

# LONELINESS

**THE CHALLENGES, LESSONS, PURPOSE,  
MEANING & PROMISE OF THE LIFE  
TRANSFORMATION OF LONELINESS**



***Includes an examination of Abandonment generally, in Borderline Personality Disorder, (affecting non-borderlines too) and Sexual Abuse and its effect on Loneliness.***

***At the core of every human heart there is the paradox of the need and longing for connection and the reality of loneliness inter-mixed with the desire for the joy and peace of the solitude of aloneness.***

**By Ms. A.J. Mahari**

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# LONELINESS IS TRANSFORMING

*Loneliness and its challenges, its lessons, its purpose and meaning promise life transformation as surely as the caterpillar cocoons to become the majestic butterfly.*



*So too much each of us cocoon, from time to time, in the reality of the formidable wounds, hurts, and losses that we experience in the course of our lives. Seasons of loneliness, or even protracted loneliness are not without purpose.*



*Unlike the caterpillar, however, the human cocoon can be a lonely and very painful place from which to seek to further complete one's psychological birth. Emotional pain, not unlike physical pain is brought to our attention and experienced profoundly by us so that we may discover what isn't working and what we need to address in order to move forward.*



*Just as the caterpillar in the cocoon has found a comfortable state of being, so too has many a human being consciously or subconsciously retreated to an emotional cocoon wherein choices are made to protect instead of to be open to the full-range of human emotions. These choices, when adhered to way past their effectiveness stall the emotional and psychological evolution of the human being in painful and repetitive life schemas. The process of opening up to and becoming more aware of the pain and distress of your loneliness will transform your life as you work your way out of the cocoon of your woundedness.*



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***“The thing that makes you exceptional, if you are at all, is inevitably that which must also make you lonely.” -- Lorraine Hansberry***

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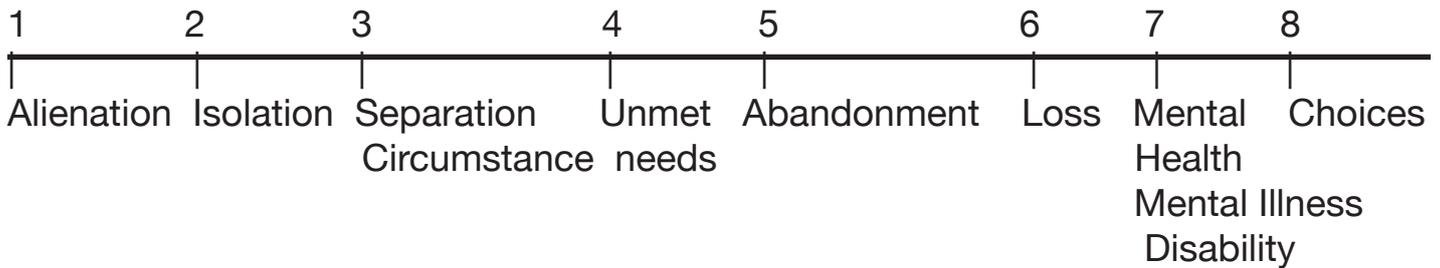
Among the challenges of loneliness are the inevitable seasons of it that come and go in our lives. Some stay longer and are much more pervasive.

There are seasons of loneliness that have great purpose. They are usually very painful. Each season of loneliness calls us to a stillness that encompasses the need for greater and deeper understanding. A stillness that leaves us wanting to run back to all we've known, no matter how much it has hurt or hasn't worked. A stillness that we have to find the strength to meet head on. Each season of loneliness seeks to increase our awareness of ourselves and of our choices in life.

Each season of loneliness calls us to search harder for what is better for us. Each season calls us to a greater awareness, more understanding and increased insight into the choices that we've continued to make in our lives that do not work for us. Each season of loneliness reminds us that there is more and that we need and want more out of life.

The challenge of each season of loneliness is learning to cope with the reality that each season can severely hurt and will cause distress. Growth, healing/recovery and change cannot be brought about without pain.

## The Continuum of Loneliness



### **1-Alienation**

The feeling of being alienated from *authentic self* and/or other people is at the farthest end of the spectrum where the most pain and distress from the reality of loneliness is felt. It is a state of emotional isolation, often even dissociation. It is a way of being very disconnected from the world. Alienation produces the most severe and lasting pain of loneliness when it is not totally dissociated from or blocked from one's conscious feeling state. When one is alienated one is often separated from others as the result of one's own anger or hostility. Anger and hostility that mask the very pain that being lonely and alienated causes.

Alienation is a state of estrangement between the *self* and the objective world or between different parts of the personality. It is prevalent in many personality disorders and forms of mental illness. It often causes the withdrawing or separating of a person or a person's affection (or affiliation) from others. Alienation fractures any and all forms of attachment. Those experiencing alienation are detached from the values of their society and/or family. Alienation is most often a state of abnormal function that can include mental derangement, an unsoundness of mind, right up to and including the mental malfunctioning of insanity.

