, I take a bunch of flowers to some shut-in. And if it's winter, I go out and feed the birds!” An act of compassion -- that was her instinctive antidote for loneliness. (Arthur Gordon, in Reader's Digest)**

## Loneliness is the anxiety that you do not matter at all. (Joyce Huggett)

**Attending our church’s Christmas program, I noticed that many other men there had full beards. Knowing my wife’s aversion to facial hair, I teasingly whispered to her, “How do you think I’d look with a beard and mustache?” She whispered back, “Lonely.” (Robert C. Baptista, in Reader’s Digest)**

## "I'm lonely here," Samantha Bee has joked of being the only female host of a late-night television show. (Time magazine, May 1-8, 2017)

## I believe in punctuality, though it makes me very lonely. (E. V. Lucas, English publisher)

## Maybe the biggest problem with loneliness is that we walk around thinking we’re the only ones suffering from it. (Jeanne Marie Laskas, in Washington Post magazine)’

**What a lovely surprise to discover how unlonely being alone can be. (Ellen Burstyn, actress) 423987**

**My new cell phone has room for 15,000 songs, 25,000 photos, 150 hours of video. I can get e-mail, AIM, text and video messaging. I am so connected! I’m so lonely.” (Scott Stantis, in Prickly City comic strip)**

**I never feel lonely in the kitchen. Food is very friendly. (Julia Child, in Time magazine)**

**For three and a half hours on July 20 , 1969, Michael Collins was the loneliest man in the universe. As pilot of the Apollo 11 spacecraft Columbia, Collins orbited the moon at 3,700 mph while astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin made their historic first steps 60 miles below. "You cats take it easy," Collins radioed his crewmates as they descended to the lunar surface. Despite his cheerful words, Collins feared Armstrong and Aldrin might never make it back to the Columbia, and he ran repeatedly through the 117-page list of contingences he'd drawn up in case of disaster. "If they fail to rise from the surface, or crash back into it, I am not going to commit suicide," he recalled thinking. "I am coming home, forthwith, but I will be a marked man for life." His worries never came to pass. The three astronauts splashed into the Pacific on July 24, 1969 and emerged from their craft as national heroes. (The Week magazine, May 14, 2021)**

**Until you corner a skunk, you don't know lonesome. (Hank Ketcham, Field Newspaper Syndicate)**

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**The cure for loneliness, strange as it may seem, is not in more active involvement in the world, but in seeking active unfoldment from within of our essential, isolated self. (Eric Butterworth, in Unity magazine)**

**Loneliness is the surest cure for vanity. (Inspiring Quotations: Contemporary & Classical, compiled by Albert M. Wells, Jr.)**

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**Danger: Loneliness – Keep Out! (Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)**

**Are you lonely? The way to have a friend is to be one. (Dear Abby)**

**Loneliness in itself has never been known to cause death -- but it can make death more welcome. (Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)**

**There is nothing more lonely than two people who live in the same house, who are living under the arrangement and living their lives of quiet desperation feeling totally empty and devoid of any true love. This is loneliness. So that loneliness essentially is a deficiency of the Spirit, and it can only be corrected by overcoming the deficiency. (Dr. Eric Butterworth, Unity Minister, in The Commitment of Love)**

**Loneliness is most acutely felt with other people, for with others, even with a lover sometimes, we suffer from our differences – differences of taste, temperament, mood. With other human beings, vision becomes double vision. We are busy wondering, “What does my companion see or think of this?” and “What do I think of it?” The original impact gets lost, or diffused. Alone, we can afford to be wholly whatever we are, and to feel whatever we feel absolutely. That is a great luxury. *(May Sarton, poet and novelist, in The New York Times)***

