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Foreword

As humans, we are social creatures. We are like the ants and the bees when it comes to sheer existence; we want others of our ilk to be with us at all times.

Whether we are in the early years of our lives or in our prime, or have crossed the age that most people consider to be the prime of our lives, we want companionship. Loneliness can be a sure killer, and that is the reason why most people try to avoid the blight of loneliness as much as they can.

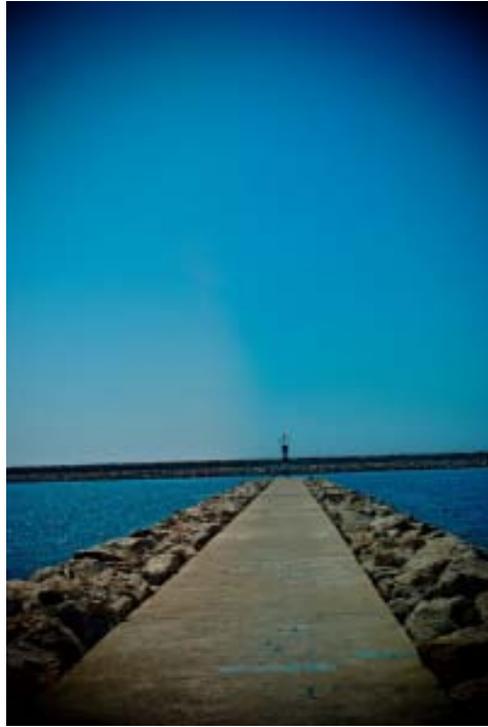
It is indeed a curse to be lonely. What can we do if we do not have someone likeminded to share things with us in whatever we do? Most of us would not even like to watch a movie or eat at a restaurant alone.

But, at the same time, there are some people who are living this curse day in and day out. Due to some reason or the other, which may or may not be their fault, they have to suffer a lonely life.

In this eBook, we have understood the problem of loneliness. We have taken the problem piecemeal and analyzed it. Why does loneliness happen? Can it happen to anybody?

And, if it happens, what are the different ways in which it can be eliminated? How can a lonely person become a social butterfly? These are some of the questions that we are going to find answers to in this eBook.

You need to put your heart and soul into the issue. If you think you are lonely, you are actually not alone. There are millions of people in this world who are living a lonely life, and this eBook tries to reach out to all those people. This life-changing tool may be just what you need to unleash the true hidden potential within yourself.



Loner's Lifhack

The Guide To Escaping Loneliness And Living A Life Surrounded By
Loved Ones

Chapter 1:

What Is Loneliness?

Synopsis

When you are trying to counter something, the most important thing is to first understand what you are up against. Here, your main problem is loneliness.

You are on a journey to find out how you can solve the loneliness in your life, and find out answers to the problem. In order to do so, you have to first understand what loneliness really is.

In this initial chapter of this eBook, we speak about what loneliness really is. Read it, and you will find why you might be alone even if you are living in a crowded house full of people of different types and personalities.



What Is Loneliness?

Everyone has some idea of what loneliness means. Dictionaries define loneliness as the state of being sad because one is without company. If you do not have friends with you at the moment, and you are feeling morose on account of that, then you are suffering from the pangs of loneliness.

This is something that is sapping at your very innards, and you want to snap out of the feeling. Loneliness is, after all, a very discomforting feeling, and we all seek some or the other solution to overcome it.

But, even if you already have an idea about loneliness, you must realize that there are several different kinds of it. For example, the loneliness of someone who has lost a partner to death is quite different from someone who is lonely just because it is raining outside and they cannot venture out of the house.

Even a person who goes to a foreign country might feel lonely, even if they are surrounded by people all the time. All these are different manifestations of loneliness, and they are all cured in different ways. There is no universally applicable solution to loneliness; it has to be dealt with on a case-to-case basis.

Chapter 2:

The Types Of Loneliness

Synopsis

Here we shall take a look at the different kinds of loneliness that exist.



The Forms

State Loneliness

This is the loneliness of the person who has been stranded at home without company because it is raining outside. The person is lonely only because some change in the environment has made it difficult for him or her to mingle with others.

This is also the loneliness of a sick man who has to stay in bed and cannot meet others when they want to. Also, if someone has been kept in confinement against their will, the loneliness can be termed as state loneliness.