### **2-Isolation**

Isolation is one degree over from alienation on the Loneliness Continuum because while it is pivotal to the pain and state of loneliness it is not as abhorrent, dysfunctional or severe as alienation. Those who are alienated often have a character that is significantly wounded and results in repellent mannerisms and actions.

Isolation is a state of self-imposed or circumstantially imposed segregation from contact and/or connection with others. It can include actual physical isolation due to disability,

illness, or geographic location, or it can be a totally emotional circumstance.

Isolation can also exist in the form of a psychological defense mechanism designed to enact the separating of ideas or memories from the emotions connected with them. This type of isolation has a very profound and negative effect on any and all attempts to be or feel emotionally connected. It therefore, though enacted to protect from pain, actually worsens emotional isolation and increases the pain of loneliness.

### ***3-Separation***

When we experience a loss we are separated from previously experienced connection. The death of a loved one, the death of a spouse or partner, divorce, the loss of a friend, loss of a job, even a move to a new city all cause us to experience the loneliness associated with separation. Separation under these conditions is a part of life and is not a pathological process. These reasons for loneliness, along with many of the others are a natural occurring reality in the experience of what it means to be fully human. Sometimes being fully human means experiencing some loneliness.

Separation, or feeling separate, is very painful. It is not as severe, over-all though as feeling or being alienated or even isolated. It is often a disconnection that is the result of the pain of loss and/or abandonment.

There are many varied reasons and circumstances in life why many people become separated from the mixture of connection to and with others. Separation can be physical and/or emotional. It may be due to changing jobs, moving houses, changing schools or as severe as the death of a loved one. Separation can also be due to self-destructive behaviour, emotional immaturity, anger issues, and a lack of developed social skills.

### ***Circumstance***

Circumstances that are actually beyond our control are few and far between. More than most people want to know, face, or admit, much of the circumstance of loneliness has a lot to do with the choices that we make and even more importantly the choices that we refuse or fail to make.

There are, of course, circumstances that each of us does not have control over such as the death of a loved one, a partner who no longer wants to be in a relationship with

you, needing to move and losing close contact with family and/or friends.

Some choices we need to make for ourselves, for example, changing jobs or withdrawing from those in our lives who are not healthy for us, we do have control over but they can leave us with being separated from those we may have felt close and connected to in the past. This is a loss that cannot be prevented but that still must be dealt with.

Circumstance related loneliness is painful in its own right. Life often gives us what seem to be impossible circumstances that leave us not wanting to make choices that we know we need to make. In these scenarios it is not so much the actual circumstance that unfolds in your life that is the greatest challenge but what you choose to do with it and how you choose to respond to it that can mean the difference between continuing to progress in your life and with your goals or being run off the road so to speak and stuck in a ditch of the aching pain of loneliness.

#### ***4-Unmet Needs***

Nestled in the mid-range area of the continuum or spectrum of loneliness are our unmet needs. Unmet needs exist for a wide variety of reasons and circumstances. Unmet needs from childhood can drastically affect one's ability to even understand how to connect with and relate to others. Unmet needs that have impeded emotional development can leave many an adult lonely because they have not truly mastered the necessary skills to mature in such a way as to make successful and lasting connections that are healthy and productive.

Unmet emotional needs impede healthy relating and can be the cause of any degree or all degrees of loneliness on this continuum.

#### ***5-Abandonment***

Abandonment can be physical, emotional/psychological. Emotional/psychological abandonment can be actual and real, or it may be perceived. Either way being or feeling abandoned impacts the developing self and can result in the experience of a what is referred to as a the psychological death of the self which annihilates the actual authentic self and sees it being supplanted by a rising false self. This false self in anyone, but even moreso in those who have abandonment wounds, (Borderline Personality Disorder, Sexual Abuse, Abuse, etc) creates an emotional isolation from one's own self

### **10 Main Ingredients Necessary To Exercise Choice include:**

- 1 - openness - to feeling and facing your pain, to being helped, to connecting
- 2 - willingness to be vulnerable
- 3 - honesty
- 4 - personal responsibility - knowing feelings acted upon are choices
- 5 - identifying alternatives
- 6 - understanding that being hurt is a part of life
- 7 - being in the here and now and realizing the freedom to choose
- 8 - decisions - learning to weigh the pros and cons of any given situation
- 9 - flexible non-polarized thinking - critical thinking not based upon emotions
- 10 - clearing childhood abandonment issues that still cloud feelings and choices

## **The 10 Primary Root Causes Of Loneliness**

### **Societal - Collective**

- 1 - The Industrial Revolution and Urbanization
- 2 - The Mobile Society - The Breakdown of The Family
- 3 - Shifts In The Norms of Culture - Alienation From Common Values
- 4 - The Culture of the “Me Generation” - Doing My Thing vs Doing Our Thing
- 5 - Technology - Media and Television and The Internet - The Global Village