**Why won’t that dog stop barking? If the neighbor’s dog is driving you crazy with its barking, have a heart: Odds are it’s just a little lonely, a new study suggests. Researchers in Australia surveyed 150 owners of “nuisance barkers” and found that dogs that bark the most when alone are the ones most accustomed to contact and stimulation. Herding breeds, like border collies and German shepherds, which tend to need more stimulation, were more likely to bark, as were dogs that had been raised with other dogs. Those adopted from shelters were less likely to bark, perhaps because they miss their owners less. “It may be that homebred dogs are greater barkers because of greater separation anxiety,” study author Clive Phillips tells Discovery News. But while a silent dog may please the neighbors, a lack of yelps doesn’t necessarily mean the dog is happy, cautions animal behavior specialist Paul McGreevy. “A dog that’s quietly melting in distress is rarely identified as a dog suffering separation anxiety.” (The Week magazine, November 6, 2009)**

**Grimm: “Your family went south for the winter?” Bird: “Yep, they all flew the coop.” Grimm: “Are you doing okay?” Bird: “Well actually … I’m suffering from empty nest syndrome.” (Mike Peters, in Mother Goose & Grimm comic strip)**

**To help our four-year-old daughter overcome her fear of the dark, her father and I always reassured her at bedtime that God was watching over her. One night after I had gone to bed, I felt a soft tap on my shoulder. “Mommy,” a familiar small voice spoke up, “I know God's in there with me, but I need somebody with skin.” (Ann Gilbert, in Reader's Digest)**

**Good week for: Filling the void, after Navy wife Suzy Walker of Georgia bought a sailor mannequin to substitute for her husband, who is at sea on the USS West Virginia. Walker eats dinner with the mannequin and takes it on shopping trips, and says it makes her feel less lonely. “When I put the mustache on him,” she said, “I couldn’t believe the resemblance.” (The Week magazine, January 6, 2006)**

**Fingers like mittens better 'cause they don't get lonely in them. (Bil Keane, in The Family Circus comic strip)**

**Ever notice . . . that some folks not only keep you from being lonely -- they make you wish you were? (The Rev. Claude McDonald, in The Christian Word)**

**The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quite alone with the heavens, nature and God. Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be and that God wishes to see people happy, amidst the simple beauty of nature. As long as this exists, and it certainly always will, I know that then there will always be comfort for every sorrow, whatever the circumstances may be. And I firmly believe that nature brings solace in al troubles. (Anne Frank, in The Diary of a Young Girl)**

**It’s not that we have not found the right friends, but that we have not found ourselves. And until we find ourselves, all the friends in the world won’t overcome our loneliness. (Dr. Eric Butterworth, Unity Minister, in The Commitment of Love)**

**Good week for: Romeo, the “world’s loneliest frog, who may have found a mate. One of the last surviving Sehuencas water frogs, Romeo spent 10 years alone in a Bolivian aquarium before being introduced to “Juliet,” a new specimen described as “really energetic.” (The Week magazine, January 25, 2019)**

**Girls alone are lonelier than boys alone, generally, and young women alone are lonelier than young men alone. But by the time women reach retirement age, they’ve evidently learned to cope with it. Such women are far less depressed by loneliness than lone men, according to research at the University of Nebraska. (L. M. Boyd)**

**The Rev. David A. MacLennan, pastor of the First United Presbyterian Church of Pompano Beach, Fla., tells of a letter received some years ago by a network broadcasting company from a prospector in the Montana hills. “It gets lonely here,” the man wrote. “I have a violin I used to play, but it's badly out of tune. Would you be kind enough to strike me an ‘A’ Sunday night at seven, so I can put the fiddle back in tune?” (Rev. Billy Graham)**

**We've known intuitively that loneliness hastens death, but haven't been able to explain how. Psycho-biologists can now show that loneliness sends misleading hormonal signals, rejiggers the molecules on genes that govern behavior, and wrenches a slew of other systems out of whack. They have proved that long-lasting loneliness not only makes you sick; it can kill you. Emotional isolation is ranked as high a risk factor for mortality as smoking. A partial list of the physical diseases thought to be caused or exacerbated by loneliness would include Alzheimer's, obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, neurodegenerative diseases, and even cancer -- tumors can metastasize faster in lonely people." (Judith Shulevitz, in The New Republic)**

