



LONELINESS, THE CHALLENGE TO WELL BEING: DANGERS AND ACTIONS

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Abstract: *Loneliness is a sentiment felt by a person and completely subjective in nature. It is a state of being alone and feeling sad about it. There are so many contributing factors of loneliness like physical isolation, moving to a new location, absence of a romantic partner, deprived from the company of friends, divorce, death of dear one's, etc. Feeling of loneliness is a world wide problem increasing like a pandemic and is prevalent among people all age groups. Even 61% of young adults and 51% of mothers with young children feel 'serious loneliness'. Its consequences are depression, anxiety and suicide. We should overcome it by connecting himself to the social world, increasing creativity, giving importance to hobbies and interests, spending quality time in community services, etc.*

Keywords: Loneliness, Emotional Isolation, Depression

Our social relations begin, change and end in the normal course of life. Human societies are based on the assumption of togetherness. It unites us, gives security, love and affection and feeling of belongingness and also prerequisite condition for happiness (Weiss, 1973; Bowlby, 2008). But throughout all the phases of life we can't taste the sweetness of togetherness. Life is a mixture of light and darkness. Sometimes we feel lonely, it is a complex phenomenon as well as a serious problem of this technology based modern era. The word "lone" implies "emptiness" and loneliness means "contamination, desolation, intervention and consolation". Loneliness is a state of being alone and feeling sad about it. In day to day life people need affiliation but in loneliness people need no affiliation (they do not need to be with others).

Everyone who feels loneliness, experiences it in different situations. Sometimes "no time for me" is the cause of loneliness whereas for someone else "no sweet heart or romantic partner" is the reason for this feeling. Sometimes it is possible in crowd, in family or even in the company of friends. Today it is not an old age problem, even teenagers are lonely.

Loneliness is a sentiment felt by a person and is completely a subjective concept. It is a state of mind, which is personally coloured. During lonely period one feels incomplete. Fromm-Reichmann (1959) described it as a painful and unpleasant experience. It appears always to be a response to the absence of some particular type of relationship. Lonely people are less happy, less satisfied, more pessimistic, more depressed, highly anxious, restless and board (Perlman & Peplau, 1981).



There are two affected states which are likely to be characterized as “loneliness” are respectively emotional isolation and social isolation (Weiss, 1973). Emotional isolation is produced by the absence of an attachment figure but social isolation arises by the absence of an accessible social network (Russell et. al., 1984).

There are few behavioral manifestation of loneliness:

1. Lonely people show different patterns of self disclosure. It may be that they either pour out their hearts to listeners or keep their personal lives extremely private.
2. The behavior of lonely people reflects only self-focus. They feel shy in social gathering. They are typically eager to explain the reason for stress (Peplau, Mieeli & Morasch, 1982).

Loneliness is not always associated with negativity but sometimes it has been associated with positivity. Psychologists state that positive loneliness is a state of living or working alone, which is free from pain of isolation (Mijuskovic, 1977). People of positive loneliness include adventurers, sages, saints, sailors and seekers. Many of them have found it pleasant, exciting, enlightening and highly desirable. One of Thomas Edison’s quote is “The best thinking has been done in solitude”. It is related to positive changes in people’s reported cognitive state (Larson, 1979). Positive loneliness is always related to those people who are great thinkers, scientists, etc. but 99% of the time loneliness for a common person means lack of close emotional ties, feels rejected and disliked (Weiss, 1973). Loneliness with negative emotion of distress is not understood by others.

There are new evidences that young adults, ranging between 16 to 24 years are particularly vulnerable to loneliness. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the largest survey on loneliness globally showed that 40% of young adults felt lonely often, whereas 29% of those between 65 to 74 years of age and 27% of 75 years and above feel lonely (BBC Loneliness Experiment, 2018). In U.K. 24% of young adults often experience loneliness and 7% reported that they are lonely at all times (YouGov, 2019). According to global survey approximately 33% adults are experiencing feeling of loneliness worldwide, Brazil has the highest percentage of it. India and Saudi Arabia has followed with 43% to 46% of people who experienced loneliness at least sometime (Statista Research Dept., 2021).

Large no. of young adults in Japan want to live alone and they dislike family setting but it has some serious consequences like broken families, society misbalance, emotional and mental



problems. For the solution of this problem Japan and British Government established a ministry to deal with this problem. In 2017 Cocox Commission found that in Britain 90 Lakhs people are a victim of loneliness. Today the important institution of society i.e. the family is fading its glory and importance but during Covid-19 it was again felt important.

How to Fight Loneliness:

- Loneliness can be difficult but it's still just a feeling that can be changed. When we challenge this feeling we feel changes in our life. In this way cycle of loneliness will start breaking. We feel lonely because we have no company of others or we isolate ourselves from others.
- During transition period like new school, new city, new occupation, new environment we feel lonely. Transition phase is a short term period, it can take some time to settle in new place.
- We should look for opportunities to meet people in small groups, use our skills and interests i.e. join a sports team, local library, recreational clubs, local parks, take a course or join a club to meet people, who already share our interests. Building relationship takes time but never feel scary, try to initiate conversations and spend time with others.
- Friends and relatives are always helpful in increasing social connections. Sometimes geographical factors create barrier to see each other physically but phone calls, video calls, emails and other forms of communication can defeat the spirit of loneliness.
- Sometimes people take interest in multiplayer gaming, chats and messaging sites, even online dating sites to overcome the feeling of loneliness.
- Contributing our time and energy with others for a good cause can very effectively help in fighting loneliness. These activities reduce stress and depression. Making friends and connecting with others make us a happy person. Some volunteer activities we can do like visit senior citizens in homes, etc. These activities bring altruistic feelings and help in finding new meaning of life.
- Proper exercise, healthy food, proper sleep, yoga, meditation always provide us energy to fight loneliness. Due to exercise, endorphins, the happy hormones secret in the brain. They elevate our mood and we feel better. Sunshine also triggers good hormones including endorphins and serotonin. A healthy diet can affect our brain too



and help to overcome loneliness. Proper sleep is very important factor for it, loss of sleep or poor sleep can aggravate feelings of loneliness. Sleep quality increases emotional health (Cigna, 2020).

- If waves of loneliness crash over the head then take help of a therapist because in this situation, a person needs extra support. Therapists also suggest skills to manage it.
- Music and other sounds are helpful in breaking the feeling of loneliness.

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