

OPTIMAL

A newsletter for wellness and improved wellbeing

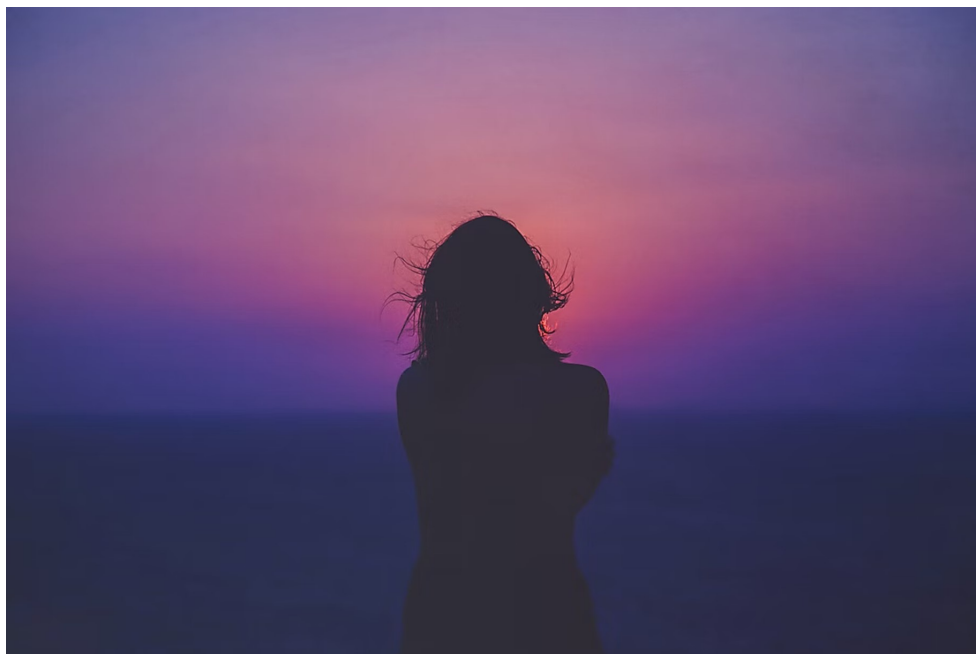
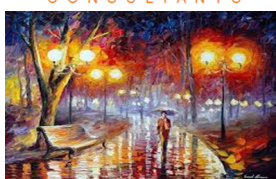
About OPTIMAL

OPTIMAL is a monthly wellness newsletter developed and circulated by Sages & Scribes Consultants aimed at informing, educating and improving the general wellbeing of readers by focusing on the essentials for improved mental health, and how to live a vibrant yet practical life in the present reality.

In this edition, we look at loneliness. Life happens in different ways, and we tend to feel lonely more often than not. What is loneliness, and how does it affect our wellbeing? Why do some people feel lonely even in a crowded room? What can we do to overcome loneliness to live meaningful and productive lives?

Improve your wellness, optimize your wellbeing and enhance your lifestyle with OPTIMAL.

Sages & Scribes
CONSULTANTS



LONELINESS

By Ven. Adelowo Adesina

Loneliness has been around for as long as there has been man. Many sociologists, psychologists, social scientists, humanists and various other interest groups have researched, discussed, written about and debated extensively the subject of loneliness. It is even part of the creation story where it was said that “It is not good for man to be alone...”

With the global lockdown in 2020 following the covid-19 pandemic and the call for social distancing, many people began to self-isolate. Everyone was encouraged to stay away from other people. Consequently, people began to experience an unprecedented degree of loneliness,

despite technology bringing people together in virtual reality.

Some of the psychosocial effects and consequences of loneliness include the feeling of hopelessness, despair, anxiety, depression, and in extreme cases, substance abuse and alcoholism. More dire are domestic violence, rape, suicide, murder, family disorder, and even divorce.

What then is loneliness?



Loneliness is...?

Interestingly, there is no universal generally accepted definition of loneliness. Simply stated, it loneliness could be described as the absence of meaningful physical and social contact with people that matter.

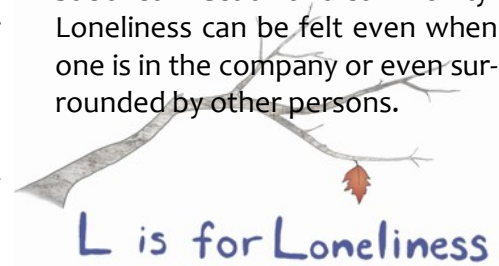


Loneliness, according to many experts, is not necessarily about being alone. Rather, if you feel alone and isolated, then that is how loneliness plays into your state of mind. Loneliness has also been described as a state of mind linked to wanting human contact but feeling alone. www.verywellmind.com

Loneliness is the feeling of being alone, regardless of the amount of social contact. Social isolation is a lack of social connections. Social isolation can lead to loneliness in some people, while others can feel lonely without being socially isolated. www.mind.org.uk

Understanding Loneliness

- ▶ Loneliness is a complex emotion. It is a negative, unpleasant experience/response to isolation. It can be felt even when one is in the company or even surrounded by other persons.
- ▶ Loneliness has been described as “social pain”, that is, a psychological mechanism meant to alert a person of his or her isolation and motivate him or her to seek social connection.
- ▶ It is commonly agreed amongst experts that loneliness is a feeling of anxiety as a result of lack of social connection and community. Loneliness can be felt even when one is in the company or even surrounded by other persons.