State loneliness is always a condition that has been imposed by outside circumstances. The people going through this kind of loneliness actually have very little say in what they can do about improving their condition. They have not voluntarily brought about this loneliness upon themselves.

While we are speaking about what state loneliness is, it is also good to tell right at the outset that state loneliness is the easiest to get rid of.

Whatever the circumstances might be, these people can very easily snap out of their solitude and put their lives in a more meaningful direction. In subsequent chapters, we shall see how state loneliness is easy to treat and what we can do about it in order to come out of the situation.

Trait Loneliness

This is the type of loneliness that people impose upon themselves. Strictly speaking, these people do not want the loneliness, and they can snap out of their condition if they want to, but they are too diffident about their condition. They do not want to do anything about their situation. That is the reason trait loneliness is the most difficult to get rid of.

A woman who has lost her husband feels lonely. Someone who has taken up some work and willingly chooses not to meet anyone for a while is going through trait loneliness too. Trait loneliness is also found in people who lead introverted lives; they like to live that way.

It becomes very difficult to handle people who are suffering from trait loneliness. Reversing this condition requires dedicated efforts from the sufferer as well as from the person or people treating them. It might usually require changing the personality of the person who is going through the condition.

The Difference

On reading these two fundamental kinds of loneliness, you will have recognized one fact. State loneliness happens mostly because of an external factor, while trait loneliness happens because of the person's intrinsic tendencies.

Even in the case of a woman who has lost her husband, she chooses to stay that way. She can find company in various activities, but she often chooses to spend time in remembering her husband, and staying lonely. The people who stay at home for work and lead an introverted life have made a conscious decision to stay that way. Hence, trait loneliness is brought on by people upon themselves.

On the other hand, state loneliness is not because of the person's choice. In all the examples we talked about—someone not being able to go out because of the weather or someone who is secluded because of sickness or someone who is in prison—it is some outside condition that has caused them to be alone. These people want to break free from their loneliness at the slightest opportunity they can get and, in most probability, they will do that.

Characteristic Loneliness

There is another type of loneliness which we shall term as characteristic loneliness. This is what is also referred to as 'loneliness in a crowd'. It happens with all of us at some time or the other. We are in a crowd of people and then suddenly we find that we do not belong there. We phase out. We take ourselves to a completely different place and think, "What am I doing here?"

A magician who has been called to perform on stage at a rock concert will feel terribly out of place. A person who is surrounded by people who have completely different interests than what he has will feel phased out too. This is characteristic loneliness, what most people suffer from, and what can be easily cured if only the person comes out of denial and start thinking about how to make matters better.

Think of yourself in a company of people whom you think you have nothing in common with. For example, you are with a group of sailors by chance. You are not a sailor; you do not know anything about it. Now, in this case, though you are with people around you, and though they are probably talking, laughing, partying and doing everything else that a merry group of people is supposed to do, you are feeling

left out. You are feeling lonely because you do not connect with these people. This is called as characteristic loneliness.

If you extend this definition for loneliness, you might arrive at the conclusion that everyone has to face a bit of loneliness at several times in their lives. There are so many instances when we are caught in situations where we are out of place.

When we are visiting somewhere that is totally alien to us, we are lonely. When we attend an event where we know no one, we are again lonely. These are examples of a universal type of loneliness, which may not harm anybody if it happens occasionally, but can be quite detrimental in an overdose.

The Overriding Definition

We can see that there are many different ways in which loneliness can be defined. One man's loneliness need not be another man's loneliness too. In fact, what one might find joyful company could become brain-numbing loneliness for someone else. So, is there a definition that can encompass all these different definitions of loneliness?

The truth is there is. In all these above examples, there is one thing that is common, whatever the situation might be.

In all of them, people are devoid of company that they can associate with. Whether you are solitary or in a group of people, you are going to feel left out and lonely if there is no one you can associate with. The mental equation is very important here. You have to have someone with whom you can share things, and feel what they feel.

Thus, we can define loneliness as **lack of companionship** or **friendlessness**. If you do not have friends at any place, you are lonely there; doesn't matter if there are a thousand humans at that place. The connection is very important. If the connection is missing, you are lonely.

