

e-Health: Alone, but not lonely

Do you know the difference between alone and being lonely? For many people, they mean the same thing. When they're alone, they feel sad and isolated. They may even feel rejected or unwanted if they believe they should be around other people constantly.

But did you know: being alone is actually good for you? The fact is... we all need some solitude in our lives. Solitude suggests a space of calm and peace. When you make room for alone time, or solitude, in your life, you get to spend quality time with someone really important, yourself.

Solitude can be a positive, constructive state. It can be a time for being creative, gaining perspective, and doing whatever you want without having to worry about anyone else. You can sit quietly with your thoughts, immerse yourself in your own ideas, and reflect on your life.

Let's talk about some of the benefits of solitude. How do you go from feeling blue about being alone to actually cherishing alone time? Here are some guidelines.

Choose solitude.

Let's face it, you can always find somewhere to go where it's noisy, busy, and there are lots of people around you. But that can feel even lonelier than being alone, especially if you don't feel a connection to those surrounding you. You know the saying, lost in the crowd. Well, it can be a real feeling, and not a good one. Instead of putting yourself in that kind of position, why not make a choice to spend time doing whatever you want to do instead of trying to fit in.

Enjoy your time with you.

Throw away the idea that you always need a companion to do something fun or be happy. Take yourself to a movie, out to dinner, or to a museum. Do something you enjoy. Enjoy the freedom and good company.

Connect with yourself.

Solitude gives you quiet time to be in your own head, with your own thoughts. Rather than feeling unwanted or stigmatized because you're alone, consider it a gift. It can give you time to develop self-awareness. Also, you're building self-confidence and inner strength when you can be happy on your own.

And here are some ways you can really benefit from alone time.

Recharge your mental and emotional batteries.

Socializing can be draining. When you're interacting with others, you may feel you have to keep them happy, make them feel good, laugh at their jokes, sympathize with their woes, and more. In social settings, we do these things to tend to each other's feelings and needs. When you're alone, there's only one person you need to keep happy, you.

Have more time to think.

Have a hectic life? Who doesn't these days? Solitude gives you a great chance to think about things, make decisions, and learn more about yourself. You might use the time to write in a journal or just relax, let your thoughts flow.

Grow more independent.

Learning to be comfortable by yourself can build your self-esteem and inner strengths. It can make you feel more confident. That self-assurance will spill over into other areas, like your work, home life, and relationships.

Ready to give it a try? Make a choice to spend time alone once a day, once a week, or whatever works for you. If you find yourself alone unexpectedly, turn that time from sad to glad. You may be pleasantly surprised to see how good you feel when you start to embrace some solitude in your busy life.

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44.27.362.1-RFL (12/18)