

This Week's Message: Solitary **By Ellie Lingner**

Solitary: adj. 1. living or being alone 2. without others; single; only (a solitary example) 3. characterized by loneliness or lack of companions 4. lonely; remote; unfrequented (a solitary place).

There is a huge difference between being alone and being lonely. Many people love to be alone. Solitude is a welcoming friend. It gives them comfort, an opportunity to think, create, take stock of their lives. Others cannot bear to be alone with themselves and their thoughts for even one hour. Where do you fall on this continuum? There are many solitary pursuits that offer great opportunities. What do you enjoy doing when you are alone? Does the silence frighten you? Do you feel compelled to turn on music or television to avoid it? For some, silence is a welcome relief from the bombardment of noise that surrounds them everywhere, every day. Do you study alone or do better in a group? Do you walk or exercise alone or do you always seek a partner?

If you hate to be alone, have you ever thought about the reason? Does loneliness frighten you because you feel “left out” or because you fear boredom or your own thoughts? If you want to learn to enjoy solitude, start with 15 minutes a day. You might want to learn the art of meditation. It's not an easy thing to do, but well worth it. See what thoughts come up, but don't dwell on them. Acknowledge them and let them go. When you have mastered 10 minutes, try 15, then increase it to 30.

Feeling lonely is far different from being alone. It's easy to feel lonely in a crowd or in a family. Have you ever felt it? The dictionary defines lonely as “standing apart from others; unhappy at being alone; longing for friends, company, etc.,” but that is far different from choosing solitude. Try it. You might like it.

Week's Quotes:

*“There are days when solitude is a heady wine that intoxicates you with freedom, others when it is a bitter tonic, and still others when it is a poison that makes you beat your head against the wall.” Colette, *Freedom, Earthly Paradise* (1966).*

*“To dare to live alone is the rarest courage; since there are many who had rather meet their bitterest enemy in the field, than their own hearts in their closet.” Charles Caleb Colton, *Lacon* (1825).*

*“He never is alone that is accompanied with noble thoughts.” Fletcher, *Love's Cure* (1647)*

*“Better be alone than in bad company.” Thomas Fuller, M.D. *Gnomologia* (1732).*

"It is in solitude that the works of hand, heart and mind are always conceived, and in solitude that individuality must be affirmed." Robert Lindner, *The Mutiny of the Young, Must You Conform?* (1956)

"Solitude is as needful to the imagination as society is wholesome for the character." James Russell Lowell, *Dryden, Among my Books* (1870).

"Life is for each man a solitary cell whose walls are mirrors." Eugene O'Neill, *Lazarus Laughed* (1927).

"Solitude vivifies; isolation kills." Joseph Roux, *Meditations of a Parish Priest* (1886).

"I love to be alone. I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude." Thoreau, *Solitude, Walden* (1854).