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THE EXPERIENCE OF LONELINESS.

The City University of New York  
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1976

THE EXPERIENCE OF LONELINESS

BY

GREGORY PORTNOFF

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1976

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

THE EXPERIENCE OF LONELINESS

BY

GREGORY PORTNOFF

Adviser: Professor Bernard Seidenberg

Sixty-eight college students were instructed to think about a time when they were particularly lonely. They were then asked to write detailed descriptions of the following aspects of that experience: 1. the circumstances under which it arose; 2. what they thought, felt and wanted; 3. how they behaved; and 4. the circumstances under which the experience was alleviated. The respondents answers were then subjected to a content analysis.

All but two of the respondents acknowledged that they had at some time felt lonely. Failure to discern discriminably different patterns of loneliness led to the conclusion that there was a fundamental unity to the experiences that the respondents had described; that is, that the term "loneliness" was not a conceptual umbrella sheltering several generically different classes of experience.

Loneliness was shown to be precipitated by lack of or estrangement (though not necessarily physical separation) from relationships of

mutual caring. The experiential elements most frequently mentioned by the respondents in their descriptions were depression, longing for others, boredom and/or apathy, anxiety, alienation and emptiness. Women reported depression and longing for others almost twice as frequently as did men. Men, on the other hand were equally disproportionately high on boredom and/or apathy. Engagement in activities was reported to be relatively ineffective in alleviating loneliness; while communication with others was highly effective.

The bulk of the exploration was an attempt to formulate a theoretical framework within which the findings of the present investigation could be understood. It was argued that the key to understanding both the similarities and differences among experiences of loneliness is the concept of meaning - that under conditions of estrangement from others, both self-definition and the significance of external objects and activities erode. Loneliness was seen to be an analog within the symbolic realm of the physical-world experience of being lost. It was defined as, "an experience of disorientation or lostness within a dimensional domain of meaning, resulting from lack of or disruption of relatedness to significant Others."

The meaning hypothesis was applied to aspects of the data other than those from which it was generated. It was found to handle these data adequately. Next, the means by which people acquire and maintain the feeling of having meaning was explored. It was argued that this is a two-step process; involving first, knowing that an Other is experiencing me as meaningful, and then converting that awareness into an absolute sense of meaningfulness.

Other behaviors and experiences were then looked at in the light of the meaning hypothesis. The joy of romantic love was seen as a

temporary cessation of a lonely emotional ambience; resulting from a positive feedback-loop situation, in which both members of a dyad reach unprecedentedly (at least in adulthood) high levels of meaningfulness. Communication and conformity were discussed as means toward establishing the common meaning domains necessary in order to have the experience of really being with an other person. Neurosis was touched on as a means toward generating spurious meaning. And spirituality was discussed as a way to achieve the experience of absolute meaningfulness without going through the usual prerequisite step of becoming meaningful to other persons.

It is difficult to explore an area that is problematic to as many people as loneliness is, without suggesting at least some tentative solutions. The final section of the dissertation offers some prescriptive measures suggested by the theorizing that precedes it.

## PREFACE

Sometime early in the fall of 1970, I walked into the City University of New York with what seemed to me to be the definite intention of quitting school once and for all. I was feeling over-age for a student; and requirements were stretching out before me like melting taffee.

Inquiries regarding procedures for withdrawal led to my being shown to the office of Stanley Milgram, then chairman of the Department of Social Psychology.

I don't remember much about the conversation that ensued, except that we talked a lot about loneliness, a deep interest of mine that I felt had been paid far less attention by psychologists than it deserved. I left in about a half hour ready to write a doctoral dissertation.

During the months that followed, I experimented with various research designs until I arrived at one that was acceptable to both myself and my dissertation committee. The data was collected during the summer of 1971, and promptly put on ice as I became involved first in a move across the country, and then in meeting the demands of my first permanent full-time teaching position at The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington.

The data thawed out during the summer and fall of 1972; and a first draft of the dissertation was written and submitted.

This final draft differs from my initial effort in its incorporation

of suggestions made by my committee and changes of my own based upon ideas that accrued during often long intervals of time that elapsed between flurries of work on the dissertation. The latter consist largely of insights that range beyond what is directly implied by the data at hand. This includes an additional section, in which I've attempted to indicate some of the implications that my findings and theorizing have for alleviating and coming to terms with loneliness.

Because it is written informally, and intended to be useful to people whose interest in loneliness is not purely academic, this section, in particular is not "dissertation-like." Yet I feel that within my looser speculations and advice lie some of the more important ideas I've had throughout the course of creating this work.

In my re-readings of what I have written I have come across a number of striking inconsistencies. For example, my statements are sometimes about myself, sometimes about "people," "one," "you," etc. Most of the time this reflects whom I actually intend to talk about; but at times it's either copping out on revealing myself or unthinkingly sticking in what seemed most appropriate at the moment.

A similar situation occurs in my usage of masculine and feminine pronouns. Generally, I've used masculine pronouns when referring to people who could be of either sex. However, occasionally I've used the more accurate, though stilted he/she or him/her.

The grossest inconsistency I have found lies in the disparity between my fantasy of how I would go about studying loneliness, and what actually happened. My methods section spells out my intentions in considerable detail. But like many a game-plan, significant parts of it were left behind upon running afoul of abrasive opposition (in this

case largely the dogged determination of the respondents to say things other than what was expected of them). Thus, while the data was collected as planned, its analysis diverged from my expectations considerably.

While having the data itself dictate the format of its analysis would appear to violate scientific protocol, it is in keeping with the spirit of phenomenological investigation. Nevertheless, the changes were not made without trepidation; and remain a reminder of my naiveté. However, even at some cost to consistency and style, it seems more informative to leave the introduction in its original form than to change it to match exactly what was actually done.

My sincerest thanks go to Stanley Milgram, without whose initial encouragement the study would not have been carried out; my dissertation committee, who, seeing some merit to my work, were willing to accept a highly atypical dissertation; and Bernie Seidenberg and Donna Portnoff, who, each in their own way, hung in with me for a long, long time.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The introductions that precede descriptions of scientific investigations typically define the subject or problem at hand; and place it within the context of the field as a whole through a review of relevant literature. In cases in which the subject is circumscribed by the field (e.g. a mathematical treatise), such a review may summarize a significant proportion of what has been said about the matter. In the investigation of loneliness, however, this is not the case. So much has been said about loneliness by investigators other than psychologists that a reasonably thorough review ranging beyond the confines of the field of psychology, could constitute a dissertation in itself (and in fact has--D'Aboy, 1972). Thus, it has seemed sensible to confine the present review to psychological studies of loneliness.

However, upon searching psychological literature for empirical studies of loneliness, one finds oneself almost immediately beset by another problem. The earliest investigation to be designated a study of "loneliness" concerns excessive masturbation in a three and one-half year old girl who had been separated from a nurse who had "fondled her considerably" (Fischer, 1933). Now, the remoteness of this situation from those to which the term "loneliness" is generally applied in its everyday sense raises a very serious question: when the phenomenon being studied is an experience, how seriously is the label attached

by the investigator to that experience to be taken? Am I to accept that the sexual habits of a three year old are what loneliness is about?

To complicate matters further, there are literally hundreds of studies to be found classified under such headings as alienation, isolation and homesickness. There is no question that in some of these studies the experience under investigation could legitimately be called loneliness.

Were we dealing with a clearly defined experience, we could simply survey those studies which deal with it and omit those that don't, regardless of how they are labeled. But as we shall see, the experience of loneliness is not as yet well defined. (To do so is, in fact, the major focus of the present investigation.) As such, there is no way in which relevant studies can be discriminated from the rest without first prejudging the very issue the present study was designed to explore (i.e. what is loneliness?). Thus, while recognizing that there may be a few vegetables among the fruit and many a plum missed, my survey of the literature will include all the empirical studies I can find that are designated investigations of loneliness, but out of necessity will not deal with potentially relevant studies under other headings.

Having eliminated both "non-psychological" studies of loneliness and psychological investigations of phenomena not explicitly labeled loneliness, one is struck by the extent to which the field has narrowed. In fact, so little has been written about loneliness by psychiatrists (who could certainly be expected to deal theoretically with it) that the highly respected Frieda Fromm-Reichmann has attributed dynamic significance to this paucity, arguing that there is an avoidance on the part of psychiatrists to face such a painful and frightening experience

(1959). This, however, implies: 1. that one cannot investigate loneliness without experiencing it oneself; 2. that there are almost no psychiatrists willing to face the pain experienced by a rather large number of artists and writers who have explored loneliness in considerable depth. Since neither of these implications seems plausible, I should like to suggest an alternative explanation to Fromm-Reichmann's.

It is this: Complete definition of a psychological state generally refers to the physiological events that accompany it, behavioral manifestations of it, and its probably genesis. For example, English and English (1962) define anger as: "n. an emotional reaction--aroused by being interfered with, injured, or threatened--that is characterized by certain distinctive facial grimaces, by marked reactions of the AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM, and by overt or concealed symbolic activities of attack or offense."

Loneliness has no known physiological concomitants. It is not dependably associated with any particular behavior. And while we know that prolonged physical separation from others will produce loneliness, it is common knowledge that one can be lonely in a crowd. "Loneliness" does not appear in English and English's avowedly comprehensive psychological dictionary. Too little is known about its relatedness to observable phenomena to make even reasonably explicit definition possible.

It is my contention then, that much in the way that English and English couldn't find an operational handle on loneliness, psychiatrists and behavioral scientists in general have found it too slippery to deal with. The few major psychological theorists who have had at least something to say regarding the nature of loneliness have shown this caution to not be unfounded. Freud (1915) refers to loneliness in terms

of object loss. H. S. Sullivan (1953)<sup>4</sup> anchors it to need for intimacy and Rollo May (1953) to anxiety. One cannot even say with assurance, then, whether the term "loneliness" refers to a single "species" of experience or to several discriminably different kinds? Fromm-Reichmann in fact, has argued for the latter, saying that,

...loneliness is one of the least satisfactorily conceptualized psychological phenomena, not even mentioned in most psychiatric textbooks. Very little is known among scientists about its genetics and psychodynamics, and various different experiences which are descriptively and dynamically as different from one another as culturally determined loneliness, self-imposed aloneness, compulsory solitude, isolation, and real loneliness are all thrown into one terminological basket of "loneliness" (1959).

However, the existence of several different kinds of loneliness is not the only way the disparities in definitions of loneliness may be explained. There is a second possibility based on the lack of consistency of the aspect of experience chosen as a basis for denotation. May's definition is based on affect, Sullivan's on conation, and Freud's on genesis. It is conceivable, then, that all refer to the same experience, but in different terms; much as the blind men in an ancient story could not agree upon the definition of an elephant because they had all touched different parts.

Speculation of this sort, however, gets us ahead of where I intended to be at this point. Going back then...

In a way the history of the empirical exploration of loneliness begins some four years before the results of the first large scale investigation of it was published. For it was at this time that Erich Fromm published Escape from Freedom (1941), a work that was to anticipate and to some extent explain the results of future investigators.

Very briefly, Fromm's chain of thought runs as follows: From the moment a child is biologically separated from its mother, its life may

be looked at as a continuous process of individuation. This process, he argues, is two-fold. On one hand, the child grows stronger physically, emotionally and mentally. On the other, as it emerges from the world of primary ties the child becomes more and more aware of being alone.

The process is slow. It may be months before it can recognize another person, and years before it ceases to confuse itself with the universe. But it is inexorable. The inevitable price of being an individual, is to stand alone, facing the world in all its perilous and overpowering aspects.

Parallel to this line of thinking are Fromm's views on the development of humankind as a species. "Phylogenetically, too, the history of man can be characterized as a process of growing individuation and growing freedom." As such, the adult is more alone in contemporary society than were his counterparts in the past. But "to feel completely alone and isolated leads to mental disintegration just as physical starvation leads to death." Thus it is imperative on both an individual and a cultural level to find ways in which to avoid this feeling. This may be achieved through relatedness to "ideas, values, or at least social patterns that give him a feeling of communion and belonging."

To summarize Fromm's views on loneliness, then:

1. Loneliness is an inevitable correlate of individuality.
2. It is mind-crushing.
3. Its alleviation lies through symbolic means.
4. It is more of a problem now than it has ever been before.

The historic significance of these notions is that each of them

appears in one form or another repeatedly in more recent explorations of loneliness.

The earliest large-scale empirical investigation of loneliness to be carried out was Duvall's study of the effects of separation on the wives and fiancées of servicemen (1945). Among the 67 wives and 10 fiancées who were interviewed, loneliness was found to be the most frequently mentioned problem. A five-point scale was developed; and respondents were grouped in accordance with their professed degree of loneliness. Degree of loneliness was found to be related to neither length of marriage nor length of separation. However, socially active wives were found to be less lonely than those who were less active. And by occupying, interesting and comforting their mothers, children were found useful in alleviating loneliness.

Duvall is not particularly interested in theorizing about the nature of the loneliness experience. She moves directly from her results to recommendations regarding the welfare of the population in question. However her findings are, in fact, of some theoretical significance. They suggest a number of properties of loneliness which will be mentioned only briefly here, but discussed in some detail with reference to the present investigation. They are as follows:

1. The experience of loneliness can be precipitated by the absence of a single significant other.
2. Plotted against time, degree of loneliness does not show the increasing intensity typical of drive states.
3. Engagement in meaningful interpersonal relationships other than the one whose disruption precipitated the experience can, to some extent, alleviate loneliness.

Greer (1947) in a single case study points out the critical importance of depth in interpersonal relationships with respect to loneliness. She argues that surface contacts ("token relationships" in her terms) regardless of their frequency do little to alleviate loneliness. Later, she elaborates on this theme (Greer, 1953) emphasizing the needs for support, understanding, communication and sharing in interpersonal relationships.

Greer attributes loneliness to broad social changes resulting in dissolution of close knit groups, anonymity and the loss of a predictable future. She argues that loneliness is an inescapable consequence of individuality, but that through it hidden assets such as growth and creativity may be found.

Bowman (1955) elaborates on the theme of social change as a major determinant of loneliness arguing that such factors as the breakdown of primary groups, urbanization, physical and social mobility and bureaucratization are making loneliness a widespread contemporary problem rather than a symptom of various neurotic and psychotic states.

It should be mentioned that both Bowman's and Greer's writings represent applications of the far more generalized notions regarding the relationship between social evolution and separateness proposed by Fromm (1941) and Riesman (1950).

Among the books that have been written expressly on loneliness by behavioral scientists Margaret Wood's Paths of Loneliness (1953) is the first and most scholarly. Following a necessarily brief review of relevant sociological and psychological literature, Wood explores in considerable depth what she feels are the major situational determinants of loneliness. Among the isolating factors considered are generation,

sexual segregation, unemployment, fame and responsibility, criminal transgression, disease, wanderlust and compulsory and voluntary solitude. Egotism and authoritarianism are presented as means of escaping loneliness. In each case an impressive array of examples from personal, biographical, scientific and literary sources are presented. However, no attempt is made at theoretical formulation of the nature of the beast. Thus, as is the case in other sociological approaches Wood's focus is primarily upon the circumstances that surround loneliness rather than on the experience itself. The reader is left with the feeling of having heard quite a bit about loneliness, but never having met it.

