

The difference between loneliness and aloneness

Written by Timothy Houston
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A friend of mine recently stopped me to share how my article "The power of Aloneness" had positively impacted her life. Because she is an excellent writer and presenter in her own right, I was both humbled and inspired. Others may have been similarly impacted so I thought it would be a good idea to revisit the difference between loneliness and aloneness. This knowledge will be extremely valuable, especially to women who are in-between relationships or experiencing the empty nest for the first time. It is in our understanding of the difference that we will be able to maximize our quiet time.

"There is a tremendous difference between loneliness and aloneness. When you are lonely, you are thinking of the other, feeling that it would have been better if the other - your friend, your wife, your mother, your beloved, your husband – were there. Loneliness is absence of the other."

Osho - The Discipline of Transcendence Volume 1, Chapter 2

Men and women view extended time alone differently. Men often see time alone as an opportunity to do the things they enjoy. They will go hunting, fishing, or on any other outings that will allow them time to get away. Women have a different view on this. They often see time alone as being absent from the ones they love. The fear of loneliness is one of the reasons some women allow themselves to be with men who are unhealthy for them. The belief that you need someone unhealthy in your life to keep you from feeling lonely is not good. This temporary relationship does not allow you the time alone needed to discover the real self-value that comes from reflecting within.

The difference between loneliness and aloneness is a matter of perspective. Loneliness is a feeling and not a reality. It is a negative state because it equals you minus the other. This is an indication that you may be placing greater importance on others than yourself. Loneliness suggests that you are less when others are not present. It makes you dependent on others instead of using your time alone to work on yourself.

"Aloneness is the presence of oneself. Aloneness is very positive. It is a presence, overflowing presence. You are so full of presence that you can fill the whole universe with your presence and there is no need for anybody."

Osho - The Discipline of Transcendence Volume 1, Chapter 2

Aloneness is a choice. It is power and freedom. Relationship with other is a by-product of "self," and as a result, strengthening yourself, strengthens your relationships. When there is no significant other, when there is quiet time, you have the power to choose to use this time to develop yourself, to become greater. All your energy and effort, the time and energy that you might otherwise have to expend on others can be concentrated on you. This will help you to avoid relationships that will drain you. Time alone allows you the opportunity to gain the knowledge that will show you how to attract those that will add positive value to your life.

You are never truly alone. Because of the God-given power within, you do not need anyone to make you whole. The Father has done that for you. He has declared you to be all together beautiful and fearfully and wonderfully made. Never settle for less. This is the true knowledge of self. God has promised to light up your path and guide you into all truth. He also promised to

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never leave or forsake you and to be with you always even to the end of the age. I believe the greatest difference between aloneness and loneliness is the time you spend with God.

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