### **Personal - Individual**

- 6 - Abuse
- 7 - Abandonment - Ruptured Relationship With The Authentic Self
- 8 - Abandonment - Ruptured Relationship With God/ Creator - Roots of Your Soul
- 9 - Emotional Isolation Resulting From Ruptured Relationships (Abandonment)
- 10 - Lack of Awareness - Abandonment Wounds Causing Need For Instant Fix

### **Societal - Collective Root Causes of Loneliness**

- 1 - ***The Industrial Revolution and Urbanization***

According to Rosana Albernaz, on her website, [http://www.lhup.edu/smarvel/Seminar/FALL\\_2000/Albernaz/albernaz.htm](http://www.lhup.edu/smarvel/Seminar/FALL_2000/Albernaz/albernaz.htm), “At the beginning of the Industrial Revolution only

*3% of the world population were living in cities. Now about 43% of the world's people live in cities. In the U.S about 79% of the population is urban.*

*In 1900, 13 cities had populations over 1 million; all except Tokyo were in Europe or North America. Presently, only one of the 10 largest cities (New York) is in North America or Europe. By 1990, there were 235 metropolitan areas of more than 1 million people- an eighteen fold increase. In 1900, London was the only city with more than 5 million people; now nineteen cities have populations above 5 million."*

Industrial civilization, and particularly urban lifestyles, tend to force individuals into many superficial, apparently socializing, contacts, while other features of modern society tend to cause actual isolation. Such isolating features include the breakdown of the extended family, the erosion of family-centred values, and passive entertainment.

Industrialization changed the way people lived their lives in many ways. Pivotal among those changes was the reality that growing industrialization in the 1800's led to the formation of more and more cities. People moved to the city to find work. Their work lives changed. The overall way they related to each other also began to change. For example, in the past, where many families had lived in the country and farmed together, industrialization changed the landscape of work. This meant that there was more separation among family members due to the circumstance of the changes that industrialization brought to the work ethic and to the expectations of the worker.

Prior to the Industrial Revolution people were much more inner-directed. They had a more stable and individual set of values that would be adhered to and were not affected by one's environment or one's peer group. People were more accustomed to the solitude of their lives. What they thought and how they felt about themselves was not dependent upon any work-driven set of values or expectations. There was no 9-5 box into which people were forced to fit.

With the shift to industrialization workers moved to cities to sell their skill set, their labour power, which though valued one day, may not be in demand or could be redundant the next day. 18th century change, in the rural economy was very slow and gradual, an adjustable pace, really, but, the urban (industrialized) economy of the 19th century brought with it fast-paced, rapid, and often devastating change. A type of change that people were not accustomed to dealing or coping with.

With the development of the industrialized labour force came much wealth but with



*There is no one as lonely as the unmothered, unnurtured abandoned child.*

*That soul has such a hunger, with deep pain, it is driven wild.*

*Angst, depression and discontent.*

*A lasting legacy of the wounds of abandonment.*

*The pain is of your past.*

*Healing and recovery take time and do not happen fast.*

*The way to get there - to recovery - is to face what is in the way.  
Let that wounded little child cry and grieve today.*

*What is in the way - is the way. Everything comes ... to pass.*

*Your loneliness wants you to attend to it so you can be whole.  
Unearth the inner-mother in you and learn to love yourself,  
that's the goal.*

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Emotional loneliness is the result, for whatever reason, of poor people skills often seen in those who have experienced interpersonal and/or psychological loneliness. When one is experiencing emotional and/or psychological loneliness he/she can feel even more alone, more alienated when in the company of others.

***Loneliness is often not contingent upon actually being alone. It can be intensified by being around others and feeling emotionally disconnected and/or alienated or isolated from them.***

**2) Social loneliness** is the feeling of aimlessness, anxiety, and emptiness. It includes just not feeling very connected to the people that you may spend time with. You may or may not know why you feel this distance from others. When one feels socially lonely there often tends to develop a pattern of social withdrawal and sometimes even depression or anxiety increasing when spending time with others.

**Social causes:** such as technology, mobility - immigration that causes culture shock, urbanization with its ever-increasing density of population, and cosmetic concerns, such as judging oneself too fat, not pretty or handsome enough, too thin, too tall, too short, and so forth are major contributing factors to an increasing experience on the part of a growing number of people who feel socially disconnected, lost, defective, not good enough, or even isolated or alienated. What contributes greatly to social loneliness is all that our communities increasingly lack as the direct result of the focused pursuit of mobility, privacy, and convenience. These pursuits continue to separate us from each other more and more making social connection equally more elusive and challenging.

Before discussing ***Existential Loneliness*** I think it prudent here to define existentialism first. Existentialism is a twentieth century philosophy that denies any essential human nature. It insists that individuals create their own nature through free, responsible choices and actions. According to existentialist philosophy we cannot say that humans have a fixed rational nature and a fixed purpose.