Fromm-Reichmann (1959), however, breaks away directly to the heart of the matter. Loneliness, she says, is not the name of a single experience, but is rather a conceptual umbrella that shelters a rather sizable number of discriminably different creatures. She then goes on to differentiate no less than 10 of them. They are as follows:

1. The culturally determined "cut-offness and solitariness" of modern man described by the sociologists as characteristic of this culture.
2. The "oceanic feelings" of unity with nature associated with solitude in the mountains, desert or near the ocean.
3. The constructive seclusion which yields creative artistic or scientific objects.
4. The loneliness of not being understood or accepted.
5. The loneliness of "other directed" persons when temporarily alone.
6. The loneliness of being with another who cannot share one's experience.

7. The sense of loss and aloneness following the death of a loved other.
8. The loneliness suffered by lovers after a broken-off affair.
9. The feeling of need for nonsexual physical contact.
10. "The exceedingly unpleasant and driving experience connected with an inadequate discharge of the need for human intimacy, for interpersonal intimacy." (taken from Sullivan, 1953)

It is the last of these ten that Fromm-Reichmann considers "real loneliness." In severe cases, she says, it reaches the proportions of a paralyzing horror which cannot be endured for long without resulting in psychosis. The experience is described as a "loss of reality" or as "a sense of world catastrophe." That there were people in one's past is more or less forgotten; and the possibility of future relationships lies beyond the realm of imagination.

Because it is so frightening few people who have experienced real loneliness can talk about it. "It can arouse anxiety and fear of contamination which may induce people--among them psychiatrists who deal with it in their patients--to refer to it euphemistically (my emphasis) as "depression."

It is apparent from even this brief description that what Fromm-Reichmann calls "real loneliness" is not something that is experienced by most people. It is reserved, rather, for those who have had histories of early emotional deprivation. What the majority of us call loneliness, she sees as mild borderline states generally induced by temporary aloneness. She concedes, however, that even these states are unpleasant enough

to be the cause of considerable anxiety and defensive behavior. It is, she argues, this association between loneliness and anxiety (and for that matter loneliness and depression, which has caused them to be viewed by some theorists as the same phenomenon; but that further research into the interrelations among them will show them to be distinctly different dynamisms.

It is difficult for a therapeutically oriented psychologist to explore a major psychological problem without at least saying something about its treatment. Fromm-Reichmann ends her paper with advice to the psychotherapist treating the lonely person. To the present investigator it may be summarized as this: offer your presence and your understanding--and expect nothing.

Here, we will back-track in time for a moment to follow up the source of Fromm-Reichmann's definition of "real loneliness," Harry Stack Sullivan.

In doing so, we find that Fromm-Reichmann has followed closely the conception of loneliness expressed in Sullivan's Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry (1953). However, while it is all there in its same indescribable awfulness, Sullivan seems to relegate loneliness less to the abnormal than does Fromm-Reichmann. Also, in analyzing loneliness he emphasizes a dimension that Fromm-Reichmann makes little of--age. In infancy he associates loneliness with a need for physical tenderness; in childhood, a need to participate in adult activities; in the juvenile era, a need for compeers and acceptance; and in preadolescence through adulthood, a need for intimacy. He seems to see these as cumulative elaborations; such that for an adult while loneliness may be experienced primarily as a need for intimacy it retains elements of its earlier forms

as well.

The design of the present study is such that it should generate data that will be useful in assessing these notions.

The format of Clark Moustakas' Loneliness (1961) is strikingly similar to Margaret Wood's Paths of Loneliness (1953), but with a poetic flair that Wood cannot (or perhaps chooses not to) match. Like Wood, Moustakas leans heavily on personal, biographical and literary sources. But taking a more psychological approach, he attempts to theorize as to the nature of the loneliness experience itself.

Moustakas argues that there are two basically different types of experience that are commonly referred to as loneliness. He calls them loneliness anxiety and existential loneliness. Loneliness anxiety, he argues, is not generically loneliness at all; but is rather a vague anxiety relating to self-alienation. Following Fromm and Riesman he says that contemporary culture alienates people both from their roots and from one another. Hence, loneliness is always just around the corner; and many of us live in perpetual fear of it. "Modern man is plagued with the vague, diffuse fear of loneliness. He goes to endless measures, takes devious and circuitous pathways to avoid facing the experience of being lonely."

Following this line of thinking it would appear that what Moustakas means by loneliness anxiety, then, is the anxiety that results when one loses contact with oneself in order to avoid the experience of loneliness itself. At times, however, whether loneliness anxiety is in fact anxiety rather than loneliness is not quite so clear. Immediately after the sentences quoted above is the following: "Perhaps the loneliness (my emphasis) of a meaningless existence, the absence of values, convic-

tions, beliefs, and the fear of isolation are the most terrible kind of loneliness anxiety." Here, the meaning of loneliness anxiety, which seemed straightforward becomes fuzzy.

Moustakas' definition of existential loneliness is of some use, but fails to clear the air completely. Existential loneliness, he says, is the "inevitable real loneliness of genuine experience." He elaborates on this statement saying that, "The vastness of life itself produces the emotional climate of existential loneliness, the mystery of a new dawn, the endless stretches of sea and sky, the immense impact of air and time, and space, the unfathomable workings of the universe. The constant, everlasting weather of man's life is not love but loneliness." One gets a rough feel from this of what loneliness means to Moustakas, but nothing that approaches a scientifically heuristic definition. However inasmuch as the book appears to be directed toward a lay audience, this may not have been a concern of his.

The tone of Loneliness and Love (Moustakas, 1972) is much in accordance with that of Loneliness, though it is somewhat more firmly grounded in the personal experience of the author. The issues have changed to remain contemporaneous (e.g. there is talk of encounter and confrontation), but the viewpoint seems fundamentally the same. The one apparent exception to this is that existential loneliness is now seen as expressing itself in two basic forms: "the loneliness of solitude, which is a peaceful state of being alone with the ultimate mystery of life--people, nature, the universe--the harmony of wholeness of existence; and the loneliness of a broken life, a life suddenly shattered by betrayal, deceit, rejection, gross misunderstanding, pain, separation, illness, death, tragedy and crisis that severely alter not only one's

sense of self, but the world in which one lives, one's relationships, and work projects."

Thus far, two doctoral dissertations have focused on loneliness, Hendrix (1971) and D'Aboy (1972). In Hendrix's exploration unstructured interviews were given to five selected subjects who expressed having had experiences of loneliness that were troublesome to them. Two personality tests (The Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation-Behavior test--FIRO-B--and the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule--EPPS) were then administered. The tests were scored, and edited transcripts of the interviews rated by professional judges for inclusion, control and affection.

Conclusions were drawn directly from the relationships among the interview material, the test scores and the judges ratings. The content of those conclusions will not be presented here. It is the result of a five-subject study that lacks a control group. Such data may be useful when treated as case history material, but attempting to base conclusions on quantitative differences within this context simply doesn't make sense.

D'Aboy (1972) refers to his methodology as "qualitative research" which is, in essence, a literature search. His results indicate that, 1) "loneliness" in some form is a familiar experience for most, though not all, persons; 2) "loneliness" does not have a consistent definition; 3) among counselors and counselees differences in understanding the concept of "loneliness" are more differences of degree than of definition.

D'Aboy concludes that, "The study of loneliness in a systematic manner is just beginning" and that "...more research should be done shortly." He adds that using the term "loneliness" is confusing in that it is used to designate such different affective states as "self-alien-

ation," "creative solitude," and "culturally induced estrangement."

In looking back over this review, a curious fact comes to light. Leaving aside those investigators whose speculations regarding loneliness are part of a larger theoretical endeavor we find that slightly more than half of the social scientists who have addressed themselves to the problem of loneliness are women. Within the behavioral sciences so many more men than women publish in general that lack of a corresponding disparity within the field of loneliness is suggestive of the possibility that loneliness may in some way be related to sex differences. While we are dealing with numbers here that are far too small to base any conclusions on, this hint of sex differences will be followed up in the present investigation.

## CHAPTER II

### THE FOCUS OF THE PRESENT INVESTIGATION AND PLANS FOR METHODOLOGY

The present investigation was designed to explore the experiences people designate as "loneliness;" and by doing so, to lay some groundwork for future investigations of loneliness. As such it is meant to be heuristic rather than definitive.

Briefly, a large number of accounts of experiences of loneliness were collected. This data was studied with two superordinate questions in mind: 1) Are there common elements that may be found in all experiences labeled "loneliness"? 2) Are there elements that tend to be related to specific other elements within given experiences of loneliness? The first question was geared toward constructing a general definition of loneliness; the second, toward the possibility of categorizing different patterns of loneliness. A taxonomy of this sort is seen as providing a necessary groundwork for more exact approaches to the issue.

#### The Problem Bias

In attempting to explore subtle similarities and differences between reports of intrapsychic states the problem of bias becomes particularly relevant. If, for example, the consistent presence of any element is to be treated as indicative of an intrinsic component of lone-

liness, the investigator must be certain that that element was not suggested by the question or instruction eliciting the response.

The least biased approach would be to ask some cross section of the population to simply describe in detail a lonely experience they have had. This approach was taken by Van Kaam (1959) in his study of "The Experience of Really Feeling Understood by a Person." However, such lack of structure makes comparison among descriptions extremely difficult. Van Kaam started with the assumption that all his respondents were describing essentially the same experience. As noted, in investigating loneliness this cannot be assumed a priori. Thus, comparison of highly unstructured responses would be likely to lead to the same unresolved question raised regarding the theoretical constructs mentioned earlier. Namely, do apparently different descriptions refer to different aspects of the same experience or to different experiences entirely?

#### The Questionnaire

The open-ended questionnaire that was given to respondents (see Appendix I) was an attempt to guide their responses toward comparable structure, while introducing as little bias as possible. Each question was intended to elicit a description of a different aspect of a particular loneliness experience that they recall having had. The four aspects of interest were:

1. The situation within which the experience occurred (including what the respondent saw as having precipitated the loneliness).
2. The nature of the experience itself.
3. Behavioral concomitants of the experience.
4. What alleviated the loneliness.

### The Respondents

The respondents in the present investigation were 68 students in introductory psychology courses that I taught at a large urban eastern university. Due to the absence of tuition and to open enrollment the group was more mixed in both ethnicity and social class than might ordinarily be expected on a college campus. The respondents ranged in age from 17 to 53, but clustered sharply between 18 and 22 years. Thirty-six of them were women and 32 were men.

### The Data Collection

The students were given the questionnaire during the summer of 1971. It was early in the quarter; and I had avoided talking about any subjects that I thought might have significant bearing on the study. The data were collected during the first half of a regular daytime class hour. The students were given as much time as they needed to respond to their own satisfaction to the questionnaire. All finished within 20-25 minutes.

### The Data Analysis

It is generally foolish to attempt to defend "white college sophomore samples" as quantitatively representative of larger populations. As such, exact proportions of subjects responding in any particular way are not to be taken too seriously. Nevertheless, the "case histories" that comprise the sample were considered diverse enough to offer a data base for both preliminary considerations of the range of experiences that people call loneliness, and some speculations regarding their meanings.

The fact that people are able to communicate about loneliness is proof that the experiences to which they refer have something in common. One focus of the data analysis was to search for elements that most or all of the descriptions share. The second focus of the analysis was an attempt to differentiate among different patterns of loneliness. As indicated previously, there are a number of standpoints from which one may view an experience. One may focus on its probable causes, behavioral concomitants, affective or cognitive components, etc. To the extent that psychological functioning is lawful, one may expect such aspects of any particular experience to form a coherent pattern that may be discriminated from patterns of other experiences. (Such patterns enable us to some extent to infer one another's feelings and to predict one another's behavior.) If loneliness then, is, as Fromm-Reichmann suggests, a term used to describe more than one experience, then detailed examination of the experiences that people label "loneliness" should reveal several internally consistent discriminable patterns.

It was my intention to develop categories which would enable me to sort the majority of the responses to each question. When possible, I would identify consistent patterns of response (patterns being correlated categories of response to different questions). I expected, for example, that different categories of precipitating factors would be correlated to different categories of alleviation. The criteria for categorization would to some extent be suggested by the data itself. However, several possibilities were apparent beforehand:

1. The precipitating situation--One of the few points of agreement consistent through all formulations about loneliness is

the notion that it is the result of isolation from other people. However, while physical separation from others will produce an experience of loneliness in most (perhaps even all) individuals, as Simmel (1956) points out, "The feeling of loneliness seldom occurs...so decidedly...as when one is conscious of being a stranger among many physically quite adjacent people." It would seem, then, that it is not merely the presence of others, but rather some form of relatedness to them that is necessary for holding loneliness at bay. The question of the precipitation of a given loneliness experience then becomes, "What particular kind(s) of relatedness is the individual lacking?" It was expected that the data would suggest a number of discriminable kinds of relatedness lacking in different experiences of loneliness. Such categories would provide unique information bearing on one of social psychology's most basic issues, "What is it that people need from one another?"

2. The experience itself--I see loneliness experiences as having cognitive, affective and motivational aspects. Although these components may be experientially fused, conceptual separation is possible. Thus, categorization was made in accordance with the dominant thoughts, feelings and desires expressed in the description. Some experiences, for example, were expected to be primarily of longing while others to center around boredom or anxiety.
3. Behavioral concomitants--It was anticipated that the answers to this question might not lend themselves to the procedure that

had been suggested. Pilot interviews had hinted that what people do when they are lonely may not be highly related to the kind of loneliness they are experiencing. The reason for this seems to be that the response to loneliness is frequently one of eliminating affect rather than attempting to alter the circumstances that are seen as responsible for it. The means chosen for anaesthetization seem related to factors other than the nature of what one wishes to blot out. The question was included primarily to garner information regarding the defenses people use to keep themselves from experiencing loneliness.

4. Alleviation of loneliness--In cases where the termination of the experience was the result of action taken by the respondent, answers to this question were expected to merely be an elaboration of the response to question three. However, in some cases the termination of loneliness may be independent of the respondent's behavior. It may simply fade; or perhaps be ended by events initiated by agencies other than the respondent himself.

#### The Discussion

As patterns of loneliness emerged, they would be related to relevant literature. While most of this was expected to fall within the scope of psychology, other sources (literature, philosophy, sociology, etc.) were acceptable. Emergent patterns were to be related to three demographic variables, the age of the respondent at the time of the experience, the sex of the respondent, and the year that the experience took place. However, choice of respondents was not based upon heterogeneity across

these variables. And ultimately sex was the only one of them that could be given serious consideration in the light of the data. Finally, if possible, the findings were to be synthesized within the format of a theoretical formulation as to the nature of the loneliness experience(s?).

## CHAPTER III

### SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES AMONG LONELINESS EXPERIENCES

Having collected the data, the first "result" that I noticed was that the data were, in fact, collectable. All but two respondents (one man, one woman) had contributed at least one experience designated as lonely. Two, spontaneously, had contributed a second experience. The fact that so many were able to relate to the task required by the questionnaire's instructions is in itself meaningful. While few of the experiences reported were of the devastating sort described by Fromm-Reichmann (1959), apparently a vast majority of people at some time or another experience what to them is loneliness.<sup>1</sup>

In order to discuss some of the similarities and differences among these experiences, responses to each question will be examined separately. For the moment, for the sake of clarity, the possibility of different

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<sup>1</sup>Rogers (1970) has argued that, "...individuals nowadays are probably more aware of their inner loneliness than has ever been true before in history." He explains that, "When one is scrabbling for a living, uncertain as to where the next meal will come from, there is little time or inclination to discover that one is alienated from others in some deep sense. But as affluence develops, and mobility, and the growth of increasingly transitory interpersonal systems instead of a settled life in the ancestral home town, men and women are aware of their loneliness." Hesse (1927) struck close to the roots of loneliness as a contemporary dilemma nearly 50 years ago when he said, "Now there are times when a whole generation is caught in this way between two ages, two modes of life, with the consequences that it loses all power to understand itself and has no standard, no security, no simple acquiescence." (see also Fromm, 1941)

kinds of loneliness will be ignored.

