

# Essay on what is loneliness

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For many, loneliness is simply a lack of company. This definition, in itself, is extremely accurate, if a little obvious. For others, loneliness can mean having a great group of friends and an active, busy social life but then returning home to an empty home, sleeping alone in a bed, and having nobody to share thoughts, feelings and opinions with. However, what is arguably the worst form of loneliness is the person who has the great friends, has the loving partner but still feels entirely alone in the world. When a person feels as though they are simply ‘fitting in’ rather than being able to be themselves, however different they may be, the loneliness is compounded by the fact that the people surrounding you love someone who you are only pretending to be; the thought of if you were yourself, they might not like you is the loneliest feeling in the world.

Loneliness is not simply isolation. Often, being alone is a calming, relaxing state to experience: not having to fight over what is on TV, what to have for dinner, whether it’s acceptable to wear your pyjamas all day... sometimes, being alone is cathartic. However, it is when that isolation stretches out into days and days without talking to another human being that it becomes a problem: loneliness. As people, we are intrinsically designed to seek out company and social situations; whilst some may prefer their own company for a lot of their time, the need to socialise is still built into our DNA.

For the vast majority of people, they pair off into couples and share experiences together: holidays, concerts, family events, and they are each other’s eternal company. When a relationship ends, the individuals are plunged back into a world without each other’s support network and loneliness is acutely felt at the loss of their partner. However, if the

individual is lucky then their friends will take them to the pub, listen to their woes and generally help to bolster them back to feeling like their normal self again. This temporary state of loneliness relies heavily on being abated by the pre-existence of a support network; it is vital to maintain friendships to avoid loneliness.

As couples enter their old age, it is a sad fact of life that one of them will eventually die. For some, old age is equated with loneliness because of this, especially if the couple didn't have children. For many old people, they counteract loneliness by bring a pet into their home. Depending on their health, others move into warden-assisted housing which often has day rooms where the elderly residents can all sit together, chat, watch television and sometimes, play games. Socialising is an important part of a healthy life and it is imperative that this happens whether you are five or sixty-five.

Life is full of exciting experiences that should be shared with loved ones. Whether they are your family, friends, co-workers or your partner, these experiences are a way of warding off loneliness. Find people who love you for who you are and accept you, faults and all, for who you really are. Feeling lonely is a depressing and emotionally draining experience but with the advent of Facebook, mobile phones and e-mail, it is now easier than ever to catch up with friends and maybe even make some new ones.