Although existentialism, what is known as theistic existentialism is also popular among religious thinkers

***Being an increasingly mobile society thrown into urban high-density living and with our increasingly-fast-paced lifestyles that demand more and more convenience we continue to be more socially-isolated.***

most anything to feel some connection with others. Many end up abusing drugs and/or alcohol and find toxic unhealthy connections with fellow substance abusers.

There is nothing about toxic or unhealthy friendships or relationships that will truly lead you out of your pain or out of your loneliness. You may know this and you may be sitting in the middle of one of these unhealthy, codependent enmeshed relationships right now, feeling lonelier when with the friend or partner than you even do when you are alone. It's a no-win place to be.

When we feel so desperately lonely and/or alone, and we don't cope well with being alone, that we settle for these types of relationships or connections we are often doing so because we are reenacting painful unresolved issues from our childhoods. The issues that haunt us from childhood need and deserve to be dealt with. They often trap us in emotional isolation because we are too afraid, too wounded, too hurt, to risk being vulnerable and so we will continue to be walled off from others and ourselves no matter how much company we have.

***Unhealthy relationships are just diversions and are short-cuts back to where you've always been and to the pain you've been trying to avoid.***

***It is relatively easy to fall into an unhealthy friendship or intimate relationship that ends up serving the purpose of facilitating your avoidance of yourself and the issues that caused you to be so lonely in the first place. It is much more difficult to deal with your own issues first, feel the pain that will lead you to a profound understanding of your loneliness and get healthier yourself while facing your loneliness head on.***

### **5) Fractured or Abandoned Spirituality**

If we become too self-focused and too worried about our situation and our pain or the running and hiding from that pain we will not only worsen or intensify our loneliness but we will often experience a fracturing of our spirituality and/or abandon our relationship with God, a higher power, or whatever one believes in.

Loneliness prevails when we choose to lengthen grief beyond normal time expectations. Hibernation and withdrawal from life is either a conscious or unconscious decision, but nevertheless it is a decision. It is a decision that can separate us from our spirituality. It is a decision that has the secondary effect of cutting us off from our faith.

If we are separated emotionally, spiritually, and psy-

chologically from our roots of faith, belief, and practice of religion and/or spirituality, our loneliness and our negative judgement of *self* increases.

When we feel too unworthy to reach out to others we often feel too unworthy to call on God (or a higher power). I believe that God is always there, ready and waiting to hear our prayers and to forgive our sins, mistakes, and mis-steps. It is how we judge ourselves that blocks this connection often. In my own experience of loneliness (and I have experienced all categories of it) it was only when I experienced a chosen (by me unbeknownst at the time) separation from my own spirituality that I felt and experienced the excruciating hopelessness and despair of what was then essentially total separation and isolation.

***The pain of your loneliness is your inner-child crying out for you to rescue, soothe, and heal him or her.***

If you are a spiritual person and you are lonely and judging yourself harshly you will benefit from calling out to your God or higher power. The relationship to self and to God is the place to start to get a foot-hold in the war against the agony and despair of utter loneliness and/or uncomfortable aloneness.

***If you are running or hiding from him/her, why are you running or hiding?***

### ***Loneliness is a False Assessment of the Situation***

You may feel unworthy of being loved or cared about. You may even believe that God has abandoned you or doesn't care about you. You may be so depressed that you don't even care about the needs of your precious soul. But so much of the pain of loneliness is the ache of the soul.

Loneliness drives a negative and false assessment of the reality of the situation between you, your soul, your faith, and whatever higher power you believe in or want to believe in.

In the case of those who are atheistic it is the rupture from *self* that is similar to the rupture between the spiritual person and his/her God or higher power to some degree. Just as the spiritual person needs to build a healthier relationship to self and to his/her higher power, so too does the atheist need to create this relationship with him/herself.

## **6) Negative Anticipation and Fulfillment of that Anticipation**

What you seek is what you will find. How you think will determine what you experience. If you choose to anticipate loneliness, you will find it. You set your mind on a certain situation and you will build on that Foundational philosophy. Let me illustrate: You go to a singles gathering and you anticipate you will not be accepted so what happens is, in your mind you are not accepted, so when someone laughs, you think they are laughing at you, when two people talk you will think they are talking about you, etc.

So what you anticipate, you will find plenty of. If you anticipate a negative experience it likely means that not only are you thinking negatively but you are also preventing yourself from objectively assessing any given situation. Overly negative situational assessment can fuel many of the root causes of loneliness as outlined on the loneliness continuum on page 19.