### The Precipitating Situation

Situations of Estrangement - The situations described ranged from the profundity of birth (e.g. #56)<sup>1</sup> and death (e.g. #'s 2, 29, 31) to the seeming innocuousness of an empty house (e.g. #43) or friends gone for the day (e.g. #14). Conspicuously absent were cases describing periods of prolonged physical isolation. Yet in almost all cases, some indication of estrangement from others was apparent.<sup>2</sup> This took a number of different forms. The most common event associated with the onset of loneliness involved physical separation from specific Others. In such situations, the respondents were not necessarily alone. But certain particular individuals, who were significant to them were, for one reason or another, inaccessible. In many of these instances separation was initiated by the respondent or by an external agency (e.g. #'s 1, 9, 48, 67), indicating that rejection is not necessarily involved in precipitating loneliness.

A second group of experiences focused on lacking an Other. Rather than missing specific individuals, these respondents experienced a lack

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<sup>1</sup>The verbatim responses of the respondents are given in Appendix II.

<sup>2</sup>Since physical isolation was not a precipitating factor in the experiences described by the respondents, it has not been explored deeply in the present investigation. However, because it is closely related to the subject at hand, something should be said regarding the nature of that relationship. Brownfield's (1965) survey of the effects of prolonged physical isolation show them to include most of those reported by the respondents in the present investigation. However, they appear in far more extreme forms; some of which are generally deemed symptomatic of psychosis (e.g. delusions, hallucinations). This suggests the notion of estrangement (as in the situations described by the respondents) as a sort of partial isolation operating much in the same way as physical isolation, but somewhat gentler in its impact.

of raw materials to fill particular roles complementary to their needs. Into this category, for example, would fall a large number of responses that expressed the need for a boy or girlfriend (see p. 25). A number of experiences of this sort were precipitated by situations that emphasized the respondent's estrangement by highlighting a sharp contrast to it (e.g. #'s 28, 30, 38).

In a third group of experiences, the significant Others from whom the respondent felt estranged were present, but were not behaving in such a way as to keep the respondent from feeling lonely (e.g. #'s 3, 54, 57).

In a number of cases (see p. 30) estrangement was not apparent as a precipitant of loneliness. These instances will be discussed in detail later.

The finding of estrangement and consequent loneliness in the absence of prolonged physical isolation supports the foregone conclusion that not simply lack of people, but rather lack of some form of relatedness to them is critical to the onset of loneliness. The existence of the third group of experiences of estrangement adds dimension to this notion. The relatedness in question seems to be somewhat fragile (e.g. In order to keep one from feeling lonely, not only must one's friend be around; but he must be acting like a friend). Or to put this more generally, the relatedness in question is somewhat dependent upon the Other's immediate orientation toward one rather than simply their identity.

#### Estrangement from Whom?

This brings us from discussion of the kinds of estrangements experienced to the question of the relationships involved. Unfortunately, the majority of the respondents were not explicit with respect to the

specific interactions they experienced as lacking or disrupted.<sup>1</sup> (E.g. "Someone I loved went away.") Thus, without any hints as to what to look for, attempts to generalize about the kinds of relatedness involved would require far more interpretation than is comfortable within the context of a phenomenologically oriented exploration.

However, although many of the responses were vague with respect to what was lacking, in most cases it was quite apparent who was lacking. Using the human objects of the experiences as a basis for classification, the following clusters become apparent.<sup>2</sup>

A. Experiences referring to separation from or lack of a boy or girlfriend (#'s 3, 4, 10, 13, 16, 17, 20, 22, 23, 26, 30(implied), 38, 40, 41, 44, 45, 46(implied), 47, 51, 54, 55, 57, 58, 62, 63, 65).

B. Experiences referring to separation from or lack of friends (#'s 1, 4, 5, 7(as if), 10, 12, 13, 14, 15(as if), 21, 24, 26, 27(as if), 33, 35, 36, 37, 40, 41 (implied), 44, 46 (implied), 47, 60, 66).

C. Experiences referring to separation from or lack of family (#'s 2, 6, 8, 10, 11, 17, 19(implied), 29, 31, 33, 35, 40, 43, 50, 52, 56, 61,

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<sup>1</sup> Respondents did, at times, clearly express needs they had during the experience (e.g. succorance in #57). However, this was generally in response to question #2 of the questionnaire rather than question #1, and may well be a result of loneliness rather than its cause. A dressing may be useful when one is cut; but cuts are not caused by lack of band-aids.

<sup>2</sup> Classification of this sort requires a multitude of small decisions. Making the grounds for each explicit would take a great deal of space, and obscure the major issues. Instead, the investigator has simply designated which cases were placed into each category, allowing the reader the opportunity for disagreement and reclassification of so chosen.

63A, 67).<sup>1</sup>

D. Experiences in which either no specific individual or group was indicated as lacking, or in which some significant event other than estrangement was referred to (#'s 2, 5, 7, 9, 10, 13, 16, 18, 19, 25, 27, 28, 32, 34, 35, 39, 42, 48, 49, 50, 53, 54A, 55, 56, 60, 64, 66, 67, 68).

All of the experiences described fit rather comfortably into one or more of these categories.<sup>2</sup> It was not unusual for a single description to fall into two or even three of them, as in cases in which the respondent has left his home (e.g. #'s 10, 13).<sup>3</sup> It is of significance that category D is not an "all others" basket. Family, friends and boy and girlfriends cover all the specific objects of estrangement referred to by the respondents. From this, it may be inferred that lack or disruption of the special kind of relatedness that an individual has to these particular classes of Others precipitates the experience of loneliness. The next question is then: What kind of relatedness do these relationships have in common?

#### Estrangement from What?

All of the relationships that have been described are ones that are characterized by mutual caring. This suggests that disruption or lack of caring relatedness may be the central factor responsible for the onset of

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<sup>1</sup>Due to the age distribution of the sample, in only a few cases does "family" refer to the respondent's husband, wife or children.

<sup>2</sup>Reports #4 and #26 rightfully belong either in category A or B, but not in both.

<sup>3</sup>Experiences that have been listed under more than one category have been underlined.

loneliness. A number of respondents support this notion by referring explicitly to their care for the Other(s) from whom they were estranged (e.g. #'s 11, 12, 26). However, many of the descriptions show far from total deprivation of caring relatedness. In quite a few cases, in fact, onset of loneliness was attributed to estrangement from one significant individual. This raises a problem of definition. The generally accepted meaning(s) of loneliness refers to situations in which an individual is isolated to a considerable extent from critical human relationships. Yet, here is a common case, labeled loneliness by the respondents, in which only one relationship is disrupted or lacking. It would be tempting to simply label this a misapplication of the term "loneliness"; to reason that under the pressure to produce exerted by the questionnaire, some respondents submitted the closest experience to loneliness they knew, a situation in which they had "missed" someone badly. However, this kind of thinking tends to lead the investigator toward defining the phenomenon in terms of his own presuppositions.

This being the case, the precipitation of loneliness by estrangement from what is presumably a small proportion one's caring relationships demands explanation. For if onset of loneliness is precipitated by estrangement from caring relationships, unless a person had very few, it would seem unlikely that loss or lack of one (or even one class of relationships) would be enough to produce the feeling of total, devastating deprivation seemingly experienced by the respondents. This suggests two possibilities, either or both of which may be operative in the precipitation of an experience of loneliness.

First, different relationships may profoundly influence one another. Life may be conceived of as a unified Gestalt, within which disturbances within one sphere may be expected to reverberate throughout the whole.

Perhaps in some instances of loneliness, estrangement from one critical individual may lead to estrangement from others. The data at hand lend some support to this notion. It has already been pointed out that many of the experiences reported involved estrangement from several categories of Others. While this may be explained, in part, in situational terms (e.g. Many Others are left behind when one leaves town.), psychodynamic factors seem to play a part as well. A considerable number of respondents, for example, report loss of interest in (and at times avoidance of) activities or persons other than the objects of their loneliness (see table 1 p. 33). Thus missing one individual may alienate the respondent from other potential sources of comfort.

Second, it is possible that people have several discrete interpersonal needs which may at times be met exclusively by one Other (or class of Others). In such cases this estrangement alone would be enough to produce total deprivation vis à vis that particular need. This suggests that aside from the mutual care common to all the relationships referred to by the respondents, each type of relationship may have forms of relatedness peculiar to itself. If this is the case, then looking over the categories of estranged Others may offer the hints necessary for generating some reasonable hypotheses regarding specific different kinds of relatedness essential to holding loneliness at bay.

A. Experiences of separation from or lack of a boy or girlfriend - Boyfriend-girlfriend relationships account for about 80% of the cases in which onset of loneliness was attributed to estrangement from only one Other. In addition, not one response referred to separation from more than one boy or girl. Thus, this would seem to be a case that exhibits strongly the exclusivity described above. Phillip Slater (1970) has explored in some depth this aspect of the romantic love relationship. It is

enough for the moment to repeat his observation that romantic love is unique among object relationships in its irrational specificity. Since romantic love is a foundation of the American boyfriend--girlfriend relationship, and the respondents conform to Slater's observations; it is reasonable to suppose that the experiences of loneliness characteristic of this group were precipitated by loss or lack of romantic love. Some implications that this has with respect to the nature of romantic love will be followed up later.

B. Experiences of separation from or lack of friends - The friends of respondents were found to be somewhat more interchangeable than were their boy and girlfriends. Friends were generally not referred to in the singular, and rarely, if ever, was loneliness attributed to the absence of a single friend.<sup>1, 2</sup> Correspondingly, the functions served by friends seem to be more diverse than those of boy and girlfriends. As such, it is far more difficult to speculate on a priori basis upon what forms of relatedness are disturbed by the absence of friends. The data offer considerable material that has bearing on this question; but since almost none of it lies in responses to question #1, it will be passed over for the time being.

C. Experiences of separation from or lack of family - Attempting to analyze this group of experiences in terms of discrete kinds of relatedness, raises all of the problems mentioned above and adds a fresh one. Relatives cited include parents, spouses, siblings, children

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<sup>1</sup>Numbers 4 and 26 are possible exceptions; but it is not clear whether or not the respondents are referring to friendships or romantic relationships.

<sup>2</sup>It should be remembered, though, that we are dealing with a relatively young sample. I suspect that among an older group, friends would appear to be far less interchangeable.

and grandparents, all of whom may be expected to be related to the respondent in different ways. Hence, this category offers little direction.

D. Experiences in which no specific individual or group is indicated as lacking - This is a particularly interesting group, in that it includes a far narrower spectrum of experiences than might have been expected from the breadth of the category itself. First, there are those experiences that are ontologically members of categories A, B, and C, but which by definition fall into this fourth category (e.g. #'s 9, 10, 19). For example, the student who says she felt lonely during her first few weeks at an out of town college probably misses her family, friends and/or boyfriend. Yet, unless these individuals were mentioned in her response, it could not be grouped under A, B or C.

A second group of experiences in which no specific individual or group is indicated as lacking is more interesting. These are situations in which the subject feels radically different from the surrounding Others. It is rare in its pure form (e.g. #39), but worthy of mention because of the frequency with which it shows up as a feeling in conjunction with other responses (e.g. #'s 4, 15, 38, 44).

A sizeable remainder of category D is made of of experiences in which the precipitation of loneliness was associated with some event other than estrangement from significant Others ('s 2, 5, 7, 9, 10, 13, 16, 18, 25, 27, 28, 32, 34, 48, 50, 53, 55, 60, 66, 67, 68). Of these, the most interesting are several accounts of personal crisis in which estrangement from others plays no apparent part ('s 34, 42, 49, 64). The data offer some hints regarding the relationship between personal crisis and loneliness, but again they don't lie in response to question #1, and so will wait.

### Estrangement and Time

There was considerable variation among the responses both in the duration of the estrangement that precipitated the experience and in the latency of its onset. In some instances, estrangement was permanent (as in estrangement due to death), in others it was a matter of hours (e.g. #'s 14, 54A).

Throughout the courses of the experiences described, there was no indication that loneliness followed the typical need pattern of gradually increasing intensity coincident to increased deprivation. In fact, in some cases (e.g. #'s 20, 43, 47) it seemed to appear instantaneously. And one subject (#65) reported experiencing it in anticipation of estrangement.

#### The Nature of the Loneliness Experience Itself

The section that follows is a survey of the thoughts, feelings and desires reported by the subjects to have been a part of their experience of loneliness. Originally, it was intended that each of these aspects of experience would be treated separately. However, in the light of the actual data, it is apparent that this would involve a considerable number of arbitrary decisions. (E.g. Is "emptiness" a cognition or an affect?) Instead, the thoughts, feelings and desires reported will be arranged simply in the order of their frequency of expression. These data are based on a total of 68 reports. Thirty-three came from the 31 men who reported experiences of loneliness; and 35 from the 35 women who did likewise.

The complete profiles of each subject's experience are shown in table 1<sup>1</sup>. The same data are presented in a more summarized form in table 2.

Depression - reported in 42 responses - In the majority of these cases, the respondent reported explicitly that she was depressed. However, in many responses depression was quite apparent while not explicitly named, (e.g. "I felt pain physically due to the injury. Emotionally I was unstable. I literally ran from school or work friends. I spoke very little, hardly laughed (both are exact opposites of my personality), couldn't eat without getting pains in my stomach and at times prayed that I'd die." - see #17).

Thus, responses mentioning symptoms typical of the depression syndrome (e.g. death wishes, thoughts of suicide, unhappiness, self-pity, negative self-valuation, loss of sense of humor or the ability to have fun) and a number that were simply depressed in tone (e.g. #4) were rated depressed. Twenty-seven of the reports of depression came from women as opposed to fifteen from men, raising the possibility of sex differences there.

Desire to be with others - reported in 25 responses - This was most frequently expressed as a wish to be with a specific Other who was missed. However, in a substantial number of instances the desire was specific in terms of the needs that had to be met rather than the identity of the Other who was needed. (Respondent #47 for example laments, "What I wanted most was someone to talk to who I knew cared and would try to assure me some-

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<sup>1</sup>In a number of instances data were drawn from responses to questions other than #2. If, for example, in response to question #3, a subject reported avoiding talking to others, alienation was scored whether or not he mentioned it as a feeling.

TABLE 1

## CATEGORIES OF EXPERIENCES REPORTED BY INDIVIDUAL RESPONDENTS

Male Respondents															
S#	1	2	3	4	6	7	9	10	11	13	14	17	18	21	24
1	Depression	X		X	X			X			X	X		X	X
2	Bore-Apathy	X		X				X			X	X			X
3	Alienation		X	X								X			
4	Irritability														
5	T, P, A**	X		X											
6	Other Want	X			X		X			X					
7	Indif. Att.***					X									
8	Emptiness												X		
9	Isolation												X		
10	Stomach														X
11	Nausea														
12	Anxiety									X					X
13	Lostness														
14	Meaningless												X		

Female Respondents																
S#	5	8	12	16	19	20	22	23	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
1	Depression	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
2	Bore-Apathy					X					X				X	
3	Alienation						X	X					X	X		
4	Irritability			X			X									
5	T, P, A															
6	Other Want		X		X	X				X			X			
7	Indif. Att.															
8	Emptiness		X			X	X									
9	Isolation									X		X			X	
10	Stomach					X	X									
11	Nausea										X					
12	Anxiety	X			X							X			X	
13	Lostness					X						X				
14	Meaningless												X			

\*Reports designated "a" are second experiences offered spontaneously by respondents #'s 54 and 63.

