

LONELINESS

The change and development during university years bring about a variety of feelings. In addition to excitement and expectation, there may be feelings of loneliness. Some of us feel alone when they are rejected by a person or a group, while some others may feel alone when they have nobody to talk about his/her deep feelings.

What is loneliness?

Loneliness may intensify depending on the meaning you give to it. University students are inclined to have the following misconceptions: "Loneliness is a sign of weakness and immaturity" "If I'm alone, that means there is something wrong with me. These were supposed to be the best years of my life" "I'm the only one who feels this way"

Why am I alone?

- Separation from family and friends
- Stepping in a new and unfamiliar environment
- Shyness
- End of a relationship
- Disappointments in past relationships or fear of rejection
- Lack of people who understand you

What can loneliness do to me?

- Feeling isolated, angry, unhappy, fearful and not understood
- Being excessively self-critical and sensitive, self-pity
- Criticizing and blaming others excessively
- Self-doubt, shyness
- Decrease in self-esteem and a parallel decrease in success
- A (wrong) assumption that others assess you negatively
- Unrealistic expectations that everybody should love you or accept you to their group
- Difficulty with introducing yourself or participating in group activities; depending on others for maintaining self-esteem

What can I do?

If you feel lonely, do something about it. Loneliness is not a defect or a permanent personality trait. Loneliness is a feeling that is familiar to everyone.

Feeling lonely is a sign that some of your important needs are not met. Thus, you should act immediately.

To gain friends...

- Remind yourself that loneliness will not last forever.
- Say "hello" and introduce yourself.
- Have small conversations with the person who sits next to you.
- Participate in class discussions.
- Try to do your daily activities with others. For example,
- Eat with others
- Sit next to new people in class
- Find a partner to study or exercise with.
- Put yourself in situations where you can meet new people. Try the activities you are interested in. This increases the possibility of meeting people with whom you share a common interest and you can really like spending time.
- Use the opportunities of the campus. Find the organizations and activities such as clubs, part-time jobs, and voluntary pursuits.
- Try to improve your social skills. Practice to know others and make them know you. You may observe someone you find sociable.
- Don't wait for others to call you, you call them. Don't take rejections personally.
- Don't judge new people by your past experiences. Instead, try to look at each person you meet from a new perspective.
- Don't jump to conclusions about people. Know that we are all different and respect it.
- Intimate relationships develop slowly, as people start to share their feelings. Don't rush. Follow the natural flow of the process.
- Value all of your relationships, not just the one with your boy/girlfriend.

For myself...

- Don't neglect yourself because you are feeling lonely. Take care of your health, and spend time on your school and

hobbies. Consider the time you spend alone as an opportunity to get to know yourself, be independent and deal with your own emotional needs.

- Enjoy the time you spend alone, rather than bearing it until you find friends. Be active. Keep things like books, puzzles, music, etc. close to you.
- Consider doing the activities, which are usually done with people, alone. For example, you can go to a movie or a concert alone and may discover that it is fun.
- Don't be biased about opportunities; don't decide how you will feel before trying.
- In short, do not define yourself as a lonesome person. No matter how bad you are feeling now, your loneliness will diminish and eventually disappear as you focus on your current needs and learn new ways of having friends.

Don't wait for your emotions to drive you; you go, nice feelings will follow...

For More Information

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