

THE EMPTINESS OF LONELINESS!

*Eleanor Rigby picks up the rice in the church where a wedding has been...Lives in a dream
Waits at the window, wearing the face that she keeps in a jar by the door... Who is it for?
All the lonely people ... Where do they all come from?
All the lonely people ... Where do they all belong? ... Paul McCartney and the Beatles*

WHAT TO KNOW!

- ❖ Loneliness is not just being alone; it is a state of mind where people feel isolated, unwanted, empty, unimportant, anxious, and depressed
- ❖ Loneliness can occur even when you are surrounded by people
- ❖ A recent study at the University of Pennsylvania found that decreasing social media use led to a decrease in feelings of depression and loneliness and improvement in well-being
- ❖ In 2010, 40% of Americans reported feeling lonely regularly
- ❖ It is also estimated that 40% of people will feel lonely at some point in their lives
- ❖ About 60% of people feel lonely in their marriage
- ❖ Loneliness can be temporary due to environmental factors or can be chronic due to personality characteristics or a mental disorder
- ❖ Loneliness is highly correlated with alcoholism, depression, poor sleep, isolation, weight gain, and anxiety
- ❖ It increases the risk of stroke and cardiovascular disease as well as disease progression because of impaired cellular immunity due to isolation
- ❖ Lonely people are twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's disease
- ❖ Loneliness is subjective: even though you may have friends, you may feel disconnected
- ❖ Loneliness can make you actually feel physically colder
- ❖ Despite having a large social network, people can still feel lonely as it is the quality of the connection that matters
- ❖ Loneliness has been described as "social pain" when people are detached from others
- ❖ Loneliness can be caused by a relationship break up, move to a new location, isolation, divorce, grief, low self-esteem, lack of confidence, and depression
- ❖ In children, loneliness is linked to antisocial behavior including hostility, delinquency, and violent acting-out
- ❖ Individual therapy, group therapy, and animal-assisted therapy can be very effective in eliminating feelings of loneliness
- ❖ Emotional support animals such as cats, dogs, and horses can be very effective in decreasing loneliness and depression

WHAT TO DO!

- ❖ Recognize when you are lonely and that you need to be active to feel better
- ❖ Understand that loneliness can affect you emotionally and also physically
- ❖ Talk to others including strangers as connecting with others can cause good feelings
- ❖ Interact with people in person rather than online which will boost endorphins
- ❖ Push yourself to talk regularly with neighbors and co-workers
- ❖ Volunteer for community service where you can meet other people with similar interests
- ❖ Join a book club, attend discussions or lectures, work out at a gym
- ❖ Focus on positive thoughts and attitudes and be upbeat around others
- ❖ Seek professional help if you cannot overcome your feelings of loneliness, depression, pessimism, and social anxiety

WE CAN HELP!

Call us at **954 755-2885** or email us at DrKimmel@KimmelPsychology.com

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