\*\*Tension, pain, anguish

\*\*\*Attribution to Others of indifference

TABLE 1 - Continued

34	37	39	42	43	44	51	53	54	54a*	60	61	62	63	63a	64	66	68	
X			X			X	X	X				X			X			Depression
	X					X	X	X		X			X		X			Bore-Apathy
X			X			X	X	X				X	X					Alienation
			X															Irritability
	X							X					X					T, P, A
										X		X	X					Other Want
X	X			X				X										Indif. Att.
X				X	X			X									X	Emptiness
		X			X			X		X							X	Isolation
								X									X	Stomach
								X					X					Nausea
			X							X	X				X	X	X	Anxiety
																		Lostness
X															X			Meaningless

33	35	36	38	40	41	45	46	47	48	49	50	52	55	56	57	58	65	67	
X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	Depression
	X															X	X	X	Bore-Apathy
			X				X			X									Alienation
		X								X			X		X			X	Irritability
			X										X						T, P, A
			X	X	X			X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X		Other Want
			X			X		X		X									Indif. Att.
X	X						X					X							Emptiness
				X										X					Isolation
																X			Stomach
							X									X			Nausea
		X				X		X	X				X				X		Anxiety
							X		X	X									Lostness
	X	X					X												Meaningless

TABLE 2

FREQUENCY OF SPECIFIC EXPERIENCES  
 REPORTED BY WOMEN AND MEN

	No. of Reports by Women (N=35)	No. of Reports by Men (N=33)	Total
1 Depression	27	15	42
2 Bore-Apathy	7	13	20
3 Alienation	7	10	17
4 Irritability	7	1	8
5 T,P,A	2	5	7
6 Other Want	16	9	25
7 Indif. Att.	4	5	9
8 Emptiness	7	6	13
9 Isolation	5	6	11
10 Stomach	3	3	6
11 Nausea	3	1	4
12 Anxiety	10	9	19
13 Lostness	5	0	5
14 Meaningless	4	3	7

what that I belonged somewhere and was necessary to someone or something.")

Lack of specificity is carried to its extreme by respondent #48 ("I felt I had to be with people most of the time.") Sixteen of the 25 responses were contributed by women.

Boredom and/or Apathy<sup>1</sup> - reported in 20 responses - Many of the subjects expressed a strong desire to do nothing. Others, upon becoming involved in activities, found it extremely difficult to maintain interest in whatever they were doing. They lost patience quickly, and were prone toward listless moping. Respondent #1's report expresses this feeling well-("Throughout the day I would look at my watch. Minutes turned into hours. I was very depressed. I had no patience to go swimming, watch T.V. or do any of the other things I enjoyed...") Thirteen of these reports were contributed by men, as opposed to seven by women.

Anxiety - reported in 19 responses - This group included reports that made mention of anxiety, fear, insecurity and nervousness. In terms of severity, the responses ranged from mild tenseness to ones bordering on panic as in #61's odd mixture of nightmare and fantasy--

That night I dreamt about my parents and I actually saw them in my dreams. At the point where I saw them they were very filthy and they were wearing ragged clothes. In the dream I saw them walk into a place labeled "bath" in one of the concentration camps. I tried to scream but I had some feeling of helplessness (although I wasn't part of the dream). Moments later the gestapo was dragging out their bodies and piling them onto a truck. Seconds later I woke up and just sat in my bed feeling very lonely and with a rapid heartbeat. After a few seconds when I realized what I had just saw, I sort of went hysterical. Finally I raced into my

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<sup>1</sup>Experiences of boredom and apathy have been grouped together because I see them as essentially the same. The difference between them lies not in the experience itself, but in its attributed locus of causality. When we attribute the experience to an impoverished environment, we call it boredom; when we blame ourselves, it's apathy.

parents' room but it was empty. I started to scream very loudly, then I quieted down and started to think about myself and what I would do.

Alienation - reported in 17 responses - In these cases, the experience involved a willful separation or desire to be separate from Others, confirming that loneliness may be in part self-inflicted. Respondent #49, for example is quite explicit about this--

During this experience I always went to lonely places. I didn't want to talk or listen to anyone. Sometimes just hearing a strange person talking got me so frustrated that I would have to leave and walk off to get myself cooled off. I felt angry towards the whole world in general. I just didn't want to be bothered with anything at all.

As might be expected, there appeared to be a negative relationship between expression of alienation and those of desire for others noted above. In only four cases did expression of both appear in the same report. The significance of these instances will be looked into later. The seven alienation responses reported by women all occurred in correspondence with reports of depression. A similar, though less striking, relationship was present among men.

Emptiness - reported in 13 responses - In the majority of these cases, the respondent simply reported feeling empty. (E.g. "Physically, I felt an emptiness in my stomach, almost on the verge of nausea but not quite." see #54.) However, three cases are included in which the feeling was externalized. One respondent felt surrounded by emptiness, a second, that time was empty, and third sorry for her cat's empty life. It is difficult to say what emptiness means in this context. Empty of what? For the moment, at least, no effort will be made to answer that question.

Isolation - reported in 11 responses - This group includes cases in

which respondents stated that they felt isolated or alone. Respondent #29's account of her experience at the time of her mother's death is an extraordinarily powerful description of isolation. It is one of the few reports given by respondents in this exploration that would undoubtedly qualify as "real loneliness" even under Fromm-Reichmann's stringent criteria. It reads as follows:

The time when I felt the loneliest was prior to and during and after the death of my mother. This period lasted from approximately the age of 16-17 or 18 years of age. It was one in which I felt detached from everything. I felt as if nothing was a part of me and yet I was carrying an unwanted burden of the whole world on my shoulders. The closest feeling which I can associate with it which can be induced is one in which one is on heavy medication (approx. 1000 mg thorazine). (It's as if you have a shield around you and all sound, motion etc. are on a completely different level of reality.) The analogy in regards to being heavily medicated lies in the fact that you're completely into yourself and any contact with the "outside," whether an effort is made on your part or not, is impossible. Loneliness to me at that point in my life gave me the feeling, in regards to relating to the "outside," I was in a room and there were pictures (motion pictures) projected on all the walls. I was trying to communicate with the people in them but it was an impossibility because I was on a different plane of reality--all alone.

The following responses were reported by fewer than ten respondents.

Indifference attribution - The majority of these responses explicitly stated, "No one cared for me (or about me)." The remainder seem to be minor variations, "no one appreciated me," "no one understood me," and "no one liked or wanted me." This narrow beam covers almost the entire range of negative attitudes toward the respondent attributed to others. Thus, estrangement from caring relatedness again shows up as a significant factor in the experience of loneliness.

Irritability - This includes two instances of anger directed toward a particular person. Generally, however, these cases refer to a tendency

to become irritated more easily than usual. Its occurrence does not seem to be correlated to the reports of lack of patience in sustaining activities, nor to the alienation category. It may be of significance that all seven of these responses occurred in correspondence with reports of depression. However, this relationship could merely be correlational in that six of them were reported by women whose loneliness, as shown earlier, seems typically depressive.

Undifferentiated pain - This is a rather broad category which serves as a basket for anguish, pain, tension and other undifferentiated unpleasantness. The comments that are included in it seem to be efforts on the respondents' part to sum up their overall experience rather than specific feelings in themselves.

Meaninglessness - This group includes explicit references to feeling meaningless, purposeless, useless and unsuccessful. "Most of the time my unhappiness," says #64, "was tied to finding a meaning for what I was doing, for life, was it worth it?"

Stomach sensations - Contrary to popular belief, loneliness is not felt in the heart. If anything it gets one in the stomach, which was the only specific part of the body referred to in any of the data. Two of the respondents who reported stomach sensations said they felt nauseous. Nausea was also reported by two other respondents, who were not included in this category, having made no reference to where in their body it was experienced.

Lostness - Included in this category are reports of feeling lost, out of place and not belonging. It may be of significance that all were submitted by women.

The remainder of the responses were reported three times or less; and as such, are not included in table 1. The group of responses that were reported only once includes some that were genuinely idiosyncratic, and others that were simply too vague to classify - extreme fatigue (#'s 36, 38, 41); feeling sick (#'s 20, 42, 66); negative evaluations of others (#39 - their interactions were meaningless, #44 - they were shallow, #53 - they were harsh); physical weakness (#'s 36, 58); desire to be more like other people (#'s 4, 44); desire to escape (#'s 26, 53); insomnia (#'s 45, 53); part of me missing (#26); detached, sound and motion on a different level of reality, not solid, molecules spread apart, fed up (#29 - apparently psychotic at the time); needing to share feelings (#50); everything indifferent, everything pressing (#40); needing sex (#41); strange (#42); disgusted (#45); nothingness (#48); unstable (#51); secure (#54A); dazed (#61); frustrated (#51); hatred, jealousy, anticipation, adventurousness (#65).

Both increased and decreased appetite were reported by a number of respondents, but no count was kept because of the questionnaire's explicit suggestiveness in this direction.

#### Behavioral Concomitants

Question #3 asked the respondents about their behavior during their experiences of loneliness. As expected, responses to it showed that when lonely, people do not behave in any particular way that is characteristic of that state. While many of their activities may be motivated by loneliness, they are relatively mundane behaviors that may be engaged in for any number of other reasons as well. What follows is a list of the activities initiated by the respondents during their period of loneliness.

They include a number of responses to question #4 in which the respondent himself initiated the behavior described. The listing again follows order of frequency. Since the categories are somewhat fuzzy, exact counts should be taken only as rough indications of order of magnitude.

Involvement in activities - reported in 25 responses - The nature of the non-interpersonal activities engaged in by the respondents was diverse; though television viewing, listening to music, reading, hobbies and work were each mentioned a number of times. Some respondents reported explicitly that through activities, they could forget what was bothering them. An effort to forget was also reported by two respondents who did not report involvement in activities (see #'s 1, 2, 13, 14, 17, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 33, 35, 36, 37, 43, 45, 50, 51, 52, 53, 55, 60, 65, 67, 68; and #'s 58, 63).

Communication seeking - reported in 18 responses - This category includes instances in which the respondent initiated communication with others.<sup>1</sup> Generally the subject was the respondent's "problems." And it was clear that the Other played the role of a listener (see #'s 1, 3, 9, 16, 17, 18, 22, 24, 25, 30, 33, 37, 38, 40, 46, 56, 57, 63).

Active avoidance of others - reported in 11 responses - The cases in this category run the gamut of alienated behavior from speaking less than usual to not leaving one's bed (see #'s 2, 4, 14, 17, 26, 31, 34, 50, 54, 62, 64).

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<sup>1</sup>In a few cases that were included, it was difficult to ascertain whether the respondent or the Other initiated the interaction. Cases in which it was clear that an Other initiated the contact were omitted.

Consumatory behavior - reported in 11 responses - Included are reports of eating (5- to be interpreted cautiously because of appetite suggestion in the questionnaire), drinking alcoholic beverages (3), smoking (2- no indication of whether it was dope or cigarettes), and drug usage (1) (see #'s 37, 43, 45, 60, 65 and 7, 55, 63 and 3, 58 and 38).

The following behaviors were reported by fewer than ten respondents.

Rationalizing--restructuring - A number of respondents seemed to more or less try to talk themselves out of feeling lonely. While most of this group seemed content with "pep talks," one enterprising soul cultivated a hatred for the object of his loneliness, and thereby reduced it (see #'s 4, 7, 10, 16, 40, 47, 51, 62).

Fantasy - The typical theme was being together with the object of estrangement (see #'s 9, 13, 21, 48, 55, 65, 66).

Friendship seeking - These are not cases in which a known friend was sought to speak to or to share in some activity. Rather they are ones in which an attempt was made to become friends with new individuals. In 4 cases platonic friendships were the object; in 1, a romantic relationship; and in 1 case, both. The respondents whose reports fell into this group were typically individuals who were away from their usual environment for one reason or another (see #'s 21, 25, 66, 68, and 5 and 13):

Crying - All cases were submitted by women (see #'s 47, 52, 55, 56, 57).

Walking - Because walking does not occupy the mind, this behavior was considered generically different from the "activity involvement" above

(see #'s 27, 57, 64, 67).

### Events that Alleviate Loneliness

The final question asked of the respondents was designed to garner information on the kind of events that served to alleviate loneliness or quell it completely. The following are events which were reported to do this. All were given in response to question #4. Reports that indicated only temporary or slight alleviation are omitted. In this instance no differentiation was made between happenings which were initiated by the respondent and ones for which some outside agent was responsible. The listing once more follows order of frequency.

Reunion with or replacement of estranged Other - reported in 20 responses - In the majority of these cases, the specific Other or group missed by the respondent became once more accessible, putting an abrupt end to the experience. In the remainder, a new Other or group, who appeared to fill the slot in the respondent's life left vacant by the original was substituted (see #'s 5, 9, 10, 13, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 35, 43, 45, 57, 60, 61, 65, 66, 67, 68).

Interpersonal contact with others who were not the objects of estrangement - reported in 19 responses - In 13 of these instances, the respondents spoke to Others about what they were feeling. (Of these 13, 9 were women.) In 4 of the cases, the respondent was contacted by friends (see #'s 1, 3, 6, 8, 17, 18, 22, 25, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 37, 38, 39, 40, 46, 58).

The following alleviating events were reported by fewer than 10 respondents.

Involvement in activities - Activities that alleviated loneliness ranged from long range involvements, such as getting a job, to T.V. time killing (see #'s 22, 35, 37, 50, 60).

Problem resolution - This group of responses were given by respondents who had reported that their experience of loneliness had been precipitated by facing a problem by themselves. In these cases, loneliness was alleviated by alleviating the problem that had precipitated it. (see #'s 42, 56, 64).

Fading - In these instances the alleviation of loneliness was not associated with any particular event. The experience simply faded over a period of time (see #'s 27, 36, 45, 53, 54A, 62).

Nine respondents indicated that they were still lonely at the time they responded to the questionnaire. In these instances, the conditions that precipitated the experience still prevailed (see #'s 2, 12, 28, 41, 44, 49, 52, 55, 59).

The effectiveness of various behaviors in alleviating experiences of loneliness is summarized in table 3.

TABLE 3

VARIOUS MEANS FOR ALLEVIATING LONELINESS  
AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

	Sought	Engaged In*	Reported As Relievers	% Effective
Activities	25	25	5	20
Communication	18	19 -57 +8,34	13	68
Avoidance	11	11	0	0
Consumatory Behavior	11	11	0	0
New Friendships	6	5 -25	5	100
Rationalizing	8	8	7	88
Crying	5	5	0	0
Walking	4	4	0	0
Fantasy	7	7	1**	14

NOTE: The numbers in the first three columns indicate the number of respondents who sought, engaged in, and were relieved by each of the events listed on the left.

\* Number sought minus cases in which seeking was not successful plus cases in which event occurred without being sought.

\*\* In this particular case, the onset of loneliness was attributed to cessation of fantasy.

## CHAPTER IV

### PATTERNS OF LONELINESS

Thus far, responses to the four questions that made up the questionnaire have been scrutinized question by question across respondents. This has yielded information on the range of experiences that people call loneliness; and has provided at least a rough notion of the relative frequencies of various precipitating factors, feelings, behaviors, etc. The second type of analysis planned was to look over the data within respondents across questions. It was expected that this would yield evidence of different patterns of loneliness, that is, reliable associations among classes of precipitating circumstances, resultant thoughts and feelings, and alleviating events.