This is the overriding definition, the one that supersedes them all. You have to understand that loneliness is a state of the mind. It does not have to do anything with your physical senses.

Your eyes may see people all around; your skin might touch them even. But, if your mind does not associate you with them, then you are going to feel the pangs of loneliness. It is this mental loneliness that we have to learn to conquer.



Chapter 3:

How Do You Know You Are Lonely?

Synopsis

What makes it more difficult to fathom loneliness is that there are so many different types of it. Due to the different types, you may not really understand whether you are actually lonely or it is just a phase that you are passing through.

The problem with psychosomatic and psychosocial disorders is that they do not have very clear indications. They cannot be diagnosed due to the presence of certain symptoms, because these symptoms vary from one person to another. You cannot be certain that what you are facing is really loneliness because one person's case may not fit yours.

What you need to do is to find out for yourself. There are some indicators that can tell you whether you are lonely. This is an assessment that you have to do before you try to find out any remedies for the problem. It is not difficult to overcome loneliness, but you have to go through it the right way, which will help you to find the right solution for your problem.

How Do You Know You Are Lonely?

Loneliness is pronounced by a lot of different manifestations, and that is the reason why people cannot say for sure whether they are lonely or not. There might be some people who have been lonely since ever but they are still not able to find out what their real problem is.

They might be suffering from the pangs of being left out, but still do not know that they are suffering from a problem, let alone try to find out a way to resolve it. This is what happens with most of the lonely people in the world today. They do not realize that they are lonely until it is too late for them to make any improvements in their situation.

Here we shall be talking about some of the indications of loneliness. Sit down and think whether any of these plague you. If they do, you have a better idea of where you should place yourself.

You find yourself doing solitary things more.

If you tend to occupy yourself with more solitary activities, then it might be an indication that you are lonely. For instance, you might enjoy sitting at home, playing on your computer, watching television, reading a book, cooking, etc. more than going out and meeting with people.

If these are the kinds of activities that give you more pleasure than going out and socializing, it might indicate that you are a reclusive person by nature. Not that there is anything wrong with being reclusive, but maybe what you enjoy at the moment can lead to severe problems later on. You might love hacking away at the computer at

the moment, but the very fact that you enjoy that might mean that you do not have anything better to do outside. Over time, this will distance the friends you have and you will slowly find yourself lonelier and lonelier.

Here, the secret is the right balance. There is nothing wrong with the computer or television or a book, but you should know how to balance these activities with other things that you do outside the house, with other people. Everyone needs some 'me' time, but if you spend hours with yourself without giving even a little time to activities that involve other people, then you are not going to sustain this kind of life for long.

You envy people who go out with other people.

Many people who are lonely find a slight twinge of pain when they hear about people having parties, going out with their friends, going on dates and so on. They may not consciously realize this pain—as the pain can manifest itself in several different ways—but they do find themselves asking why only other people can do all of these things, and why are they not in the place of those people.

If you do not understand why other people are finding more company than you are, then you are probably a lonely person. If you had company with you, you would have been going out with others too. It is time to make some adjustments in your lifestyle.

You are gloomy most of the time.

Loneliness can bring about behavioral changes, especially if it continues for a long time. The most common change is that it can

make a person gloomy and sad, and may even lead them to depression if it persists for long.

It may also happen that you start feeling immensely touchy and irritable. People who are lonely often start hating people who are with them but whom they do not perceive as valuable company, such as the people from their family whom they take for granted.

If they feel lonely, they start lashing out at these other people who are with them. Things may take a bad turn when they start hurting people who are with them, just because they cannot be with people whom they want to be with.

If you find yourself saying a lot of hurtful things to your near and dear ones, quarreling with people for no reason and if you find yourself depressed a lot, then it is possible that you do not have many people with you. Perhaps expanding your circle of friends could be a nice solution for improving your lonely situation.

Dreading Special Occasions and Festivals

Do days like Valentine's Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc. put you in a bad mood? If you do not have many friends, this is bound to happen. You might start feeling the pangs of fear when these days approach just because you do not know what to do.

You do not have people to be with. This puts you in a bad mood. You do not have a date; you do not even have friends with whom you can celebrate these special days. Things take an awful turn when your birthday approaches. There are very few people wishing you, and they are just your family and some few people whom you label as friends,

though you know they are not really that. This can put you in dejection and even depression. If you do not enjoy the special days that you should enjoy, then something is definitely amiss.