## **7) The Trap and No-Win of Self-Centeredness**

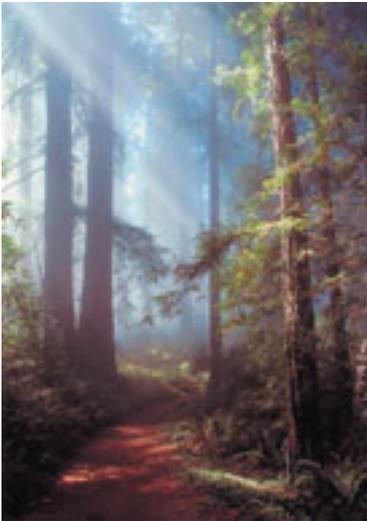
Isolation, unmet needs, lead many to focus inwardly. The more one spends time alone and/or the more one feels a deepening and lasting pain of separation and/or loss of loneliness the more self-focused or self-centred many become. This in turn intensifies loneliness. This is a no-win cycle really.

Here is where many fall into trouble. Pre-occupation with *self* is a great cause of loneliness. Loneliness is similar to non-physically caused depression. Both types of people focus on themselves and as a result of any failures or outside situations, they crawl into the “woe is me” syndrome and stay there. They tend to use other people to feed their sympathy ego which normally accompanies these voluntary conditions. Ego means “I” in Greek. The sympathy ego follows like sneezing does a cold. If you know someone you have been coddling who is into these conditions, then stop, because you are helping perpetuate their self-centeredness, loneliness, and its pain in turn.

Initial work into loneliness, for example, has focused quite extensively on the causes of loneliness. Previous theorizing on the causes of loneliness include the cognitive discrepancy model (McWhirter & Horan, 1996; Perlman & Peplau, 1982), a social skills/behavioral model (Duck, 1992; McWhirter & Horan, 1996), attachment theory (Weiss, 1973, 1989), psychodynamic theory (Hojat, 1989; Sullivan, 1953) and sociological models (Gordon, 1976). Recently, Rokach and Brock (1996) have proposed a five factor model of the causes of loneliness including categories of personal inadequacies,

# PART THREE:

## THE PURPOSE AND MEANING OF LONELINESS



*There are so many paths up the mountain that is your loneliness and the view from the top is still remarkably the same. In the valley the sun doesn't shine. Choose which way you are going to go. Stand still in the purpose of your current loneliness until the direction on the path that is your life is revealed to you through your patient radically acceptance of all that you feel. Know that your pain has sacred purpose. The pain of your loneliness will teach you so much if you let it. -- A.J. Mahari*

*“What I’m looking for, after all this time, keeps me moving forward trying to find it. Since I learned to walk all I’ve done is run...” - Mary Chapin Carpenter, “A Place In The World”*

*Within the grasp of loneliness there exists a gentle hand that catches us as we fall. That hand is our faith. It is our belief that everything in life has lessons to impart to us and has purpose.*

*There are many lessons to be revealed to each one of us as a direct result of our loneliness. As we climb to the peak of each mountain of loneliness in our lives, each new step firmly planned and thoughtfully taken, a moment at a time, mindfully we can wind our way from despair to hope and to the promise of our purpose and our place in the world.*



# CHAPTER SEVEN

## THE NECESSITY OF LONELINESS

What? Loneliness is a necessity? You may be shaking your head right now, thinking, oh I need this necessity like I need a hole in the head? Is that you? Are you still fighting the inevitability of your loneliness? There are seasons of loneliness. They come to teach and when the lessons are learned they pass. (With the exception of some of the reasons/issues for loneliness in the topic areas of the ebooklets that will accompany this ebook). So I am referring to what one might call the predominantly common experiences of loneliness that are not driven by Mental Illness, Borderline Personality Disorder issues, Sexual or other abuse, or Asperger's Syndrome.

Many people do not want to stop and find out what is actually causing their loneliness. There is too much fear there. A great deal of that fear is often fear of pain or fear of feelings that one thinks will "never" go away and can leave you feeling very miserable and negative to and about yourself. There is also fear of what remains unknown that leaves many trying to escape being alone. Each and every choice to avoid, run, or hide, from a season of loneliness in your life is a choice to remain separate from the very lessons that will connect or reconnect you to your *authentic self*. It is this deeper level of connection with *self* first, and others second, that can provide a transforming environment in which you can transcend the current season of loneliness in your life.

***In each season of loneliness we have to make a conscious decision to leave the shore of familiarity - to row our boats away from the docks of the past that anchored them as we remained tied to choices that have not worked for us. It is in and through and the making of new choices that we will be able to transform the pain of our loneliness into the kind of growth that yields a richer emotional maturity.***

Seasons of loneliness are born out of unmet or unaddressed needs. They are born out of a primal pain, often, that cries out to be healed. Pain is a great motivator for change. It takes us out of our usual comfort zone, out of our denial, even out of our defenses and calls us into the action of self-examination.