**Loneliness is not in being alone, for then ministering spirits come to soothe and bless – loneliness is to endure the presence of one who does not understand. (Elbert Hubbard, in Bits & Pieces)**

**Loneliness hurts the heart: It’s no secret that loneliness is unhealthy, physically and emotionally. Already linked to a weakened immune system, unwanted isolation also takes a toll on the heart, new research suggests. Studies following 181,000 healthy people for up to 21 years showed that those who lacked strong social ties and had few friends were 29 percent more likely to have a heart attack and 32 percent more likely to suffer as stroke, reports The New York Times. Lonely people are more apt to smoke and less likely to be active, follow a healthy diet, or visit their doctor. The findings don’t prove loneliness causes disease, but lead researcher Nicole Valtorta of the University of York in The U.K. contends it’s as significant a risk factor as anxiety and job strain, and that more efforts should be made to help isolated people make connections. “Our study shows that if this is a risk factor,” Valtorta says, “then we should be trying to prevent the risk factor in the first place.” (The Week magazine, May 6, 2016)**

**Loneliness increases the risk of death by up to 14 percent, a University of Chicago study found. The stressful pangs of unwanted solitude trigger the "flight or fight" response, causing inflammation and cellular changes that disrupt the production of white blood cells that protect the body from illness. Social isolation does improve the body's ability to fight harmful bacteria, but it also makes people more susceptible to viral infections. "The lonelier one is and the longer one is lonely," author John Cacioppo says, "the greater the negative effects." (The Week magazine, December 25, 2015)**

**If we are lonely, it's not because others won't share with us. It's because we ourselves won't share that which is worthwhile with others. There are people who only want to talk about themselves and expect others to listen and be compassionate. But others need to talk as well. (Tom Johnson, in New Thought magazine)**

**Jealousy is no more than feeling alone against smiling enemies. (Elizabeth Bowen, Irish novelist)**

**If a man does not make new acquaintances as he advances through life, he will soon find himself left alone. A man, sir, should keep his friendship in constant repair. *(Samuel Johnson)***

**Loneliness is knowing the television schedules by heart. *(Bill Vaughan, NANA)***

**One doesn’t realize in early life that the price of freedom is loneliness. To be happy is to be tied. *(C. S. Lewis, in The Atlantic)***

**Eventually it comes to you: the thing that makes you exceptional, if you are at all, is inevitably that which must also make you lonely. (Lorraine Hansberry, in To Be Young, Gifted and Black)**

**Let me tell you this: If you meet a loner, no matter what they tell you, it's not because they enjoy solitude. It's because they have tried to blend into the world before, and people continue to disappoint them. *(Jodi Picoult, novelist)***

**Loneliness is more fatal than a poor diet or lack of exercise, as corrosive as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Friendship literally saves our lives. *(Marisa G. Franco, psychologist, in The Wall Street Journal)***

**Loneliness and the feeling of being uncared for and unwanted are the greatest poverty. *(Mother Teresa)***

**You are never so alone as when you are the only one in the room who doesn’t get the joke. (Wise & Aldrich, Universal Press Syndicate)**

**The next time you feel lonely and that nobody cares … try skipping a mortgage payment! (Tom Wilson, in Ziggy comic strip)**

**People are lonely because they build walls instead of bridges. (Joseph Fort Newton)**

**Friends with benefits: Being lonely can make you physically sick. A Carnegie Mellon University study found that college students with few friends and little social support had a 16 percent weaker immune response to a flu shot than did their classmates. Researchers theorize that loneliness may depress immune systems by increasing psychological stress and decreasing the amount of sleep people get. A second study of more than 3,000 men found that those who had the fewest social interactions every week had the highest levels of an inflammatory marker that plays a role in heart disease. Researcher Sarah Pressman of Carnegie Mellon University says that the key factor is a subjective experience of social support, not the actual number of friends. “Loneliness is the perception of being alone,” she tells New Scientist. “You can have many friends yet feel lonely.” (The Week magazine, May 20, 2005)**