Skipping Meals, Insomnia, Etc.

Lonely people suffer from a lot of pathological problems in the long run. We take things like eating for granted. But the fact is that over our times of evolution, we have developed eating into a very social activity. We love to eat with other people.

It is only loners who eat alone. And that is what creates a problem here. If you do not have people with whom you can eat, then the pangs of loneliness start expressing themselves more acutely. All right, everyone wants to be left alone once in a while, but if eating alone becomes a regular affair, then you are definitely not going to be able to sustain it.

Chances are that you will start skipping your meals. You cannot suffer the thought of eating alone. You would rather go to bed hungry than have one more meal in front of the television.

But that is where the situation becomes more problematic. That is because, when lonely people try to sleep, they cannot sleep well. The pangs of loneliness extend to them even then, and insomnia becomes a characteristic problem arising out of their loneliness.

If you suffer from eating disorders or sleep disorders, then probably it is your loneliness that is the underlying cause of it. You have to find out a way to remedy the situation before your problem manifests itself to more dangerous proportions.

Chapter 4:

Chronic Loneliness

Synopsis

The most alarming situation is when loneliness starts becoming chronic. This is when the person who has been suffering from the pangs of loneliness for a while begins to accept the fact that he or she is meant to be lonely for some or the other reason.



Important Info

These people tend to accept their loneliness as a part of their personality; as something that they cannot do without. They think it is a part of the definition of who they are. Quite dangerously, they resign themselves to the fact that they are meant to be lonely; that there is something wrong about them that will always keep them lonely, try what they might.

When a person becomes chronically lonely, then it becomes very difficult to reverse the situation. Such people will not see companionship even when they are with other people.

They will hate it when people are around them, because they have become so used to staying alone. In fact, they slowly begin disliking being lonely and retract themselves more and more into their shells.

These people have accepted their loneliness. They do not see their lives going any other way. But, even though they have accepted their loneliness, they still suffer from the pains of it.

They are caught in a very difficult dilemma whether to take some action and try to mingle with people, or to withdraw themselves from the world and plunge headlong into a future of loneliness. Only a very few people make the right decision and try to do something really positive of their lives.

You need to take stock of the situation and find out a remedy before your loneliness turns into a chronic condition. Once that happens, it will be very difficult to come back to a healthy routine in your life, it not entirely impossible.

Chapter 5:

How You Must Look At Loneliness

Synopsis

If you are thinking seriously about coming out of your condition of loneliness, then you need to go in a systematic manner about it. Here we talk about the first step you need to take if you want to remove the loneliness out of your system and live in a healthier way in companionship with others.



The Way To View It

Loneliness is a psychosocial and psychopathic condition. It affects your mind, your body and the way you interact with people. As such, it is very close to a mental disorder, and if allowed to remain as it is, it is quite likely to get compounded into something larger, a problem that would be infinitely more difficult to treat.

Hence, it is important to treat loneliness when it first begins to rear its head. In most cases, a very simple treatment would be to go out and meet with people.

If you can find people who are well-suited to your tastes, then you have it done. This is how you can easily counter loneliness. Things are much more relaxed if you can find company that you like to be in.

The problem is only more compounded when your condition has become chronic. If you have been lonely for a very long time there are people who have always been lonely and have never realized that then you need to be more careful about the whole thing. Chronic loneliness cannot be just wished away by finding people.

If you have always been lonely, then you have probably adjusted to that kind of destructive life. There are all chances that you do not like to be with people, and even if everyone is having fun in a very nice way, you will want to head back home and curl up with a book.

Not that there is anything wrong with that, but the moment you break off from the group, you will start feeling low about yourself and you will repent the fact that you broke away.

This can become a chain you get company, you do not like being with them, you separate from them, and then you repent having done so. Then you go ahead and find another group to be in. See, the problem here is not that you are not finding people to be with. You are, but you are not able to adjust with them.

The other kinds of loneliness are where you do not find people to be with at all. For that, the solutions are much simpler. You could just join a club or a class or something like that, go where you are definitely likely to find people, and your loneliness problems will be solved. This is a very simplistic solution, but if you are lonely because of your present state only, then this is the way you can solve your problem.