Some relationships were shown among the events that precipitate and those that alleviate loneliness (e.g. the effectiveness of reunion with or replacement of the estranged other in alleviating loneliness). But the critical relationships, those that involved the thoughts and feelings reported as occurring during the experience itself, were with few exceptions, not apparent. For example, with the exception of the object of the respondent's longing, experiences of loneliness precipitated by separation from a boy or girlfriend did not seem strikingly more similar to one another than they were to ones precipitated by other situations. Thus, while the data indicates that there are considerable variations among experiences of loneliness, it does not justify the notion of completely

different kinds. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, then, it seems most reasonable to continue to conceptualize loneliness in what has become the conventional manner--that is, as a single class of experiences. However, within the context of the present exploration, a monolithic definition of loneliness obligates the investigator to show how the frequently seemingly disparate experiences that were described are related to one another. The bulk of the remainder of this investigation, then, involves a discussion of the responses that have been reported, with an eye toward reconciliation, and the proposal of a rough theoretical framework that appears able to handle them.

#### The Precipitation of Loneliness

The results and prior discussion have indicated that loneliness is generally precipitated by estrangement from significant Others. The ways in which estrangement occurs have been pointed out, as have been the roles of the Others. However, some elaboration would be useful at this point with respect to the term "generally" as used above.

It was noted earlier that no indication of estrangement was apparent in the precipitation of four of the experiences of loneliness described.<sup>1</sup> This raises the possibility that loneliness may be precipitated by situations other than those involving estrangement. In looking over these reports to see what kinds of events these may be, a striking similarity is immediately apparent. All come from the group of responses in which the respondent reported facing a serious problem of one sort or

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<sup>1</sup>This figure is highly conservative. There are actually several more reports that may belong ontologically in this category (e.g. #'s 25, 56).

another. This could be taken to mean that aside from estrangement, a second less frequent precipitant of loneliness may be facing problems. However, there are grounds for a more parsimonious explanation, namely that just as facing a common problem (e.g. an enemy) is conducive to a feeling of community within a group, facing a problem of your own is conducive to estrangement.

The basis for both these relationships might be as follows: When we are physically in the presence of an Other we share the same environment. When we are separated we are in different places. This obvious physical regularity has its psychological counterpart. There is a strong relationship between the extent to which we feel "with" an Other and the extent to which we share environments with them. An adult human's psychological environment is not simply made up of objects and events, however. All have attendant meanings. And each of us is aware that what has one meaning to you, may have another to me. Togetherness, then is not simply a function of physical proximity, but also of the extent to which the world means the same thing to you that it means to me.<sup>1</sup> As such, when an individual's world becomes pervaded by a problem that others don't share, he becomes estranged from them. They may be physically nearby, but their "heads are in a different place"--as the expression goes.<sup>2</sup>

Schachter (1959) has shown that college women made "anxious" by facing the prospect of painful shocks chose to be with others significantly more than did women expecting only mild shocks. He concluded that

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<sup>1</sup>Put very crudely, we are together only to the extent that we agree with one another. Avoidance of loneliness, then, is the driving force behind the tendencies toward "balance" in interpersonal situations as described by Newcomb (1953) and Heider (1958).

<sup>2</sup>There is much to be learned through taking language seriously at a literal level. New expressions are subject to natural selection. Those that acquire positions of popular usage frequently do so by virtue of their essential truth.

anxiety increased affiliative needs. The present line of thinking suggests a slightly different interpretation. When faced by a problem (e.g. expected shock) individuals don't need more than their usual quota of togetherness with others, but rather they feel estranged and, as such, are more than usually acquisitive of companionship to recoup their losses.

This explains why Schachter's subjects chose as company others who were facing the same plight rather than simply other students. It is not simply that misery loves miserable company, as Schachter suggests; but rather that there is no company for the miserable except others who are miserable about the same thing that they are.

According to this viewpoint, problems are only one of many kinds of experiences that estrange us by making our subjective worlds different from those around us. One does not have to look too far to find others. People don't seek company only when faced with impending disasters. Afterwards, they find others to mourn with, or to complain to, or even just to tell about it, much as Berne's "alcoholics" compare hangovers (1964). Similarly, when our world is transformed by joyous changes, there is a need to share the event (and our resultant feelings) with others. Respondent #50 was lonely because she had no one to share her happiness with upon graduating from high school. What she needed was a situation in which others who were significant to her could share her happiness.

To put this more generally, without celebration people may be isolated by their joy. Or, still more broadly, our customs are arranged such that when deeply significant events (e.g. birthdays, comings of age, marriages) befall us, we are in the company of those Others who are most significant to us. In this way the experiences are to some extent shared; and we are not estranged from others by their occurrence.

This tendency toward sharing significant experience may be seen from the most formal social ceremonies to such seemingly innocuous behaviors as gossiping and difficulty in keeping secrets. In young children it is particularly apparent, "Daddy, look at that!" And there is far less egotism in, "Mommy, look what I can do!" than meets the eye. Although a child could never make this explicit, what it means is, "Mother, I've changed. Know me for who I am now; and share my joy at being better."

This argument has been sustained because it is applicable to many aspects of loneliness other than its precipitation; and will be alluded to again in the future. For the moment, the main point will be restated to bring it back into context. Facing a problem, or for that matter anything that makes the meaning of our world different from that of Others estranges us from them, though we may stand side by side with them. This being the case, the loneliness of the respondents in the present study was, without exception, precipitated by estrangement from or lack of significant Others.

#### The Experience Itself

It has been pointed out that the responses to question #2 show that the thoughts and feelings experienced during loneliness differ to a considerable extent across the investigation's sample. Such differences were anticipated, and the study was designed to generate data that could be used to explain them by demonstrating connections between particular types of loneliness experiences and the types of relationships whose disruption engendered them. The finding that systematic connections of this sort were rare does not mean that the experiences of loneliness reported by

the respondents are incomprehensible in terms of the events that precipitated them. What it does suggest, though, is that it may be more useful to try to understand these experiences in terms of what the events that precipitated them have in common than in terms of the ways in which they differ. The following section explores how some aspects of the experiences reported by the respondents are explicable in terms of the dynamics of estrangement.

### Mourning and Possession

It has been argued that all loneliness is precipitated by estrangement from significant Others. Among the sample, it was primarily (perhaps totally) the respondents' friends, relatives and lovers who were missed. Note the apostrophe in "respondents'." This grammatical convention which denotes possession is not without meaning. Our friends, relatives and lovers are in a very real sense "ours." The language of love makes this explicit, "Be mine," or "We belong to each other." And the basis for the jealousy that may exist in such relationships is a sense of exclusive possession. Thus the conditions that precipitate loneliness involve loss of a valued possession. This might be expected to produce (and, as such, may explain) the tone of sadness (mourning is even closer) that pervaded the experiences reported by the respondents.<sup>1</sup>

Following the thinking of Sartre (1956), we may go a step further. Sartre argues that possession is not simply a matter of availability.

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<sup>1</sup>The number of subjects who reported depression when asked to describe a time when they were lonely raises the possibility that loneliness and depression may, in fact, be the same experience. Were this the case, however, one would expect people who were depressed to report feelings of loneliness, which according to Ortega (1969) is seldom the case.

"In fact the internal relation is synthetic and effects the unification of the possessor and the possessed. This means the possessor and the possessed constitute ideally a unique reality. To possess is to be united with the object possessed."

Due to its irrationality ("This internal, ontological bond between the possessed and the possessor which customs like branding have often attempted to materialize<sup>e</sup> cannot be explained by a 'realistic' theory of appropriation."), this relationship is not a conscious aspect of the lonely individual's experience. It does, however, manifest itself in a feeling that what has been lost is not all together "out there," that in some way a part of one's self has been lost. This would explain the feelings of emptiness reported by some of the respondents; and may to some extent contribute to the anxiety reported by others.

#### Desire and Tunnel Vision

When we do not have something, or we lose something that is of value to us we desire it. The longing for the estranged Other reported by the respondents requires no additional explanation. Desire, however, has a second somewhat more subtle effect. Like attention, it can operate on a broad spectrum, attached to no particular object but open to many.<sup>1</sup> Or it may be fixed upon a single figure, in which case all else becomes ground. Keys and his associates have shown that the interests of semi-starved human subjects narrow toward including only things that pertain to food (1950). This tendency would explain the boredom, impatience and

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<sup>1</sup>It should not be surprising that desire may follow laws that we associate with the operation of attention, since experiencing desire is, in fact, a matter of attending to internal stimuli; and there is no reason to believe that the perception of internal and external stimuli should differ in such dynamics.

and apathy typical of the lonely respondents' attitudes toward objects and activities. It would be applicable as well to their alienation from Others who were not the object of their estrangement. Having lost their relevance, these Others were simply disturbances to be avoided when possible.

Withdrawal from object relationships, activities and Others, together with the sadness engendered by loss, rounds out the picture of depression described by so many of the respondents as a major aspect of their experience.

The anger and impatience with Others described by the respondents seemed to be generally a consequence of this state of mind. Others seemed to be experienced as impediments that served only to break one's consciousness away from "what is really important." On a few occasions, however, anger was the result of holding a particular Other responsible for the estrangement.

#### Implications as to the Nature of the Loss

Thus far, the format of this section has involved explanation of the experiences described by the respondents in terms of the overall situation (i.e., estrangement from significant Others) that precipitated them. At this point, this process will be more or less inverted. The precipitating situation will be explored in terms of the experiences themselves. The reason for this reversal is to gain further insight into an issue that was raised earlier, but was never fully resolved: Precisely what is the nature of the relatedness which when absent or lost results in experiences of loneliness?

In an earlier discussion it was suggested that romantic love was

one such form of relatedness. A second, more general factor that was identified was mutual caring. Looking at table 2 (see p. 35) it may be possible to add to this list by making inferences about the circumstances that could be expected to lead to the experiences shown there. The format that this line of inquiry would follow would be: What form of interpersonal relatedness when lost might be expected to lead to depression? Or boredom? Or alienation? etc.

A number of the classes of experience listed look like they might be the result of deprivation of some of the needs postulated by Maslow (1954). It is reasonable to infer that anxiety was the result of estrangement from Others who met the respondent's needs for security; depression--their esteem needs; lostness--their belongingness needs; and so forth.

Looking at the data within this framework also has the advantage of handling the imperfection of the correlation between estrangement and loneliness.<sup>1</sup> According to Maslow, interpersonal needs may be transcended by highly developed ("self-actualized") people. Such individuals might be immuned to loneliness. The susceptibility of others might be expected to be a function of their distance from this plateau.

However, many of the classes of experience described are not so easily associated with Maslow's need hierarchy. And unless the probable causes that are generated by this line of thinking can be systematically related to one another the entire endeavor is fruitless. Fortunately,

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<sup>1</sup>The reports of two respondents (#'s 15, 59) have thus far been excluded from the data analysis. Each claimed to have never been lonely. One of them cannot be taken too seriously; for following his disclaimer, he proceeds to describe a fairly typical loneliness experience. The other's, however, is critical; it clearly describes solitude without loneliness.

That this is the only such report cannot be taken to mean that solitude without loneliness is highly unusual. It is simply an experience other than what the respondents were asked to describe.

one class of experiences, while not frequently mentioned explicitly, offers a key to a relatively simple system that is capable of tying together a considerable portion of the data, including numerous fine details. It is the experience of meaninglessness.

It is not possible in psychological investigation to procure responses without dictating to some extent the form that they will take. In the case at hand respondents were asked to write in detail about their own feelings. They were not asked about other people. Thus, the data contain few attributions of thoughts or feelings to others. Yet nine respondents mentioned one specific attribution--that others did not care about them. This in itself is grounds for arguing that the experience of meaninglessness to others is a highly significant aspect of loneliness.

The relationship between estrangement and meaning lies in the existential doctrine that man is the creator and the sustainer of meaning. As such, as an individual becomes estranged from Others, he is concurrently estranged from meaning (see Fromm, 1941). Becker (1962) states this explicitly, saying, "Only by proper performance in a social context does the individual fashion and renew himself by purposeful action in a world of shared meaning...cut off from one's fellows, one cannot add his power to enhancing of cultural meaning or derive his just share of it. Social ceremonial is a joint theatrical staging whose purpose is to sustain and create meaning for all its members." Angyal (1965), writing in a less sociological vein, comes to a comparable conclusion, "This existence we cannot directly create for ourselves; it can only be given to us by another."

Within this context, estrangement becomes closely parallel to sensory deprivation. It has been pointed out that we live simultaneously in a physical world of objects and a social matrix of meanings. Only

through constant sensory stimulation do we maintain our orientation within the object world. Much in the same way, without social input we become lost with respect to our place in the intricate schema of what things mean to one another.

The importance of meaning in peoples' lives is not a new notion. The idea crops up repeatedly in both philosophical and psychological contexts. Among contemporary psychotherapist/theorists, Frankl (1963) has said that, "Man's searching for meaning is a primary force in his life and not a 'secondary rationalization' of instinctual drives." And Angyal (1965) has added even more strongly, "We are nothing within ourselves, nonexistent. To be is to mean something to someone else." If meaning is, as these suppositions suggest, a primary need, then its absence would be expected to produce deprivation effects. This taken in conjunction with Becker's argument leads to the possibility that at the core of loneliness experiences is a meaning deficit induced by estrangement from meaning-giving Others.

The data are compatible with this notion. This may be made more apparent by splitting the hypothesized need for meaning into four experientially different parts. They may be conceptualized in terms of two abstract dichotomies: quantity vs. quality and self vs. not-self. Putting this in form of a 2 X 2 schema generates four questions of meaning critical to man (see Figure 1).

Estrangement from others would be expected to result in some deprivation of all of these aspects of meaning. The acuteness of this deprivation could be expected to be a function of the extent to which meaningfulness has been incorporated into the estranged individual's self-image and world view. Which aspects of meaning deficit were experienced most

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	SELF	NOT-SELF
quality of meaning (MEANING)	What do I mean?	What do other things mean?
quantity of meaning (MEANING-FULNESS)	How much do I mean?	How much do other things mean?

Figure 1. The Critical Aspects of Meaning

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acutely would determine the flavor of the experience. This would depend on one hand, upon the relationship to the estranged Other (as discussed earlier). On the other, it would be a function of the security with which each meaning system was entrenched within the person relative to the others. This last factor, in particular, can account for a considerable number of the individual differences noted in the data at hand.

The first cell to be discussed will be the one representing the meaning of other things: To a great extent the meanings that we attribute to objects and events are derived from the way in which they affect us. A substantial remainder of our knowledge, however, is second hand. Because of the precision with which we may communicate, highly specific meanings may be passed from individual to individual. When we learn what something means to an Other we are influenced, under most circumstances, in the direction of sharing that meaning (Sherif, 1935; Asch,

1951).<sup>1</sup>

When we are estranged from Others, we lose their definition of the situation. Seclusion is in this sense genuinely dissocializing. On one hand, this accounts for its attraction for individuals who are seeking ideosyncratic definitions of the world (artists, poets, mystics etc.).<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, it would lead one to expect estrangement to engender disorientation, particularly in ill-defined situations.<sup>3</sup> As such, it may account to some extent for the anxiety expressed by the respondents. Also, since nausea and stomach upset are symptoms typically associated with physical disorientation, it is reasonable to raise the possibility that these and several of the less frequently mentioned physical problems reported by the respondents may be results of meaning disorientation.

The second cell to be covered is the meaningfulness of other things: Values are largely established by the market. To the eternal frustration of parents, children tend to want what other children value.<sup>4</sup> Similarly,

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<sup>1</sup>Balance and Congruity theories are elaborations of this generalization. Note that in more complicated situations, such as those involving negative reference groups, the situation as we see it is equally strongly influenced by Others.

