

LONELINESS – Breaking the Code

Breaking the hidden code of loneliness with Psychophonetics

By Yehuda Tagar¹

“All things are in the Universe and the Universe is in all things: we in it, and it in us; in this way everything concurs in a perfect unity” Giordano Bruno

“The soul that sees beauty may sometimes walk alone.” Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

“tat tvam asi – you are that” (Hinduism)

the relationship between the individual and the Absolute, sixth chapter of the Chandogya Upanishad on the nature of Brahman

A thin line separates aloneness from loneliness. Being alone is a fact of life, without value added. It could lead to loneliness or it could lead to deepening connection to oneself, to nature, to wisdom, to thinking, to creativity or to rest. Loneliness is a form of suffering. It is an experience of being cut off and isolated from everything and everyone, but primarily from one's own soul.

Human beings are born to be social creatures and isolation is a form of starvation. The most severe form of punishment in most prisons in the world is solitary confinement: enforced social isolation. To enforce it on a human being is cruel. In a state of enforced social isolation it is natural and healthy to strive for meaningful contact and relationship with other human beings. Aloneness can be cured by company, or at least by striving to find company. After the death of a partner or parent or a child, in a state of being a migrant in a strange country or a refugee, aloneness can be painful. But even a painful state of aloneness is not by itself necessarily a state of loneliness. We can be alone on our own under the stars feeling connected to the whole universe, in the depth of meditation connected to the roots of existence or behind our desk in the most intense act of creativity – and we are not lonely.

Or we can be in the middle of social activity and business, in the middle of a noisy party, in the office with colleagues or in bed with our partner – and feeling hopelessly lonely. What is the boundary between being alone and being lonely? What actually is loneliness?

Recently I received a reminder of the essence of what loneliness is. A woman in mid life with two young children is struggling with a chronic disease who is threatening to kill her. There is no cure. Someone recommend her to see me and she came to see me knowing that I am not a medical doctor or consultant, just a counsellor. It took a while to clear expectation and for her to express her intuition about her expectations from this meeting. I mirrored to her that everything that is happening in the process of her therapy is external, that she is completely passive regarding the real interventions in her medical conditions. She wanted to find what is it that she is doing wrong. I managed to turn the guilt energy of this question into the possible interest in what she could potentially do right, which she is not don't yet. She had no idea. She just wanted to live longer than her present prognosis, to see her children grow, to enjoy her life which she loves.

Eventually I managed to create a pause in her endless accounts of her various visits to various specialists, treatments, check-ups and worries about medications – a moment of quiet was created in which she voiced her real hop from such a meeting: to be more inside of herself and less outside. She realised that she is chronically avoiding being with herself, always seeking involvement and business with other people, preventing any possible opportunity to be just with herself. She had an intuition that something there, in her deep connection with herself which she is chronically avoiding – there is, maybe, something she can do for her own healing which she is not doing yet. I to it up to be the ‘Wish’ for the session. We imagined her going to some of the walks which she tends to avoid. To really imagine herself doing it in spite of her habitual resistance.

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It was a real effort for her to stay in that imagination. She tried many times to drop it and talk about something else, but I helped her to return to it. Eventually she had to face and stay with three frightening, painful thoughts:

a) the idea of death itself; b) the prospect of the process of dying; c) the children being left without their mother when she will die. It was a real effort for her to stay with these painful thoughts consciously and by choice. Normally these thoughts are all around her, being pushed down, being avoided. Now, for a few minutes, with my encouragement, she stayed with them, choosing to feel them. She was amazed to discover that all those years she completely avoided thinking about the one element of human life that is certain for all: death. She realised that all these years she managed to completely avoid the thought of death, the thought of what might happen to her after death, the thought of what is happening to people once they shed away their physical existence. For the first time in her life – she stopped for a moment and faced this void in her soul. The same hesitation was faced in thinking about the imminent process of dying and about the fear of the children being left without their mother.

But during these moments she experienced no loneliness at all. That was a new discovery for her.

Then I invited her to choose a joyful moment to focus on, still in the imagination of her walk. She chose a moment of family outing, having a picnic together, which they have not done for a long time, for no clear reason. Thinking about that – her face lit up as if blood returned to it. I left her with the possibility of a daily meditation: to go for a daily walk, to pay attention to three worrying topics in her life and to stay with each one of them for a moment, and then to choose a joyful thought, and to stay with it for a while. It made sense to her. I hope she is doing it.

But my main point here is the observation of consciously crossing the line between aloneness and loneliness. She would normally avoid going for walks, which she knew are good for her health, because of her fear of loneliness. When she came to the session she had no idea how to overcome this fear of loneliness. Now she discovered something she could do about it. But during these moments of focusing on these frightening thoughts – which were inside and around her anyway – she actually felt no loneliness at all. What made the difference? Of course I was there during the session as an empathetic and caring companion for her, and there is no guarantee that she will be able to do it on her own. But I believe that there is a good chance of that, because my presence did not help her to avoid the fear of these thoughts, but encouraged her to face them. My presence was quite challenging for her. It will be actually easier for her – and for everyone – to do the same without me there. That is what we call in Psychophonetics 'Real Homework'.

So here is the code-breaker of loneliness: we do not experience loneliness because there is no one else present there with us. That is *aloneness*; we experience *loneliness* because we are not present *for ourselves*, because we are disconnected from our own soul, from our own deep emotional experience. The moment we pay attention, respect, overcome the fear of it and make a conscious decision to *feel* our pushed-down feelings – loneliness disappears.

This is the governing principle: *aloneness* is a social fact: there is no one else there at that moment; *loneliness* is an internal fact: I am not there for myself, I am cut off from my own feelings and from the depth of my existence. Consequently and inevitably – I am cut off from the world, even if there are many people around me, interacting with me, filling my social space at the time.

We humans have a deep individual soul, individual consciousness which gives meaning to our experiences, and a body that is going to die. That is the deal, for every human being. But many experiences that we carry in the depth of our soul are painful, hurtful, unwell, not healed, at the time of their creation – we could not deal with them directly, so we learned to avoid them. But these experiences had not gone away. They have nowhere to go. They belong to us, healed or not healed. In protecting our awareness from painful experiences – we create a wall between our consciousness and the depth of our soul. That protective wall was necessary at the time of its instinctive/reflexive formation. It served a purpose, but with a huge cost: it became a life-long habit, and an internal prison. Above this in-built internal wall – one's consciousness remains cut off from deeper reality. Life is smaller, more shallow, more monochrome. This is a major cause of loneliness.

The code-breaker of loneliness is the restoration of the deeper connection to oneself: one's deeper emotions, pains, fears, hurts. These are all parts of us, we are potentially bigger than all of them, but we don't know that we are bigger until we face these experiences that we are so afraid of. Across that threshold – there is no loneliness: depth of the soul replaces it. And through renewed connection to the

individual depth of the soul – numerous connections to life, to people, to the world are being renewed. The restoration to the depth of our own soul is the end of loneliness.

Deeper connection to one's own depth of soul enables deeper connection to the soul of others, to the soul of our own body, to the soul of nature, to the soul of humanity, to the soul of the world.

And there is no loneliness there.