Chapter 6:

The First Step Towards Treating Loneliness

Synopsis

Whatever type of loneliness you are suffering from, the first step is common.

You have to snap out of your denial.



The Opening Move

After speaking with a lot of lonely people, people who have been observed to be lonely by their family and friends we found out that most of these people are suffering from a problem because they are not accepting it. They are not accepting the fact that they are lonely.

One girl, for instance, leads a life from her workplace to her home and her home to her workplace. She does not do anything else in between, except going to the church on Saturday evenings, where again she does not meet with anyone else.

Just does the regular prayers and comes back home. She goes shopping alone and does not buy groceries; she has help at home to do that for her.

This girl has a long list of friends on Facebook. A very impressive list, in its sheer numbers. But, when we spoke with her, we found that she had all the characteristics of being lonely. We took up the case and analyzed a bit more.

We found that Sheila that's not her real name, but let's name her for simplicity was a lonely girl. But she would never admit that she was lonely. In fact, most people wouldn't realize that if they looked at her interactions on the net.

But all her Facebook friends turned out to be people from her old school and from her workplace, and their friends. These were people she had never shared a single sentence with in real life, irrespective of what exchanges they might have had on Facebook.

She told us that she leads a very active life, and that's not wrong. She is actually never idle for a single minute in the day. She is always doing something or the other.

But then we made her see. Everything that she does, she does it alone. Whether it is going to her office and working, or shopping for clothes, she does not like to do it with anyone else. She is a trait lonely person, who does not like to hobnob with other people.

But, is that all right? After all, her characteristic nature is to stay lonely. However, knowing a bit more about her, you will decide that that definitely is not right for her. Sheila is depressed, she throws tantrums, she has become grouchy and she is quickly losing her youthful charm.

She sleeps later and later each day, her meal habits have become irregular. These are all symptoms of characteristic loneliness and we pointed that out to her.

It took a while to convince her, but when she realized that she was lonely and accepted it, everything was very easy to solve. We could easily get her back on track.

She joined a cooking class on Friday evenings, and she found a lot of people who shared the interest with her. Very soon, she could make friends with these people and even began to invite them over.

It was only until she was in denial of her loneliness that Sheila was unhappy. The moment she snapped out of it, she could take a proactive decision to veer her life in the right way.

So this is what all of us must do. Take a look at your loneliness. Probably you are lonely only because you are not accepting it. Maybe you do not even know that you are lonely. That was the whole point of including the chapter on loneliness signs and symptoms. Now you know what you should look for.

If you are suffering from any of those pangs of loneliness, you know what you must do. Sit down and think. Accept the fact that you are lonely if you are. In acceptance, lies your solution.



Chapter 7:

Meeting People

Synopsis

There is a very direct way of treating all your loneliness issues just go out and meet more people. If you feel that you aren't meeting enough people, and are feeling low about it, then the easiest way to remedy your situation is to socialize more.

So what are the places where you can meet people? And how can you approach them for friendship? Here are some tips.



Some Hints

Get Out!

Of course, if you want to meet more people, you cannot just sit at home. You have to be out of the house more often. Take every opportunity to go out, because you can never say where you will meet people. Go out to get the newspaper, go out for the groceries, go out to take the dog for a walk... everything works.

It is also great if you could make a daily routine of going out for a morning jog or to go to the gym. Apart from the chance of meeting a whole new set of people on a daily basis, you will be also doing a wonderful thing for your health.

Talk More!

Find every opportunity to converse with people. If you are sitting in a bus, and there is someone on the other seat, try to get into casual conversation.

Start with small general sentences, and then you will be able to feel them out. Some people want to talk, and some want you to shut up! If the former is the case, then you might just have made a friend for the journey and even beyond. But, do not wait till the other person starts talking with you, you need to take the initiative yourself.

At the same time, it would be better if you could practice those conversational skills a bit. You should be able to talk interestingly. Please do not bore people on a journey! If you can talk about things that interest people, there is a good chance that they will reply to you.

Chapter 8:

Additional Ways To Beat Loneliness

Synopsis

Loneliness falls upon all of us at times. Even if you're hooked up with a partner but your mate works long hours and you simply see one another on weekends and holidays, loneliness may bring you down. Coping with loneliness doesn't have to be a hard issue. Abide by these suggestions to prevent isolating yourself.