<sup>2</sup>Among those who have sought isolation and returned with the word are Moses, Jesus, Mohammed and Buddha to name a few.

<sup>3</sup>This fact was clearly understood and used by the Chinese communists in their attempts to restructure the attitudes of American prisoners captured during the Korean war (Schein, 1957).

<sup>4</sup>Parents generally think Junior is being ratty when he suddenly decides he wants the toy the baby just started playing with. What is not realized is that by simply picking the toy up, the baby genuinely increased its value to Junior.

how important activities are and how meaningful experiences are may be implicitly arrived at by consensus. Hence our enjoyment of something tends to be enhanced by the enjoyment of others in our company, while it may be destroyed by their negativity.

In the absence of others, there is no social facilitation of this sort. Thus, without others our experiences tend to become bland. This accounts for the prevalence of boredom and apathy in the reports of the respondents. The data are in agreement with this interpretation in somewhat finer detail. Among the classes of Others from whom the respondents reported themselves estranged (see p.25 ) friendship in particular is supported by mutual engagement in activities. Boredom was reported as occurring during experiences of loneliness in 38% of the responses given by the male respondents. Among the sub-group of men who reported being estranged from friends boredom was reported 75% of the time.

A similar apathy seemed apparent among the respondents' object relationships. The questionnaire asked at one point, "What sorts of things did you want?" In several instances within the study, specific questions such as this one seemed to compel answers (e.g. the one regarding appetite). Yet not a single subject reported wanting an object of any kind. Thus within the sample studied, loneliness did not appear to lead to acquisitiveness during the experience itself. If anything, it appeared to have the opposite effect.

Deficits in the meaningfulness of objects and activities may also be a significant factor in the depression reported by the respondents. According to Seligman (1973), "...what depression is--is the belief in one's own helplessness." This belief, he contends, is learned through experiences of lack of control over reinforcers. The connection between this way of conceptualizing depression and the model of loneliness that

has been presented is this: Within everyday life, almost all things that are highly reinforcing are so by virtue of their meaning. As such, in a world shorn of meaning, acts would be robbed of their instrumentality. In a very real, if atypical, sense the lonely person is helpless, (i.e. following Seligman, depressed).

Within the third cell to be discussed lies the question, "What do I mean?" Because of the impossibility of defining something without reference to anything else,<sup>1</sup> our need for others is particularly relevant to self-definition. As such, when we are estranged from others, it is our sense of our own meaning (and meaningfulness) that is most seriously eroded. And because of our concern for self above other things this tends to be a particularly painful aspect of the experience. As Becker (1964) points out, "The basic identity question is 'Who am I?' This question is partly answered by being put to someone else--the individual alone cannot supply the answers...." (See also May, 1953.) Becker adds elsewhere, "Loneliness is not only a suspension in self-acquaintance. It is a suspension in the very fashioning of identity..." (1962).

It is this aspect of loneliness that most easily accounts for the anxiety expressed by the respondents. They are panicked by the erosion of their identity. There are a number of different ways in which the respondents themselves conceptualize this feeling. Some call it "lostness," meaning that they don't know where they fit into the scheme of

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<sup>1</sup>"The qualities of a thing are its effects upon other 'things.' If one imagines other things to be non-existent, a thing has no qualities. That is to say: There is nothing without other things. That is to say: There is no 'thing-in-itself,'" (Nietzsche, 1889).

the meaning of things.<sup>1</sup> Others speak of a need for purpose, meaning a role that has some degree of ontological validity. Still others, presumably summing up such absences say they feel empty. All are slightly different ways of expressing the same thing, looked at from different angles.

The last cell contains the question, "How much do I mean?": In the absence of lasting definitions of what one means (which are hard to come by), it is comforting to know that one means something, even if one is not quite sure just what it is. Deprivation of meaningfulness of self was expressed most directly by the respondents who complained that Others did not seem to care for them. Just as a need for achievement may exist independent of what it is that is accomplished (McClelland, 1953), feeling meaningful seems to have a psychological validity of its own, somewhat independent of specific meanings themselves.

Earlier in this investigation (see p. 51) the experiences of loneliness and depression were differentiated on empirical grounds. Aside from its usefulness in elucidating some of the relationships between loneliness and depression, the concept of meaning can be used to differentiate the two conceptually. The outstanding dynamic characteristic of depression is the ascription of negative meaning to the self by the self. In the case of loneliness the self is perceived as being without meaning at all.

One might ask, if this is so; how one can be lonely and depressed

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<sup>1</sup>How I can be lost (on either a physical or symbolic level) although it is you who has gone away can easily be understood by keeping in mind that the difference between losing something (or someone) and being lost is only a matter of whether you or it serves as the frame of reference. Herein lies the difference between loneliness and experiences that are referred to in terms of "missing" an Other.

at the same time? Aren't having negative meaning and being without meaning mutually exclusive? Logically, it would seem so; but psychologically, the answer is no. If something, should so far as we are concerned, have positive value; then its having no value at all is experientially negative.

While this may sound like word trickery, its validity can be demonstrated by examining the common usage of the word, "worthless." When we say that something is worthless, literally we are assigning it no valence; yet the term is connotatively pejorative--things are supposed to have worth. So it is with meaning.

#### The Roots of Loneliness

In the preceding discussion, I have argued that estrangement from significant Others leads to meaning deficits of various sorts that may be related to a great many of the "symptoms" of loneliness. I am concerned now that this may be taken to imply that I see loneliness as affecting only those blessed with the gift of abstraction. In order to bring loneliness into contact with what I see as its organic roots I will digress to Becker's brilliant analysis of the developmental history of self-esteem.

Becker (1971) contends that infantile self-worth is sustained by "the atmosphere of love and support that surrounds all the child's body transactions with the mother." However, socialization involves a change in the child's modes of maintaining self-esteem. In the course of generalized transition from body-modes to symbol-modes of behavior "...the child's basic sense of self-value has become largely artificialized.... Self-esteem no longer takes root in the biological, but in the internalized social rules for behavior." (Ibid.)

The history of loneliness is similar in structure to that of self-esteem, and overlapping in content.<sup>1</sup> The infant lives in a totally physical world (i.e. one devoid of meaning). His sole criterion for relatedness is proximity. His sole source of the atmosphere that Becker speaks of, then, is the presence of a loving Other. In the absence of the loving Other, when the time of need arises the child feels that he has been cast into outer darkness. His experience of himself at this point is anxiety.<sup>2</sup> This is the core of infantile loneliness.

But as the human child becomes a symbolic creature a new "space" develops. One in which objects are related to one another through meaning. Once this matrix is discriminated, the need to place oneself within it takes on an urgency as great as that of being oriented in physical space with respect to objects that matter. In loneliness, as with self-esteem, attainment becomes as much a matter of symbolic as of physical transactions.<sup>3</sup> Meaninglessness, then, is to symbolic space what isolation is to physical space. And to the extent that we live in either world we may reap its benefits and suffer its consequences.

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<sup>1</sup>Note that in the present investigation those respondents who were explicit with respect to their level of self-esteem reported invariably that it was low.

<sup>2</sup>The specific term that has been used to describe this experience, which may reach panic proportions, is "separation anxiety." The only report of it among the present sample is the one given by respondent #19.

<sup>3</sup>Americans have been characterized as being highly materialistic. This is in a sense untrue, in that it fails to take account of the fact that our acquisitiveness is largely on a symbolic level. We are far less related to objects in terms of their physical attributes than in terms of what they represent to us. (If this is not perfectly clear, watching 15 minutes of television commercials should make it so.) The only genuine materialists in our culture are the children. We adults have learned that it is better to give than to receive, and that, "it is the thought that counts."

Within this context, I should like to define loneliness as an experience of disorientation or lostness within a dimensional domain of meaning, resulting from lack of or disruption of relatedness to significant Others. Its emotional tone is negative, characterized by a longing for meaningful relatedness.

Behavior Associated with Loneliness  
and its Alleviation

If at the core of loneliness lies lack of meaning, one might expect that its alleviation (and prevention) would involve experiences that generate meaning. The data support this notion. In all of the instances in which reunion with the estranged Other occurred, a resultant reduction in loneliness was reported. Similarly, all of the respondents who reported forming new friendships (mutually meaningful relationships) reported reduction in loneliness (see table 3). The section that follows will explore the mechanics of generating and maintaining feelings of meaningfulness. With respect to the 2 X 2 schema proposed earlier, the discussion will first cover meaning and meaningfulness of self; and then, more briefly, move to meaning and meaningfulness of things other than self.

The Acquisition of Meaningfulness of Self

In order to form meaning-enhancing relationships, it is first necessary to make contact with Others. As such, lonely people who are not cathected toward one specific estranged Other may be expected to engage in activities that offer such possibilities. (This offers a simple explanation for an activity reported by several respondents that was at first

quite puzzling to the investigator--taking walks. A walk alone offers, in fantasy at least, an opportunity to meet potentially meaningful Others.)<sup>1</sup>

Beyond making contact with Others, the formation of meaning-enhancing relationships may be conceptualized as a two step process. They are: 1) Knowing that an Other is experiencing me as meaningful; and 2) converting the awareness of meaningfulness to an Other to an awareness that I am, in an absolute sense, a meaningful being. Both steps require further elaboration.<sup>2</sup>

1. Knowing that an Other is experiencing me as meaningful.

An Other is meaningful to me to the extent that he affects me. I assume, then, that my meaningfulness to an Other is dependent upon the degree of effect I have upon him. To know that an Other is experiencing me as meaningful, then, requires:

- a) Behaving in a way that will affect him - This may occur spontaneously or be contrived, depending on the salience of my desire for meaningfulness. Much of what we call "phoniness" is behavior covertly aimed at affecting Others (e.g. dropped names, idle promises and threats, accounts of past exploits). This business may become complex. Since my meaningfulness to Others is meaningful to me, an Other may become meaningful to me by virtue of how much I think I mean to him. (It's difficult to dislike people who like one.) Hence, my bid for mean-

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<sup>1</sup>Being out-of-doors seems also to be directly helpful in alleviating depression, helping to put one's "problems" into their proper context of relative pettiness.

<sup>2</sup>This schema overlaps considerably with Cooley's analysis (1922) of the development of what he called "the looking glass self."

ing may take the form of demonstrating to an Other what they mean to me. Or for added complication, assume that I (like most of us) am a bit phobic regarding the prospect of being rejected. What I may do, then, is jockey for position; making my bid as strong as possible, while committing myself as little as possible to minimize my vulnerability.

Such substrata of communication, intentional or not, occur in all of our interpersonal behavior; and frequently may be of more significance to all involved than the far more apparent aspects of interaction (i.e. its manifest content).

- b) Being certain that the Other holds me responsible for what affected him.
  - 1) Being certain that he knows that it was through me that he was affected.
  - 2) Being certain that he knows that it was my intention to do it--if he thinks it was not my choice to do it, he will attribute my act in part to whatever agent he thinks caused me to act (e.g. a third party, my role, my neurosis).
- c) Obtaining feedback - Without some evidence that my act has affected an Other, I cannot with assurance assume I am meaningful to him.<sup>1</sup> Hence I must closely watch for signs of how I have affected him or, if I am particularly hungry for meaningfulness, ask for feedback. ("Sure lucky I caught that fly, huh?")

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<sup>1</sup>Herein lies the utility of the social customs of thanking and giving gifts as a gesture of gratitude. Note that a major aspect of thanking consists of letting the Other know how much what he did meant to you.

Often, indications of my meaningfulness to an Other may lie not in his immediate response to my acts, but rather in the way he behaves toward me in general. In interpersonal contact we are constantly alert to cues indicating how Others feel toward us.

2. Converting the awareness of meaningfulness to an Other into an awareness of being meaningful in an absolute sense.<sup>1</sup>

- a) Accepting the meaning I have to the Other - In order for me to feel meaningful, the meaning that I think I have to the Other must be both meaningful and acceptable to me. For example, a mother may recognize that she is highly meaningful to her children; but if "mothering" is not acceptable or meaningful to her this will not add to her sense of absolute meaningfulness.<sup>2</sup> Thus we must consistently compare the meanings we think we have to Others against our own standards of meaningfulness and acceptability.
- b) Taking responsibility for my act - If I do not feel solely

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<sup>1</sup>In categorizing the behaviors that follow as means toward acquiring a sense of absolute meaningfulness, I have made a choice between two alternatives that are almost equally attractive to me. The other way of interpreting these behaviors is as means toward generating a meaning domain that I share in common with the Other in question.

The creation of common meaning domains will be explored later in this paper. But whether it is a step in the direction of absolute meaningfulness or an end in itself is more than I can hope to resolve.

<sup>2</sup>Acceptability is a dimension somewhat independent of meaningfulness. For example, if I see an Other's interest in me as purely selfish, my meaningfulness to him, while meaningful to me is of little use. Such standards, however, may be relaxed in cases of extreme deprivation.

responsible for an act that increased my meaningfulness to an Other, I will attribute at least part of the meaningfulness to whatever agent I think caused me to act. (Just as the Other would--see lb.) Also, I must feel that it is my "real self" who is engaged with the Other. Goffman (1959) points out that, "an individual may be taken in by his act or be cynical about it." Being aware that I am acting may greatly hamper the maintainance of a sense of absolute meaningfulness. It is within this sphere that persons who have severely negative self-images are faced by a frequently insoluble lonely dilemma. If I feel that no one who really knows me could possibly care for me, then I may present what I feel is an acceptable facade. But to the extent that the self that I present to Others diverges from the way I see myself, I know that it is not "the real me" who is the object of their feelings. And to that extent I cannot build a sense of absolute meaningfulness out of my meaningfulness to Others.<sup>1</sup>

Hence, remaining within the spirit of footnote 1, we can see the prince or the millionaire donning his pauper's uniform to go forth into the world to find out once and for all whether or not he is really loveable.

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<sup>1</sup>For this reason, there is a strong pressure to become what a significant Other believes one to be. Positive regard can be a powerful tool for change, as we are told in grade B movies in which the "badman" is reformed by the love of a good woman, or the delinquent by the trust of a kind adult. (Recurrent themes in popular art forms are not to be taken lightly.)

### Maintaining meaningfulness

These five factors, then, are necessary for reducing loneliness. However, a single interaction in which they are present will not keep loneliness away indefinitely. As soon as I cease to affect an Other I am aware that my meaningfulness to him is beginning to become a thing of the past. Unless I affect him again, I will become someone who once meant something to him, but no longer does. Thus, in order to hold loneliness at bay, it is necessary to affect Others periodically. This is complicated in that it involves either constantly finding new Others to affect or new ways to affect Others one has already affected. (An act, like a joke, cannot be expected to affect the same Other repeatedly.)<sup>1</sup> This has important implications regarding long-term relationships that will be looked into later.

In the necessity for repeated interaction with the same Others lies the importance of affecting Others in a positive manner. If the Other does not like the ways in which I affect him, he will reject me. That is, if it is possible, he will deny me the opportunity to affect him further; thus making it impossible for me to remain meaningful to him. Thus, acceptance, with its promise of future meaningfulness, is generally necessary to the reduction of loneliness (see Van Kaam, 1969).