**According to research by Ryan Streeter, the director of domestic-policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute, lonely young people are seven times more likely to say they are active in politics than young people who aren’t lonely. For people who feel disrespected, unseen, and alone, politics is a seductive form of social therapy. It offers them a comprehensible moral landscape: The line between good and evil runs not down the middle of every human heart, but between groups. Life is a struggle between us, the forces of good, and them, the forces of evil. *(David Brooks, in The Atlantic magazine)***

**Loneliness is the poverty of self; solitude is the richness of self. *(May Sarton, poet and novelist, in the Associated Press)***

**In one year the average American today probably meets as many people as the average person did in a lifetime 100 years ago. And yet he's far lonelier. There's a big difference between being lonely and being alone, and the presence of other people doesn't necessarily help at all. According to Los Angeles psychiatrist and author, Dr. Leonard Zunin, mankind's biggest problem is simply loneliness. (Paul Lee Tan, in Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations, p. 754)**

**Maybe the biggest problem with loneliness is that we walk around thinking we’re the only ones suffering from it. (Jeanne Marie Laskas, in Washington Post magazine)**

**One of the quickest ways to meet new people is to pick up the wrong ball on the golf course. (Bits & Pieces)**

**Mom says to Dad: “Remind me to tell you the latest dirt on Bunny the next time we’re alone.” As Zoe sticks her head out from under the sink, Mom \then says: “Remind me to remember that we’re never, ever alone.” (Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott, in Baby Blues comic strip)**

**If you are afraid of being lonely, don't try to be right. (Jules Renard)**

**Staff at an Iowa cemetery noticed that their resident goose, Blossom, seemed lonely after her companion passed away last year. So general manager Dorie Tammen took out a personal ad in the local paper in search of a partner for her “youthful, adventurous, and lively” goose. A nearby couple quickly responded: Their widower goose, Frankie, was similarly lonely after the loss of his mate. Tammen arranged a “blind date” for the birds on Valentine’s Day, and since then, they’ve spent nearly all of their time together. *(The Week magazine, March 31, 2023)***

**My friend, who in his spare time is an enthusiastic but inexpert dinghy sailor, was promoted to a more demanding job. A short time later, he advertised his boat for sale. I was surprised, and asked him why he was giving up his hobby. “With my new boss, I don't need to sail,” he said. “I can be lonely and afraid in my office.” (D. Longley, in Reader's Digest)**

**Shakespeare, Leonardo da Vinci, Benjamin Franklin and Abraham Lincoln never saw a movie, heard a radio or looked at television. They had “loneliness” and knew what to do with it. They were not afraid of being lonely because they knew that was when the creative mood in them would work. (Carl Sandburg)**

**If you are lonely when you are alone, then you are in bad company. (Jean-Paul Sartre)**

**Loneliness is the poverty of self; solitude is the richness of self. (May Sarton, poet)**

**During the first few weeks after quitting the smoking habit, I admit I was difficult to live with. Apologizing to my wife for my short temper, I commented, “I've gone from ‘happy' to ‘grumpy.’ What's next?” “Lonely,” she replied. (W. Jefferson Lyon, in Reader's Digest)**

**Remember, loneliness is still time spent with the world. (Ocean Vuong, poet)**

**Traveling the long, lonely stretch of road between Alamogordo, N.M., and El Paso, Texas, a driver sees only flat land and sagebrush. Midway is a welcome break -- the tiny town of Orogrande, N.M. As I approached Orogrande for the first time, my mind, numbed by the monotony of the road, snapped awake. Standing by the highway was a single large tree, lush with vegetation and obviously lovingly nurtured. A sign beside it proclaimed: “Orogrande National Forest.” (Linda Hawthorne)**

