

Loneliness: Human Nature and the Need for Social Connection	
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Loss of a mother	Loss of a mother is the loss of our first connection to another person
Rate of loneliness	At any given time, 20% of people feel lonely enough for it to be a source of unhappiness in their lives
Purpose of loneliness	Loneliness developed as a stimulus to get humans to pay more attention to their social connections, and to reach out toward others
Pain of loneliness	fMRI shows us that the region of the brain that is activated when we experience rejection is the same region that registers emotional responses to physical pain
As punishment	In ape societies, infractions against the social order are punished by ostracism Kings imposed banishment as one of the most severe punishments In modern correctional institutes, the penalty of last resort is solitary confinement
Fame	Talent, financial success, fame, nor adoration offers protection from loneliness - Judy Garland, Marilyn Monroe, Princess Diana and Marlon Brando were famously isolated people
Alone versus lonely	Being alone does not necessarily mean being lonely - Needing time for oneself
Variation in desire for connection	Some people can tolerate moving away from friends and family without too much distress - Others have been shaped by genes and environment to need daily immersion in close social contact to feel okay Our well-being suffers when our particular need for connection has not been met
Effect on mental abilities	Feeling left out can reduce executive function sufficiently to impair mental performance
Eating ice cream when lonely	Sugar reaches the pleasure centers of the brain, soothing the pain
Effects of exclusion	Study found that those made to feel excluded evaluated others more

	<p>harshly, agreed to more punishment for other participants, were less willing to donate or to offer help to a stranger</p> <p>Being rejected by a group lowers our self-esteem</p>
Increasing isolation	<p>2004 survey found that people were 3 times more likely to report having no one with whom to discuss important matters than in 1985</p> <p>Projections showed that by 2010 the number of people living alone in the US will be 29 million</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Many over the age of 65
Real friends	<p>Having friends with social prestige or business connections, or a spouse who is rich/beautiful, will not ease the pain of feeling isolated if there is no deep emotional resonance</p>
Categories of social connection	<p>Intimate connectedness</p> <p>Relational connectedness</p> <p>Collective connectedness</p>
Hypnosis	<p>In order to prove the causative effect of loneliness, subjects were hypnotized to experience either loneliness or social connectedness and a psychological test was then administered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loneliness was shown to have an effect on higher levels of shyness, higher anger, higher anxiety, lower optimism, lower self-esteem
Quality over quantity	<p>Amount of time spent with others and frequency of interaction is not an accurate indicator of loneliness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What does matter is the individual's rating of the meaningfulness, or the meaninglessness, of their encounters with people <p>The solution is not quantity but quality of relationships</p>
Hostility	<p>Correlated with heart disease, lower socioeconomic status, increased likelihood of smoking, and loneliness</p>
Benefit of fever	<p>Most microorganisms that cause disease cannot tolerate high temperatures, so our immune system elevates body temperature</p>
Others' perception	<p>If you perceive that others see you as worthless, you are more likely to engage in self-destructive behaviors and less likely to take good care of yourself</p>
Stressors	<p>Lonely people are more likely to cope passively to any given stressor, enduring without attempting to change the situation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The greater the loneliness, the less likely to seek emotional support

Imitation	<p>Individuals who feel the most rapport are the most synchronized in their postures and movements</p> <p>Participants whose postures had been mimicked—even when it was unnoticed—reported having a more favorable impression of the person doing the imitation</p> <p>Desire to affiliate with an individual increases the degree of behavioral mimicry</p>
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy	Redirecting emotions by modifying everyday thoughts and behaviors
Self-transcendence	Reinhold Niebuhr: Human beings are endowed by nature with both selfish and unselfish impulses but man's reason endows him with a capacity for self-transcendence
Small changes	It doesn't take an enormous change to alter one's course and destination significantly
Compatibility	<p>Compatibility depends on common beliefs and being at compatible stages in life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For marital success, data shows that similarity i.e. birds of a feather flock together, trumps complementarity i.e. opposites attract - Being drawn to someone's appearance or status is not a good basis for a deep connection <p>Where you should go to try to meet people depends on what kind of people you want to meet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enthusiastic readers are more likely to find people to connect with at a bookstore than at a dance club
Steps for social connection	<p>Reach out in simple exchanges at the store or library</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To improve odds of receiving a positive reaction, try reaching out at charitable activities <p>Realize that we do have some control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We can alter our thoughts, expectations, and behaviors
Recognize the good	Findings reveal that having a partner who reacts actively and constructively to your good fortune is more conducive to a happy marriage than having a partner who can soothe you in the bad times
Blind spots	Each person in a relationship sees everything they do and forgoes for the relationship and they do not see everything the other person does or forgoes
Don't expect perfection	Even the best friends and the partners in the best marriages will disagree and hurt each other from time to time

Loneliness and the elderly	Loneliness accelerates age-related declines in health, yet the idea of promoting connection is rarely discussed alongside the issues of medical interventions and cost of pharmaceuticals to deal with an increasingly lonely and aging population
Altruism	Focusing on helping others fosters feelings of self-worth and control while reducing feelings of depression
Group conformity	If we think everyone is cheating on their taxes, we are more likely to cheat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If we think everyone is paying their fair share of taxes, we are more likely to pay what we owe
Interdependence	C.S. Lewis: "We need others physically, emotionally, intellectually"

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