### Rejection

My bid for meaning may be thwarted at many of the steps along the

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<sup>1</sup>See the discussion of Figure and Ground, pps. 72 and 73 .

way. And a creative Other may have many means for doing this. Some of the techniques we are most familiar with are: Physical avoidance (e.g. "Leave me alone!"), refusal to communicate (e.g. "Don't talk to me!"), internal defenses (e.g. non-comprehension, Freudian mechanisms), refusal to acknowledge being affected (e.g. "You can't hurt me," "I don't care," or "So what?"), refusal to acknowledge appropriate intentions (e.g. "You're just saying that because you want my money, body etc."), refusal to be an Other (e.g. the casual drooling of psychotics).

Where positive bids for meaning meet rejection, negative bids (which may be forced upon the Other against his will) may be employed. This can be seen in childrens' misbehavior "to get attention," anti-social behavior of juvenile delinquency, and mutual sadistic agreements. There is even an advantage here, in that negative effects are not as easily adapted to (i.e. taken for granted) when repeated as are positive ones. The bully on the block is not easily forgotten.<sup>1</sup>

May (1969) pursues a similar tack in his explanation of the roots of psychotic violence. "...no human can long endure the perpetually numbing experience of his own powerlessness."

The individual may also turn to the group to give his life meaning. In the absence of idiosyncratic purpose, the individual may adopt the causes of the group (see Fromm, 1941). Frankl (1963) argues that, "No instinct tells him (modern man) what he has to do, and no tradition tells him what he ought to do; soon he will not know what he wants to do;

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<sup>1</sup>This raises the possibility that meaning may be metamorphosed in its transition from meaning to an Other to absolute meaning. The bully may use his meaning to his victim to fashion a very different absolute meaning in his own eyes. Or, put in the context of common meaning domains (to be discussed later), it supports the notion that the basis for sharing such domains lies in complementarity as well as similarity.

More and more he will be governed by what others want him to do...."

The effective leader is one who confers meaning upon his followers.

### The conferrers of meaning

A case has been made for the supposition that, "at the core of loneliness is a meaning deficit induced by estrangement from meaning-giving Others"; and consequently, that loneliness may be reduced through the acquisition of meaning collected by affecting Others. Before going on to discuss some other means for reducing loneliness, we will pause long enough to explore who these Others through whom we may find meaning are. Or to put this in the form of a question; what "qualifies" an Other to confer meaning?

Some of the results of the present investigation that were reported earlier (Estrangement from whom? p. 24) suggested that the Others who stood between the respondents and loneliness were people with whom the respondents shared a mutually caring relatedness. At this point, with some theorizing behind us, it is possible to be somewhat more specific than this. Others who can help us to feel meaningful have the following characteristics:

- 1) Their meaning systems tend to be similar to our own. - I have argued that in order to convert relative to absolute meaningfulness, I must accept and find meaningful what I perceive I mean to an Other. In order for this to happen, however, the Other and myself must be in the same ballpark with respect to meaning. In other words, only Others whose meaning systems are somewhat similar to my own are capable of conferring appro-

priate meanings upon me.<sup>1</sup> Herein lies one of the genuine tragedies of the generation gap. As the meaning systems of parents and children diverge, each loses the other as a source of absolute meaningfulness.

2) They are meaningful to us. - How much meaning we may acquire through relatedness to an Other is a function of how meaningful that Other is to us. If I rescue a drowning insect, my self-image is unlikely to be affected even momentarily. If I rescue a child, I will feel important. How meaningful I am is determined by the meaningfulness of what I affect. The more meaningful an Other is, the more absolute meaning I may acquire through affecting him/her. This has some interesting implications with respect to the nature of falling in love. But in order to follow them up, I must first lay down some broad speculations regarding the nature of loneliness. They do not stem from the data at hand, and little space has been devoted to backing them up. As such, they must be judged largely in terms of the reader's own experience.

Most people are lonely most of the time without knowing it. Loneliness is with us so steadily that it remains, in Gestalt terms, a vague Ground against which other experiences occur, never rising to Figure except when its level radically changes.<sup>2</sup> Thus, ordinarily we experience loneliness only when it becomes too intense to ignore, or when it dis-

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<sup>1</sup>We are not dealing solely with human Others, here. Many other objects may serve as sources of meaning, particularly with the aid of a bit of judicious anthropomorphism.

<sup>2</sup>Biologically we are equipped to experience change. When stimulation becomes static, we tend to lose awareness of it.

appears for awhile (like the noise you didn't notice until it stopped.)<sup>1</sup> Temporary relief from loneliness is the "high" that people experience through participation in encounter groups. And, at a more intense level, it is the joy of falling in love.

Falling in love may be described (from this standpoint) as a situation in which two people become the most meaningful objects in one another's worlds; and through one another experience degrees of absolute meaningfulness unattainable to them since infancy. This happens through a positive feedback system<sup>2</sup> that results in an ascending spiral of meaningfulness for each.

Looking at this from the standpoint of one partner: As you come to mean more and more to me, the meaning I have to you gives me a greater and greater sense of absolute meaningfulness.<sup>3</sup> Your ability to do this makes you mean still more to me. And so on... The feeling that we alone share in this adventure brings us even closer.

But the term "falling" in love implies an ultimate coming to rest. Again, this is attributable to the fading to Ground of experiences as they become static. At some point we will find that we mean all that

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<sup>1</sup>Strong experiential evidence for this argument lies within the ease with which some people can experience loneliness simply by "tuning in to it." The fact that it need not be triggered by external events implies that it is there all of the time. This offers both an alternative to the "tunnel vision" hypothesis used to explain why loneliness can be precipitated by estrangement from only one significant Other, and an explanation for the finding that experiences of loneliness do not follow the typical pattern of gradually increasing intensity associated with deprivation phenomena. If loneliness is there all the time, then all the precipitating situation need do is turn our attention toward it; and it could be expected to spring forth in full force.

<sup>2</sup>The term is used here in its physical rather than its psychological sense.

<sup>3</sup>Note that a great deal of "love talk" consists of telling the Other how much he/she means to you.

that we can to one another. And without new input we will adapt so completely to the constellation of meaning that each of us has to the Other that it may completely fade from our consciousness. (Although intellectually it may still be there--"Yes; of course I love you.") Or, to put this into everyday language, we will begin to take one another for granted. In dating this is generally the beginning of the end, at times resulting in a cruel practice in which one partner "jilts" the other as soon as he/she becomes assured of the other's commitment. In marriage, it has more serious ramifications which will be discussed later.

There are measures that may be taken to retard this process. I may bring you surprise gifts (the gift to show that you are meaningful to me, the surprise to make me meaningful to you in a new way). Perhaps I will attempt to make you jealous or periodically reject you, keeping what you mean to me in a state of perpetual threat. There are means that are somewhat more viable than these; but that too will have to wait.

3) The final characteristic to be covered of Others who can help us toward feeling meaningful is less critical than the first two, but nevertheless, important. The Other must be related to the rest of the world. When I affect you, how far do the ripples radiate? If they go no farther than you, then my bid for absolute meaningfulness is seriously hampered. We are a closed system. As such, people in isolated groups may be lonely, regardless of what they mean to one another. This problem is a familiar one to polar explorers and married couples.

#### The Establishment of Common Meaning Domains

While much of the behavior engaged in by lonely people may be

seen as direct efforts to affect and thereby become meaningful to others and even meaningful in an absolute sense, a second aspect of their behavior seems equally relevant. It involves the establishment of common meaning domains. To ask whether either of these two aspects of behavior may be subsumed under the other is to ask whether the ultimate solution to loneliness lies at an interpersonal or at a transpersonal level. I have prudently chosen to deal with them separately. The section that follows deals with means used toward the establishment of common meaning domains.

### Communication

Sixty-eight percent of the respondents who reported that they communicated their feelings to someone else referred to doing so as something that alleviated their loneliness. This confirms Van Kaam's (1969) finding that the feeling of being "really understood" is a loneliness reducer. Within the context of the present formulations, it may be seen as a variation of the affiliation felt among the miserable (see p. 49). The communication described by the respondents in the present investigation typically involved telling someone else about their problem(s). Next to an Other who shares the same problem you have, an Other who understands it is most a part of your world. This fits nicely with the necessity reported by Van Kaam's respondents, of having the Other co-experience what they are experiencing. The underlying thinking process here is magical--similarity is treated as identity. If you understand me, then you share my world. I do not exist in it by myself. And at a still more primitive level, by experiencing the same thing we may to some extent experience fusion.

Numerous interpersonal rituals involving shared assimilation of food, drink, smoke, etc. reflect this bonding effect in material terms. As we take in that which is the same, we become the same. At an alogical level we are far closer to cannibalism than we might care to admit.

One can get some feel for the power of the thrust behind communicative behavior simply by refusing to understand what an Other wishes to convey (in any context). The effectiveness with which frustration can be generated in this manner is highly impressive. The urgency of feeling understood is also apparent in the conversation of people who punctuate their sentences with a rapid, "you know." This amounts to praying for empathy and/or trying to convince oneself that it is there.

Disagreement, which in this context corresponds closely to misunderstanding (i.e. "If you understood what I was saying, you would have agreed."), is equally divisive. Schachter (1951) has demonstrated how hard a group will work to bring a dissident member back to the fold. It is not surprising that such coercion may be violent. Disagreement not only estranges those who disagree, but it erodes the feeling of mutuality among those who remain by making what was absolute, painfully relative.<sup>1</sup>

### Conformity

Communication, as described, involves creating in someone else an experience that is similar to one's own. Correspondence may also be

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<sup>1</sup>This has obvious implications regarding motivational factors involved in religious proselytization. It suggests in particular why, throughout the course of history, non-believers have so frequently been given the choice, "Convert or be killed!"

achieved through modifying one's own experience. By doing what Others do, by having what they have, one creates a world to live in that is similar to theirs; again facilitating a feeling of sharing the same space. Smith, in keeping up with the Joneses, has no desire to be similar to them, he simply wants to be with them.<sup>1</sup> As such, the seeming contradiction between individualism and conformity, both so much a part of American culture, is unreal.

There are obviously many more complicated ways in which people adapt to make it easier for them to share one another's worlds.

More detailed information regarding the dynamics of the interpersonal influence and acquiescence described above appear in a considerable number of sources within psychological literature, ranging from the balance theories mentioned earlier (Newcomb, 1953; Heider, 1958), to Fromm's speculations on socialization and personality structure (1947), to accounts of the rapture and panic of crowds and clinical case histories of folie a deux.

The feelings of interpersonal sharing (or for that matter the cohesiveness of groups) is not simply a matter of degree of correspondence of beliefs and behaviors. Factors such as strength and salience are also critical. Undergoing experiences of heavy emotional impact together with others typically produces strong feelings of mutuality.<sup>2</sup> But many former army buddies and former T-group partners have come to the sad insight that outside of the highly charged context within which

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<sup>1</sup> Similarly lovers upon separation may vow that at some exact time in the future both will do the same thing, perhaps look at the moon; and so lessen the distance between them.

<sup>2</sup> Examples of this mutuality extend from the results of fraternity hazing to the low suicide rates that prevail during times of war.

it was formed, their relationship, intense as it felt, could not be sustained. When former friends meet after an extended period of estrangement, they have a strong tendency to reminisce. At first glance, it might appear that the pay-off here is to reexperience pleasant old memories. It is not simply that. They are engaged, as well, in the far more vital task of recreating a common world, a context within which once more they may be company for each other.

Similar, though less bitter-sweet rituals are performed by persons meeting for the first time. ("Do you come from Brooklyn? Know Max? Like Mozart? Fellini? etc.") They are not nearly so trivial as they may at first seem. They are primary means for establishing common grounds, without which relatedness is impossible.

Think for a moment about something that means very much to a deep part of you, something that most people don't know or care about (e.g. your favorite work of art, poetry or music). Now imagine meeting someone whose reaction to it is the same as yours. An immediate bond would be created. It might not last beyond the next sentence out of his/her mouth. But while it did, I suspect it would be intense.

#### Other Means for Reducing Loneliness

Some of the behavior the respondents engaged in when lonely may be construed as direct attempts to reduce the affective component of their loneliness. Janov (1970) has argued that when a need is chronically unfulfilled its owner may lose contact with it in an attempt to escape the pain. The most common means of doing this exhibited by the respondents was engagement in attention-consuming activities that had little

to do with the circumstances responsible for the respondents' estrangement.<sup>1</sup> However, while such activities, particularly when made to seem important (i.e. meaningful) offered temporary relief,<sup>2</sup> they were of little lasting value. May (1953) points out the ironic fact that interaction with Others may serve just such a purpose. Here, as in Freud's reaction formation, there is the added masking power of an activity that is totally incompatible with the experience it serves to hide. Hence, loneliness may often lead to pathetic imitations of intimacy. Lenny Bruce (1972) put it succinctly, "Men go to whorehouses to get hugged."

The consumatory behavior engaged in by some of the respondents suggests a still more primitive attack on loneliness affect. Bruch's (1958) study of obesity indicates that for some persons, excessive eating alleviates loneliness. Perhaps taking things into the body can experientially fill the emptiness left where meaning has departed. Liquor may be seen in the same light (Fromm- Reichmann, 1959); but as having in addition the advantages of dulling cognition and facilitating social relationships. As such, it is a particularly effective short-range loneliness reducer.

It is interesting to speculate on the possibility that smoking, which is also a means of filling internal space, may operate in this manner as well. There seems to be at least some correspondence between those instances in which a smoker "really needs" a cigarette, and those that have been associated with the precipitation of loneliness in the

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<sup>1</sup>Moustakas (1972) refers to these defensive activities as "the anxiety of loneliness."

<sup>2</sup>Carl Rogers (1970) and Moustakas (1961) concur that it is possible to be lonely without knowing it.

in the present investigation. Another behavior that seemed an effective loneliness-reducer was rationalization.<sup>1</sup> Seven of the eight respondents who reported doing it indicated that it reduced their loneliness. It is difficult to ascertain in these instances whether it served as a meaning-enhancer or an affect-killer.

Helmuth Kaiser (1965) has suggested that, "perhaps really every neurotic disturbance might center around the patients' effort to obviate the inner experience of being an individual, or in plain English of being alone." While there may be some overstatement here, a number of the behaviors reported by the respondents have abnormal extensions. For example, the fantasizing reported by the respondents (an ineffective measure in itself) may in its content directly reflect the need for meaning, resulting in the delusional perception of oneself as meaningful to Others that clinicians refer to as paranoia. Or a minor variation could result in meaningfulness to delusional Others, as in the imaginary playmates of lonely children or the anthropomorphism projected by the lonely on to their pets.

The avoidance of Others by the lonely also has abnormal overtones. According to the respondents, it did nothing to reduce loneliness. Rather it seemed to be a direct expression of depression and/or an avoidance of "irrelevant" interactions. A more dynamic way of looking at avoidance of others is as a withdrawal from the field through denial of the need to be meaningful. This may be augmented through projection of one's own feelings of meaninglessness and/or denial of the existence

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<sup>1</sup>The term is used rather loosely here; and may be best understood by referring to the instances in the raw data to which it was applied.

of meaningful relatedness. This has the advantage of reducing effort, frustration, longing, and self-devaluation. Curiously, then, estrangement may be a result of loneliness as well as its cause. The classic example of such a case would be Dickens' Scrooge (1843).

The responses to insoluble estrangement need not be self destructive. In some instances, the sense of absolute meaningfulness need not be mediated through meaningfulness to other persons. Whether such "spiritual" solutions are qualitatively different from the creation of delusional Others described earlier must be left as a question of faith.

The most common of the spiritual solutions to loneliness is institutionalized religion. Essentially, what all religions do is to define for their believers what they themselves mean. This, augmented by a being to whom we are supremely meaningful and a promise of company (even in Hell) after death<sup>1</sup> goes a long way toward fulfilling the requirements for a less lonely life.