**A teacher is someone who is basically very lonely and has to teach in order to get out of his loneliness. (Dr. Paul Brenner)**

**Our language has wisely sensed the two sides of being alone. It has created the word "loneliness" to express the pain of being alone. And it has created the word "solitude" to express the glory of being alone. (Paul Tillich, in The Eternal Now)**

**The toll of loneliness: Too much alone time can kill you. That's the conclusion of a study from Brigham Young University, which found that isolation and loneliness are as bad for a person's health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day or being an alcoholic. Researchers examined data from 35 years' worth of studies on loneliness, and after accounting for participants' socioeconomic status, age, gender, and pre-existing health conditions, they discovered that people who feel lonely have a 26 percent greater risk of premature death. Living alone or being socially isolated is even more damaging to a person's health, increasing the risk of early death by roughly 30 percent. The BYU team believes the U.S. will see soaring numbers of loneliness-related health problems in the near future, because more people than ever are living alone. "We are predicting a possible loneliness epidemic," the study's co-author Tim Smith tells ScienceDaily.com. (The Week magazine, April 3, 2015)**

**Mom says to the child: “Turn that thing off and go play outside! I’m sure the TV will survive being lonely until you get back!” (Pat Brady, in Rose Is Rose comic strip)**

**Be good and you will be lonesome. (Mark Twain)**

**There is a loneliness in being uber-connected. (Jennifer Egan, novelist)**

**The loneliness of virtual connection: A study found older people may be better off keeping to themselves than mingling over Zoom, said Amelia Hill in The Guardian. Researchers at Lancaster University in England collected data before and after the pandemic from more than 5,000 people over 60 in th U. K. and 1,300 in the U. S. The findings revealed that “many older people experienced a greater increase in loneliness and long-term mental health**

**disorders as a result of the switch to online socializing than those who spent the pandemic on their own.” Seniors “unfamiliar with technology found it stressful to learn how to use it.” Even the more tech-savvy struggled with video chats, which left many feeling “more depressed, more isolated, and more unhappy.” *(The Week magazine, August 6, 2021)***

**You sometimes come across the phrase “lonely widow” as though the words belong together. But survey-takers report the great majority of widows say, in effect: “If I have a choice, I prefer to live alone. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Lonely people wired differently: Pervasive feelings of loneliness can alter the brain, leading isolated people to perceive exaggerated threats and hostility in social situations, reports MedicalDaily.com. researchers from the University of Chicago monitored the brains of 38 very lonely people and 32 who weren't lonely when they were e3xposed to words such as "party," "sad," "belong," "alone," and "joy." The lonely people were much more acutely sensitive to any negativity, showing strong, immediate reactions to threatening words. The findings suggest that when lonely people walk into a crowded room, they focus on any negative facial expressions and words while ignoring smiles and words of welcome. Study authors Stephanie and John Cacioppo said that for evolutionary reasons, "being on the social perimeter is not only sad, it is dangerous." As a result, isolated people's brains become hyper-vigilant for threats. (The Week magazine, September 4, 2015)**

**Why wolves howl: When wolves let loose with their lonely-sounding howls, they are actually expressing loneliness rather than acting on pure instinct, as researchers long thought. That's the conclusion of animal behaviorists at the University of Veterinary Medicine in Vienna, who experimented with members of a captive wolf pack by taking each member of the pack out for a walk, one at a time, and observing the howls of the wolves left behind while testing their levels of the stress hormone cortisol. They found that all of the wolves howled -- and showed signs of stress -- when the pack leader left their sight. But the wolves also howled particularly long during the absence of the "preferred partners that they play with, groom, and lie close to when sleeping," study author Friederike Range tells ScienceMag.org. Those howls, it seems, were a way of asking for companionship, rather than pure expressions of stress. "Social relationships are very important to them," Range says, "and the howling patterns reflect that." (The Week magazine, September 13, 2013)**

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