If it weren't for the gift that loneliness often is how would we know that we needed change? Loneliness is an experienced state of mind that intensifies in order to call our attention to important issues in our lives. Each season of loneliness that we experience comes to teach us something. If we aren't open to these seasons of loneliness,

***Seasons of loneliness in our lives are necessary so that we can learn and continue to grow.***

to the necessity of loneliness, we block our own ability to heal what needs healing, to change what needs changing, and to continue to evolve and grow and mature as a human being. Life is a process. ***There is never a destination that means we've arrived at some point in life where we can't or won't need to change and adapt some more.***

***The necessity of loneliness*** is realized when we accept that, as human beings, our lives are in constant flux and that to live a healthy life and have healthy relationships means to live a life that includes facing the seasons of our loneliness in order to learn more about ourselves. It also means that we need to be open to learning and be adaptable. We will prosper much more in life if we learn to be as flexible as possible. Open to both the experience of pain and joy, sadness and happiness, negative reality and positive reality and radically equally accepting of it all.

***All that you fear, deny, or feel the need to protect yourself from in the name of resisting pain or change will absolutely cause your pain to intensify and to persist.***

If we are protective and resistant we will not be able to learn and to grow. We will be stuck and trapped, not only in protracted seasons of loneliness but in protracted sadness, pain, and isolation.

The reality about loneliness is that most people have been culturally conditioned to view it and experience it as a painful negative experience that at best we avoid at all cost and that at worst we endure. The necessity of loneliness is rarely, if ever given its merit and recognized as worthwhile and important. It is feared and frowned upon. In order to be accepting of the seasons of our loneliness we must break away from traditional thought and radically accept that pain is as an important part of life that pleasure is. In fact, pain, is a much more profound teacher of life lessons than pleasure is.

The pain of loneliness is one everyone wants to escape. The necessity of loneliness is that it puts us in touch with our pain and gives us the option of *escape through seeking*

*the lessons or escape through maladaptive and often very self-harming and self-sabotaging choices and behaviour.*

## ***Why is Loneliness Such a Powerful and Pervasive Experience?***

Each season of your loneliness is where the essence of your uniqueness breathes. It is your inner-child, your *authentic self*, your soul, knocking on the door to your inherent purpose, passion, and potential. It is a longing for resolution and for so much more.

The power of loneliness is paradoxical. Increased maladaptive efforts to escape your loneliness will only intensify it. It is the escaping and/or avoiding of your loneliness that likewise intensifies feelings of desperation, emptiness, fear, despair, and unmanageable pain. The more one faces his or her loneliness the more purposeful it reveals itself to be. Turning to face the pain of your loneliness is the only way to learn and grow from it, which in turn then diminishes or eliminates the need for it.

This paradoxical unfolding of the pain of loneliness is the harbinger of an astoundingly-poignant journey that will transform you and enable you to unstep your pain.

Loneliness is often an extremely powerful experience because it beckons us to surrender to that which we cannot control. It beckons us to begin or continue to live the examined life. It presents us, often, with more questions than we have the answers for. It, if we are open to it, hurts. It challenges us to be as accepting of pain as we are of pleasure.

In each season of loneliness, in life, we are presented with a cross-roads juncture at which the promise of a potentially revolutionary metamorphosis is offered to us. Our task is to weather the pervasive nature of the experience long enough to reach a much deeper awareness of who each one of us is and what we will benefit from learning.

Loneliness is such a pervasive experience, in part, often, due to the amount of resistance that we meet it with. Like a stubborn child we often rail against it and refuse to

***The central reality of the power of loneliness is that it hurts. Whether we are open to it and face it or we run from it, it hurts. The pain that loneliness generates is purposeful pain however.***

accept it. It leaves us feeling flawed, less than, damaged, and/or screwed up when really it is a part of what it means to be human and to be alive.

How we think about the loneliness we experience is what gives it negative power and makes it pervasive to the point of feeling like it is too much or what allows it to be the catalyst for the lessons we need to learn in order to make transforming and lasting change in our lives.

### ***Loneliness and Its Pain Are Necessary Teachers***

Loneliness is necessary because it is an extremely powerful teacher. Why loneliness? Loneliness is the beacon of our blocked or repressed awareness. Let the loneliness you feel cut deeply enough that you unearth the awareness that will teach you how to cope and how to embrace the pain and its lessons that your seasons of loneliness promise to enlighten you with. Focusing only on the pain and/or trying to escape the pain is not productive for you in your life. There is a profound difference between suffering and learning. Pain is a teacher. The pain of loneliness is a teacher. Suffering occurs when we run, hide, avoid, escape, and/or deny the pain of our loneliness. Suffering is a very deep trap and it can spin your thoughts so negatively that you may not be able to free yourself from its grip without professional help and/or without opening up to this ebook and to thinking differently about the pain that you are experiencing.

These lessons emanate or emerge from embracing and facing the seasons of loneliness in our lives that come and go. Each season of loneliness is generated by some precipitating event in life or the surfacing through loss or difficulty of past unresolved issues. (Other than in the case of the subjects of my companion ebooklets) Loneliness teaches us firstly and foremostly by the very nature of the experience of it, if and when we are open to it. Loneliness by its very definition is often a response to a change in life circumstances that involves loss of one type or another.

