

## **Loneliness...**

Do you know the feeling of being alone yet, at the same time deeply lonely?

Standing in the middle of a crowded party...  
or in the middle of a crowded town square...

Yet sensing a sinking feeling. When it all comes down, all these people aren't connected to us, they feel far away from us and in these moments, we feel lonely.

Can this feeling be real?

Meditation teaches us how to be still and quiet. How do life changing work while cultivating enjoyment of our own company.

The essence of human existence however, is connection, or we could say affinity for other beings. We are all designed and evolved to be emotionally contributing members of a community.

One of the secrets I have found, instead of criticising people, is to affirm what they are doing in their life. Affirmation builds bridges.

You might be taking over the universe certain days while other days you are dependent on the kind words or advice of a friend many states or many countries away to make it through the day.

This is OK, this is more than OK. It is long distance affinity, communication and shared reality.

Acknowledging this is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Recent studies tell us that one quarter to one half of Americans feel lonely a lot of the time. This has more than emotional ramifications.

According to the same study it puts us at a higher risk of developing a range of physical and mental illnesses, including:

- Heart disease
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Depression

This is not a small problem. Loneliness is a large-scale health problem that needs to be addressed.

As an individual, as a human being there are so many things we can do to ward off loneliness. Volunteering is underrated for the person doing the volunteering. That act, for the person who performs it, can be more rewarding and more of a necessity than it is for the person who is the recipient, in a traditional sense, of the service or charity provided.

When feeling lonely we also feel less of a sense of purpose. Science again tells us that humans who feel less of a purpose in life are at higher risk for cognitive decline, such as memory loss.

I believe the sense of belonging, feeling a true sense of community with other humans will help us reconnect with our purpose on days when we might feel like “the force” is less strong within ourselves.

An age group especially at risk for loneliness and loss of purpose is elderly folks. They are at risk of spending days on end with no, or very limited human contact due to physical limitations. Whenever we are doing our yoga practice or working out, giving a thought to an elderly person who is unable to perform such strenuous physical activity, is equal to sending out good energy into the universe.

This elderly person might be severely challenged by just going down to the local corner store to have a seemingly casual and seemingly very superficial conversation with a neighbor or a person working the checkout counter.

The true meaning of a casual conversation or smile in a situation like that is human connection. We all need it. We are designed to not function without it. To retreat to your own thoughts is not the same as isolation. We must always strive to help our fellow humans stay connected.

Have a lovely day,  
Rae Indigo

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