More Tips

Take a course of study at your closest university or community college.

Utilize it as a chance to learn about something you've forever wished to learn about. Get into a conversation with the individuals around you. You might discover somebody with other like interests that you are able to spend time with when class is done.

Foster your creative thinking.

Artistic manifestation is an awesome way of coping with solitude. Experiment with assorted artistic forms. Take a drawing course, join a chorus, begin a writer's group or go to a few dance classes. You don't have to be great at it. You simply have to like it.

Do a little touring.

Look for an acquaintance or loved ones who may spare even a weekend. Search those places close to home that individuals come from all over the world to see. Check into travel sites to find others looking for somebody to travel with if you can't find somebody who can spare the time.

Get together with a sports team.

Blank out the horrors of being picked last for the softball game in school. Adult sports are strictly for fun and its awesome exercise as well. Perhaps you've got an acquaintance, neighbor or colleague who

plays soccer or baseball on a neighborhood team you may get together with.

Volunteer at a few local charities.

Giving of yourself is an unbelievable experience. You'll meet other people who care about the campaigns you care about.

Get together with net discussions with individuals who are suffering from lonesomeness like you.

Learn how they're making do with it.



Chapter 9:

Enjoy Solitude

Synopsis

Many individuals despise being lonely. Individuals will surround themselves in adverse relationships to prevent solitude. They'll modify their clothes, hobbies or even their religions simply to fit in.



Ways To Enjoy

There's a power in being able to discover contentment in solitude. If you're able to be happy alone, then even in the hallowest times in life you are able to find peace and even joy.

I'm not advising solitude is better than being with individuals. Merely that it's impossible to totally avoid aloneness in life, so it's worth having a scheme to discover joy in those moments. Enjoying solitude may likewise give you an independence that makes you less despairing with acquaintances and less likely to cling onto rotten relationships.

I went through this numerous years ago. I lived in a little town, 100s of miles away from any major city. I had few close acquaintances, and I didn't associate well with the individuals around me. In addition, I was preparing to move in a year, which cut down my motivation to better my social skills, which had been deficient.

Initially, I found the solitude unendurable. I had other acquaintances in the past, so I wasn't used to being virtually totally isolated. I may definitely say this wasn't an amusing experience, but it did teach me a useful lesson about how to love my time alone.

By working at my internal life, I was able to not only endure the solitude, but really enjoy it. Even now that I have a lot of acquaintances and my social skills have bettered considerably, I still benefit from the lessons I acquired loving solitude.

It presented me an inner calm and independence that means that, while I put value in relationships and work to better them, I don't feel

desperate to remain in any friendly relationship or relationship that doesn't satisfy me.

If you're tripped up in the same state of affairs I was, I feel there are 2 steps you are able to take to turn it around:

- Discover how to draw contentment from your time alone.
- Better your social skills and establish fresh connections.

Each approach on its own is deficient. If you solely work on drawing contentment from your time alone, that approach may be disappointing if you still feel isolation is thrust upon you.

However if you work on your social skills and peaceful solitude in unison, you are able to enjoy the present while increasing your choices for the future.



Wrapping Up

You may not be able to command every component of your life, but you are able to control the meaning in your life. If you are able to produce a purpose for your present isolation, that doubles your force in moving through any obstruction.

Occasionally individuals will talk about the difference between great pain and bad pain at a gymnasium. It's in reality a silly idea: how may any pain be great, all of it hurts? The difference is that there's a meaning for the great pain, a purpose it serves as a procedure in making you stronger. The foul pain, instead, simply hurts for no reason.

The same analogy goes for solitude: there's great solitude and foul solitude. The great solitude has a constructive reason. It might still hurt at times, however if you know what it's for and why it benefits you, the aloneness may be enjoyable (even as some individuals like the pain they get from the gymnasium). Your goal is to turn foul solitude into great solitude by defining the significance it has for you.

If you believe there's no imaginable reason for your being solo, think harder. You may likely come up with a lot of opportunities it may allow, if you try. The solitude may help you center on another crucial goal you have, provide you a chance to expand your independence or even simply give you a better admiration of the relationships you do have.