Loneliness often awakens a pronounced cavernous far-reaching pain within us that challenges us from the very depth of our soul and being. This kind of pain is universal. It is known to some degree or other by everyone alive. When you first embrace this kind of pain it can feel perplexingly enigmatic. It often feels foreign, as if it is outside of us and has the power to gobble us up. It is important to know that the intricate and complicated pain of the seasons of your loneliness is indeed yours. It is imprinted upon you deep inside and often has primal roots. There are components to the intense pain within the seasons of embraced loneliness that you have felt many times before.

Components of it that you are re-experiencing now because they are unresolved even though they were actually made a part of you years ago.

***The formidable reality of this pain is that it comes to humble you. It comes to challenge you to open up to it and it all that it seeks to reveal to you. What you think is in your way - what you think stops you and blocks you from achieving more connection with self and others in the face of your loneliness - is the way.***

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*“Given the choice between the experience of pain and nothing, I would choose pain”*

William Faulkner

*“Pain is inevitable. Suffering is optional.”*

Anonymous

*“We cannot learn without pain.”*

Aristotle

*“There is no pain so great as the memory of joy in present grief.”*

Aeschylus

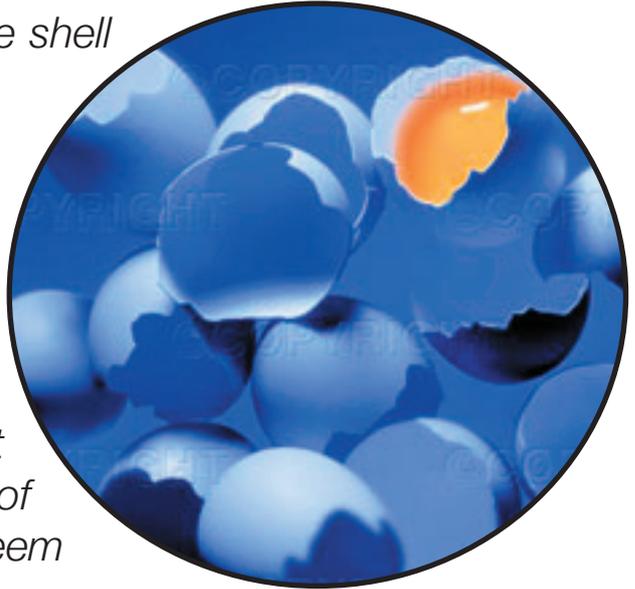
*“To repel one’s cross is to make it heavier.”*

Henri-Frederic Amiel

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*“Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding. Even as the stone of the fruit must break, that its heart may stand in the sun, so must you know pain.*

*And could you keep your heart in wonder at the daily miracles of your life, your pain would not seem less wondrous than your joy...”*



***The pain of your loneliness, once acknowledged and explored, will not only enable you to unchoose your suffering but it will also introduce you to your authentic soul. It is this integration of your worldly and spiritual selves that will unfold to you and for you the meaning and purpose of the pain of your loneliness. -- A.J. Mahari***



*“Emotional suffering can be the motivator for our turning to the spiritual path. Our spiritual practices can profoundly affect how we perceive and relate to psychological dimensions, letting us see the transparency of our conditioning much more clearly and objectively, not reifying our emotional patterns or defining ourselves in terms of their limitations, but connecting more with an expanded sense of ourselves.”*

*-- Tara Bennett-Goleman*

*“Emotions offer an opportunity for inner transformation at each level in a single unified path of gradual awakening.”*

--Tara Bennett-Goleman, in her book, Emotional Alchemy

*“No matter how difficult things may be for you at this moment, it is the only reality you have. Remember that it is always changing and that you are the force that moves it forward. You may not have chosen the challenges you now face, and chances are you are not to blame for the things that have gone wrong, but the situation is yours to deal with. You can choose to rail against it, or you can make the best of it. The responsibility for owning it and changing it belongs to you.”*

--Susan Anderson, in her book, The Journey From Abandonment To Healing

*“...So we went into scary places, coming face to face with our negative images of self. We had to look at ourselves through the eyes of our enemies, not to punish ourselves, but to find a deeper sense of self-acceptance. We had to say, ‘yes, you are right, I have behaved like a fool, but I am not a fool. I am someone who hurts, someone who takes his self-hatred and tries to make you responsible for it. I see that now.’ We do not enter the dark places of our psyches to blame ourselves or others, but to forgive ourselves for our mistakes and to take responsibility for not repeating them.”*

--Paul Ferrini, his book, The Circle of Atonement

It is in that stillness that we are gifted, even in the middle of the pain, with an opportunity to figure out what is really important to us, and why, and what isn't as important as we may have previously thought.



.....said that living the unexamined life isn't worth living ....