Loneliness is an unpleasant emotional response to perceived isolation.

Wikipedia

Loneliness or Solitude?

It has been found that what someone may consider as loneliness, others may considered as solitude.

So what is solitude? This is the idea of being in one’s world, enjoying the peace, quiet and serenity of one’s company, shutting out the hustle and bustle of the world, or the interference and nuisance value of other people. It is about being alone without being lonely.

Causes Of Loneliness

The causes of loneliness are varied; it could be social, physical, emotional or psychological. People experience loneliness for different reasons, most especially life situations and circumstances, such as:

- Losing meaningful physical and social contact with people that matter.
- The result of breakup, separation or divorce.
- The loss of any supportive friendship or relationship.



Loneliness is the human condition. No one is ever going to fill that space. The best you can do is know yourself; know what you want.

– Janet Fitch

Loneliness and Social Isolation

Loneliness and social isolation are related, but different.

Loneliness is the distressing feeling of being alone; the feeling or the lack of supportive social connectedness and community. On the other hand, social isolation is the lack of social contacts and having few people to meaningfully interact with regularly.

Studies show that loneliness and social isolation are associated with psychosocial health problems such as anxiety, grief, depression, heart disease and cognitive decline. People with health challenges and the elderly are at a higher risk of being socially isolated and lonely.



When Loneliness Creeps In

People are most likely to experience loneliness if they:

- Live alone.
- Are home or house bond.
- Have a major loss or life change such as separation, divorce, death of a spouse or family member.
- Laid off, retrenched or retired.
- Struggle with money.
- Have limited meaningful social support.
- Are not productively engaged in meaningful activities.
- Lack a sense of purpose and fulfillment.
- Have Low resilience and adversity management skills.

That Loneliness Feeling? What To Do...

There are things you can do to shield yourself and loved ones from the adverse effects of loneliness and social isolation.

Loneliness is a healthy emotion, revealing places we yearn for connection.

Megan Bruneau

- **Practice self-love.** Take good care of self; eat healthy and exercise regularly. Get enough sleep (at least 7-9 hours), do things you enjoy that give you inner peace. Manage you stress levels, and ensure to stay physically and mentally healthy.
- **Stay active.** Do new things. Connect to people who have meaningful and productive activities they enjoy with others. Make time to meet family and friends, not only on social media. Meet new people, have fun! Talk with people you trust and feel free to express your feelings. Seek to nurture and strengthen exiting relationships.
- **Help others...** Through volunteering or whatever you can do to give you a sense of purpose. It will help to boost your mood and improve well-being. Adopt a pet, if you like to care for animals.
- **Stay Physically active!** Go for regular walks, or join a gym. That's a great way to meet people and stay fit.

A season of loneliness and isolation is when the caterpillar gets its wings.
Remember that next time you feel alone.

- Mandy Hale

*Standing alone
doesn't mean I am
alone. It means I'm
strong enough to
handle things all by
myself.*



When Loneliness Sets In

No matter how we live, loneliness is a feeling we experience at some time or another; we are only human after all.

There's no clear-cut path to feeling free of loneliness. Dr. Forman says that simply trying to do something new may help open a way to better times ahead. He adds that feeling lonely is often episodic and not something that should feel like a life sentence.

In the words of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, "The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss, and have found their way out of the depths. These persons have an appreciation, a sensitivity, and an understanding of life that fills them with compassion, gentleness, and a deep loving concern. Beautiful people do not just happen."

Every difficult experience can make us deeper, wiser, more compassionate and grateful, and ultimately, happier and more fulfilled.

In Other Words...

Feeling lonely? Know that you are not alone; we are all deeply vulnerable.

Knowing this may open your heart and make you feel connected to all around you. Moreover, the pain of loneliness is also one that gives you tremendous depth and empathy.

So, how are you doing? Have you done something new lately? Doing new things can often be daunting, but it helps to connect with your inner-self, with people or with things you like to do. It will lift your spirits, boost your confidence and keep you going.

Whatever your circumstance, lift yourself, be yourself, and do you.

Be. Live. Become.

Credits:

greatergood.berkeley.edu, goodhousekeeping.com



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Employee Assistance: Employee Engagement for Productivity and Performance, Psychosocial Risk Management, Employee Wellness and Wellbeing.

Ven. Adelowo Adesina is the Managing Consultant of Sages & Scribes Consultants, and a Priest of the Anglican Communion.