



Loneliness – can you relate?

Description



Sarah wearing a dress made with FS BLEACHED Signature Finish Linen

First off, can I give you a hug? I'll make us a pot of your favorite tea, switch on the floor lamp, and we can talk while the cicadas chorus their summer song in the cool evening air breezing through the open windows. I want to sit and listen to what is heavy on your heart. Listen to your hurts and loneliness. Loneliness is hard to talk about, isn't it?

What is loneliness? Besides the dull, painful ache that looms large in your chest, loneliness is the perception of lack of emotional intimacy in relationships. In simpler terms, you feel like your soul isn't being fed enough. You are emotionally starving.

No wonder it hurts.

The very act of talking about loneliness requires vulnerability, which is one of the things you don't want to be when you are lonely - that's why we need that pot of tea and an extra hug. You can picture being vulnerable as an ancient warrior letting his shield down, taking off his breastplate of armor, laying down his sword, setting his helmet on the ground, untying his shoes, and slipping his bare feet into the soil. Being vulnerable is inherently dangerous. You are exposed to attack with little defense against it. But true connection and emotional intimacy only come when you are willing to be vulnerable. It's difficult for people to connect their emotions to yours in meaningful ways through your armor, and difficult for your emotions to connect to theirs.



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When you feel hurt and at risk of rejection, when you feel the most need to protect yourself when you feel like you can't afford to take the risk of being attacked, then you are the least likely to connect with others in vulnerable ways. This doesn't mean you should go out and be vulnerable with a load of people. No. Being vulnerable is dangerous, remember? You could be wounded more than the wounds of being lonely.

The key intermittent step to being vulnerable in healthy ways is to grow in confidence. As your confidence grows and as you learn to truly accept yourself, your willingness to be vulnerable increases, and your susceptibility to being hurt by rejection decreases. In my life, I've noticed a trend. There seems to be an oscillation from high levels of self-confidence to low levels. Some unfortunate events in which I make a fool of myself usually sets off the downward descent into the depths, and then it's a journey to build the levels of confidence back up. While you're in the depths, that is where you are most likely to be withdrawn, least likely to be vulnerable, most likely to become lonely. So if you are feeling a little extra lonely these days, as many of us are, try to remember to focus on growing in self-acceptance to increase in confidence. This may take some time.



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And then when it feels right, grab your phone and call a trusted friend and have an honest, real conversation about some things you are going through. Maybe they will follow your lead and share some hard things in their life with you, too. It's not only about you feeling less lonely, it is also a way to serve them because they are probably longing for more emotional connection, too. If you don't know who to call, you may be surprised that your online sewing friends could know more about your life and what you are passionate about than your real-life friends. Pick out one or two of your closest online sewing friends and ask to FaceTime with them or go on a road trip and meet up with them for a day.

Right now, if you are wading through the heavy waves of loneliness, I just want to say I'm sorry you are going through this. It probably feels like emptiness as thick as molasses is pressing in all around you. Loneliness hurts, and it's nice to acknowledge that. But you don't have to stay stuck there. You can create meaningful interactions that satisfy the hunger of your soul.

If you don't have anyone to talk to, come sit on my couch while I make your tea.

When you have gone through periods of loneliness before, what are the things that pulled you through?

CATEGORY

1. COMMUNITY
2. WELLNESS

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Date Created

August 16, 2020

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