*"When one door closes another door opens; but we so often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door, that we do not see the ones which open for us."*

-- Alexander Graham Bell

Often a season of loneliness is a reactive unfolding response to the change of a door in your life closing. Doors do close for so many reasons. Sometimes we even have more to do with a door closing in our own lives than we realize at first. Whether a door that closes is a choice or not, what is true is that we have to learn to cope and to accept what has happened and to figure

out where we will go from this point on.

Your response to a season of loneliness will shine a light on what may have been too important in your life and what you may need to make more important in your life. In questioning and examining what is and isn't so important to you in your own life you will come to know what to do, when to do it and how and why to do it.

The lostness of unclear priorities or goals in the midst of the pain of your loneliness is part of the process of needed change. It is painful. That pain has so much purpose. Work to identify that purpose. In the meantime, breathe, sit still, grieve, rest, nurture yourself and trust that sometimes we need to be lost to end up finding more of ourselves.

*"Doors seldom close forever. A door is only closed as long as the person within feels threatened by what may be outside."*

-- FH

***Being critical and judgmental of oneself is the hallmark of the chronically lonely. It keeps them stuck in their pain. It is also what blocks their willingness to forgive themselves for their own choices and decisions that were reactionary, protective, and necessary for survival.***

***Let go of your self-blame and stop the re-shaming of yourself so that you can forgive yourself and choose to let go of your wounds and invest in and focus on connecting to your authentic self and others.***

ness we have separated ourselves from others because we do not like, respect, trust, or believe in ourselves.

Even those of us who have carried the heavy burdens of past woundedness and victimization at the hands of others, or at the critical and judgmental negative invalidating attitudes of those who shaped our beliefs about ourselves as young children, have surrendered our birth-rights and our destinies to those abusers/perpetrators or otherwise hurtful (and hurting) people. This is why our self-talk and our core beliefs about ourselves must be cleansed if we are to truly learn the loving lessons of loneliness and transform ourselves and our lives through its pain to heal ourselves from these past wounds.

Forgive yourself for any and all mistakes. You have done the best you could. When you know better you will do better. In the meantime, realize the utter gift that your current pain offers to you. The pain of your loneliness is offering you the pathway, perhaps out of necessity, but nevertheless, this amazing opportunity or fork in the road of your unfolding life, to really get to know yourself and to really dig down deep into the unresolved wounds and issues from those wounds that has left you not really liking or respecting yourself.

Those mistakes, or the transgressions (mistakes of others) against you or that you experienced, which are also growth opportunities, also need to be forgiven. Remembered and then grieved and then let go of.

The cornerstone of self-forgiveness is a willingness to trust yourself again. To know that it not how much you can or cannot trust others that is crucial. It is the degree to which you can trust yourself (or not) that will be the measure of whether or not you can extend trust to others. When we are too wounded to trust ourselves, and we are in too much pain is often one of the most profound seasons of loneliness that can be experienced. In this type of season of loneli-

In his book, **The Self Forgiveness Handbook**, Thom Rutledge, writes, *“It is neither necessary, nor productive, to think of your family as all healthy or completely dysfunctional. Think, instead, in terms of what you learned there. Understanding how you became self-critical is an important part of self-forgiveness. The goal is to remove unfair blame from yourself, and it is not about finding others to blame instead.”*

Being wounded, is to some extent, a part of the imperfect human condition. The tragedy for so many of us who are wounded at such young ages and by the very people (parents) who we so needed to protect us and to nurture our growth and development, is that we carry the burden of having been shamed, and blamed, along with the self-hating tapes that we internalize. The self-hatred and shame of abusive or unhealthy parents results in us carrying a negative emotional legacy. We are left feeling as if we were responsible for what happened to us. It is from this crucial error in thinking, this negative cognitively-distorted core belief that we continue to feel that we cannot trust ourselves.

If you were abused or otherwise wounded as a child and it is impacting your ability to relate to yourself and to others now in such a profound way that you are suffering what you believe will be endless pain that feels purposeless, unending, and like protracted loneliness and/or emptiness, you need to grieve those wounds right now, and you need to know that you were not to blame. Forgive yourself. What happened to you is not an indictment of your worth or your ability or right to love and be loved. When you get this emotionally and rationally in balance you will do all that it takes in your life to heal the pain that has held you in the grips of loneliness for so very long because you will come to know that you are worthy and that you are not defective. You can love and be loved. You need to forgive yourself first. Forgive yourself for believing what others told you and led you to believe -- that what hurt you in your past was somehow your fault -- it wasn't.

As an adult, however, the legacy of your past, while not your fault, is now your responsibility to cope with and to transform into the healing self-forgiveness that will allow you to forgive others, trust yourself enough to risk knowing others and that will lead, in part, along with your increased ability to be with and by yourself, to an end to the pain of your loneliness. You can transform loneliness into chosen solitude.

When the pain of your loneliness has opened you to taking in the intended lessons of its pain and you are walking the path of aware and conscious dedication to healing that pain what will result is a transformation of the way you experience being alone.