Other spiritual solutions may be idiosyncratic. In defending itself against the experience of meaninglessness, the mind may generate its own version of where it fits into the scheme of things. Many religious practices (e.g. monasticism, meditation, silence, celibacy) deliberately evoke states of estrangement, making use of this tendency to raise consciousness. Among the extremely isolated, religious "oceanic"

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<sup>1</sup>Fear of endless aloneness is probably one of the more profound components of fear of death. This is most clearly manifested in the desire not to be forgotten and in customs designed to perpetuate the meaningfulness of the deceased (e.g. visiting graves, memorial funds, epitaphs). It is as if, if I am still meaningful to others even though dead I am less alone.

experiences are not unusual. Admiral Richard Byrd (1938) completely alone in Antarctica put his into words quite beautifully. He said,

The day was dying, the night being born - but with great peace. here were the imponderable processes and forces of the cosmos, harmonious and soundless. Harmony, that was it! That was what came out of the silence - a gentle rhythm, the strain of a perfect chord, the music of the spheres, perhaps.

It was enough to catch that rhythm, momentarily to be myself a part of it. In that instant I could feel no doubt of man's oneness with the universe. The conviction came that that rhythm was too orderly, too harmonious, too perfect to be a product of blind chance - that, therefore, there must be purpose in the whole and that man was a part of that whole and not an accidental offshoot. It was a feeling that transcended reason; that went to the heart of a man's despair and found it groundless. The universe was a cosmos, not a chaos; man was as rightfully a part of that cosmos as were the day and night.

Here, then may lie the ultimate answer to loneliness. Within the context of the awareness of the relatedness of all things, to exist is to have meaning.

#### Unfinished Business

Early on in this investigation, I expressed some hope regarding its heuristic potential. At this point, some of the possibilities that are most interesting to me are as follows:

1. Run a more highly structured questionnaire study based upon the response categories generated by this one. The present methodology misses aspects of loneliness that people might respond positively about if asked, but would not think of mentioning otherwise.

2. The present investigation strongly suggests sex differences in the experience of loneliness, but does little to explain them. These findings should be followed up.

3. The conclusions regarding the relationships between loneliness and meaning deficit bear following up. In depth interviews with speci-

fiably lonely groups of people would be useful here.

4. Schachter's study of affiliation (see p. 48) could be run with a positive feeling induced instead of anxiety. The present investigation would predict no significant change in outcome.

5. The methods that have been used ( successfully, I think) in the present investigation could be applied to the study of other experiences.

## CHAPTER V

### COMING TO TERMS WITH LONELINESS

Because loneliness is for many people an unpleasant and unavoidable experience, readers may hope to find in this work means for dealing with it. The preceding section has described and classified some of the ways in which people alleviate loneliness. This final section will go back over some of these findings and their implications; but this time the mode of presentation will largely be prescriptive rather than descriptive. Because it fits more comfortably with this mode than my earlier style, this section is written in a relatively conversational tone - more directly addressed to the reader. In combination, these two changes have made it difficult for me at times to avoid sounding (even to myself) like I am self-righteously pontificating. Hence, this disclaimer: I don't have it all together myself. This exploration has led me to a number of conclusions regarding how to come to terms with loneliness; but only to some extent do I act upon my advice.

Some of my conclusions seem to me to coincide with ones arrived at by Moustakas more than 10 years ago (see Moustakas, 1961 ), particularly in spirit if not content. But then, a great deal of my ability to extend this work to speculations beyond the immediate data has been a matter of not giving in to my fear of saying things that have been said before.

Acceptance and Defense

The first major step in coming to terms with loneliness is accepting that it is there. As has been shown in the present investigation, loneliness is not always experienced as a longing for Others. Its "symptoms" are quite varied; and some, like alienation and nausea, are not straightforwardly related to being deprived of company. Thus, it is quite possible to experience loneliness without recognizing it for what it is.

To make matters more difficult, a position of loneliness is somewhat embarrassing and self-devaluating to admit. Our culture bombards us at varying degrees of subtlety with the message that if we are lonely, it is because there is something wrong with us. (E.g. Change to a new hair tonic or deodorant and you will be lovable.) The upshot is that almost everybody plays it cool. (E.g. "Who me, lonely?") And so, ironically, in our loneliness we must be alone.

While loneliness is a powerful experience, it can be masked. Numerous means for directing perception away from it were demonstrated by the respondents; others were covered in the subsequent discussion. However, even though some of these mechanisms may, in the short run, have been quite successful; defending oneself against loneliness results inevitably in several forms of self-defeat.

Aside from the fact that the behaviors that people employ to stifle loneliness are rarely intrinsically highly rewarding, (and are at times even physically damaging - as when pharmacological means are invoked) the very structure of defensive behavior is inimical to a life rich in experience. Defenses (whether intrapsychic or interpersonal) are to some extent nonspecific. While they may be engaged for a particular purpose,

they cannot excise or ward off a single experience leaving the rest untouched. Your loneliness is embedded in your immediate experience of the world. The price of escaping it through defense is a consciousness that is impoverished. In fleeing an experience, you become a fugitive, whose activities are limited to spaces where apprehension is unlikely. In the case of loneliness, this may result in avoidance of the very interactions that would lead to its reduction.

Acceptance of loneliness does not mean doing nothing about it. A long time ago, I read in a source that I trusted that wisdom involved learning to accept paradoxes. I was confused by this because it seemed to me that a great many of my understandings were gained through attempts to resolve them (i.e. trying to make them go away). Subsequently, I realized that the two were compatible if I took what I read to mean that when two pieces of information seem paradoxical, it is a mistake to reject either of them without further cause. Only by tentatively accepting both can resolution occur. The paradox was resolved.

It is in this sense that I urge that loneliness must be accepted. Yes, this may result in pain. But through feeling this pain you are moved toward behavior; and through understanding it you are guided.

#### Resolution and Defense

The ways in which loneliness may be resolved through acquisition of meaning in interpersonal situations and through communication have been discussed in detail already; and will not be rehashed here, except to refer back to one point. It was stated that it is at times difficult to discern defensive behavior from behavior that genuinely does away with the causes of loneliness; that sometimes, in fact, the behaviors are

identical. How then, can you tell which of the two you are engaged in? Fortunately, this question is far easier to answer for oneself than it is from the outside looking in. Behaviors that genuinely reduce loneliness bring joy; those that merely defend against it bring numbness. Unless one is totally out of contact with oneself, the difference should be apparent.

### Loneliness and Secondary Reactions

It is all well and good to recognize that one is lonely and to know what to do about it; but at times the courses of action that would lead to its reduction may be closed to us. What then?

A second step in coming to terms with loneliness is to avoid compounding it. It was argued earlier that having a serious problem tends to estrange one from Others who don't share it. To be worried and upset about your loneliness, then, only compounds it, much as, "My God, I'm going crazy!" or "Oh hell, I'm depressed again." multiply their respective experiences.

Because we are self-conscious creatures, the totality of a given experience is made up of the raw experience<sup>1</sup> itself plus our attitude toward having it. The importance of this secondary reaction cannot be overemphasized. It can be the difference between a comic episode and a tragic one. In the present context, it can make the difference between an experience of loneliness that is paralyzing in its painful emptiness

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<sup>1</sup>The term "raw" is used loosely, here. What I refer to as "raw experience" may be in itself a highly refined, complex product.

and one that may serve as a powerful tool for growth.

### Using Loneliness

The major usefulness of loneliness lies in its dissocializing properties mentioned earlier in this exploration. It was pointed out that in our search for meaning, we are alert for cues indicative of our meaning to Others. Now, I will add that these cues are inescapable. Others act toward us in accordance with whom they perceive us to be. To take a rather extreme example, imagine the difference between entertaining the queen of England and entertaining a 37 year old girlfriend your 18 year old brought home. Every act, every gesture would be different. As such, in every bit of interpersonal behavior, an Other hints to us who he takes us to be. And when there is consensus among Others, this message can be extraordinarily compelling. Thus, many of us carry false images of ourselves formed in childhood - beautiful people who think themselves ugly, intelligent people who think themselves foolish.

A similar influence over our definition of all that is not-self is equally inevitable. Thus, it is necessary to put a certain amount of distance between ourselves and Others in order to find out what we ourselves think.<sup>1</sup> Friedenberg (1959) has argued convincingly that this is exactly the purpose served by the adolescents' self-imposed alienation from parents and society at large.

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<sup>1</sup>This is not in contradiction to the earlier assertion that Others are absolutely needed for self-definition. Ultimately, they are; but they need not be with us at the moment of definition. Even in complete solitude, we have our whole interpersonal history available for reference. Thus, estrangement does not eliminate influence; it merely weakens it.

But once in a lifetime isn't enough; and even among the adolescents there are scabs. The upshot is that we live in a culture in which extraordinarily few people think for themselves in the manner to which I have been referring. It's not a matter of lack of intelligence. Even the world-views and self-images of the highly educated appear to have somehow adhered to them rather than having been synthesized from within.

When we are estranged from Others, these appendages, having no reality base in our own experience gradually fall away. And while, as has been pointed out, this experience can be quite disconcerting; the fear that we will empty out completely is groundless. For the mind doesn't like vacuums any better than nature does. The thrust toward understanding in the face of ambiguity is awesome; as anyone who has ever shown a child a magic trick must realize. And as we move from childhood to adulthood, our curiosity doesn't die; it is simply satisfied. When answers cease to be answers, questions will be faced again.

I'm not recommending here that people periodically seek out solitude (although I do think that it's a good idea.<sup>1</sup>); but simply that when estrangement is our lot, we face it with equanimity, and use it to its fullest advantage.

### Working Together

Aside from dealing with our own loneliness, at all levels of

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<sup>1</sup>Many of the disciplines designed expressly for purposes of self-realization (e.g. yoga, Zen meditation involve deliberate estrangement. And Byrd's experience (see p. ) suggests that in the cosmic union called samadhi or satori by those who seek it may lie the ultimate resolution to loneliness. Incidentally, I believe this myself.

commitment and intimacy there are things that we can do with Others that can be highly productive. These last pages offer some guidelines for such interactions with a spectrum of Others ranging from relative strangers on one extreme to husbands or wives on the other.

Among Others we don't know well, most of us tend to be cautious; willing to bide our time until we know where we stand. We have learned to slide by one another so smoothly that each of us barely feels the wind. But in doing so we waste incredible amounts of time (which is life) in interactions that are virtually meaningless to both parties involved. Obviously, it makes little sense to tell your life-story to a stranger, in response to, "How ya doin'?" But there is a middle ground between this and the usual automatic, "Fine." we are accustomed to giving. Every now and then, I find that I have had an interaction which, while short and light, was real enough for me to feel a bit closer to the Other and a bit "higher" than I had been before. It is this realness, this reactivity to what's here and now that I am urging.

The practice of interpersonal honesty greatly accelerates the rate at which Others come to know you. This, in turn, is closely related to how quickly you become meaningful to them; which, as has been shown, is essential if the relationship is going to be useful to either party in terms of loneliness reduction.

There are risks here. Many of us walk around with the conviction that if Others knew what we were really thinking, not only would we be rejected, we'd be put away. This may in fact be the case. And while it can be argued that this is a matter of societal rather than personal pathology, nobody wants to be the town dingbat. But the stakes are higher than they seem. The degree of dissimulation that we accept as normal in our relationships with most Others results in an interpersonal parallel

to the impoverishment done by an effective intrapsychic defense system. And that's devastating.

For people who can get past their fear of rejection (which is frequently phobic anyway), there is another way in which relationships may be rapidly deepened. You can let the Other know what he/she means to you, as impressions arise. Yes, there's no question that you can get stung, here; or scare the Other out of his/her wits. But it won't be boring. Again, the stakes - The real choice to be made in interaction with Others is not between a pleasurable coexistence and a painful one; it is between engagement and alienation, spice and blandness, evolution and repetition.

To Others to whom we already feel somewhat committed, we can give the gift of our understanding. There is no great risk here, but at times some sacrifice. Others need our understanding most when they are hurting. And if we are to meet their need and really empathize; then we must find within ourselves the part that resonates with their pain. Thus, in helping them not to feel alone; in a very real way we take on a part of their burden.

All of what has been mentioned up to this point applies to our relationships with friends as well as more casual acquaintances. However, with friends there is the additional possibility of sharing self-discovery. Finding out who you are (i.e. what things mean to you and what you yourself mean) is one of the few great adventures open to all people. While it can be done on one's own; working together at times can be much faster and more fun. You do not have to be a psychotherapist to help in this quest, because the tool of choice is the question rather than the answer.

A digression may make this more clear. In teaching, when students let me know that they don't understand what I'm trying to get across I

stop, and attempt to approach it from a completely different angle (most frequently through analogy). When I am able to do this successfully, I find that frequently I have gained insight into the issue myself. And that my initial lack of clarity was a result of my own incomplete understanding.

Similarly, when an Other speaks of himself, simply by refusing to accept what is unclear, one can help him toward fuller understanding. This is what the all-night talks of adolescents are all about. Having rejected the meaning-legacy of their elders, they attempt to find their own, largely by listening to what comes out of their own mouths during the struggle to make themselves understood to one another.

I think that giving advice to new lovers is a waste of words, and an intrusion into a rare and beautifully arational state, that people deserve to experience without being bothered. It's like talking to a kid about aging in the midst of his birthday party. However, there are some things about meaning and loneliness that I think are worth saying to couples who have passed through that initial intoxicating stage of a loving relationship.

First, it is important for you to realize the impossibility of sustaining a position of being an Other's sole source of meaning indefinitely. Ultimately, we simply run out of new meaning to bestow upon him/her. ("All right, so you think I'm attractive, intelligent and essentially good. But that's just you! Anyway, you're biased.") Consequently, permanent relationships are, in themselves, no cure for loneliness. But because people are unwilling to give up their belief that they ought to be (i.e. the myth that a mature love relationship is an indefinite prolongation of falling in love), they are disappointed upon finding out that theirs is not.

This has some profound implications pertaining to the dissolution of marriages. When most people marry, they seem obviously in love, and committed to living with each other permanently. Yet, something like half of them split; and it seems safe to assume that a great many more would were it not for extrinsic factors holding them together (e.g. children, embarrassment, inertia).

At first, one wonders how they could have changed so much, or asks, what did they find out about each other that turned them off? But this is to look in the wrong places. Most often, it was not personal change or disillusionment with the Other that was responsible. Marriage involves explicitly making a commitment to a life of meaningful relatedness to an Other, and implicitly to a cessation, or at least diminution of meaningful relatedness to the rest of the world. As a result, when their mates no longer can serve as a source of new meaning, the former bride and groom may find themselves more estranged from potential sources of meaning than ever before.

At this point, an important theoretical hair needs to be split in order to clarify precisely what happens to meaning as the marriage relationship evolves. Moving back to Gestalt thinking - we are not consciously occupied by what is Ground, but we do "monitor" it. (When significant change occurs in the Ground we immediately "tune in" to it.) Meaning that has faded to Ground is still there. It is not the same as lack of meaning.

To bring this to the present context, husband and wife serve as a "bank" of meaning to one another, buffering each other from meaning

deficit.<sup>1</sup> But the acquisition of meaning and the possession of meaning are no more the same experience than are eating and being full.<sup>2</sup> While the couple may give each other the security of a reservoir of existing meaning, typically they stand in one another's way in the acquisition of new meaning.

To sum up then, the key factors in the breakdown of most marriages are the inability of the participants to keep one another from experiencing at least some aspects of loneliness; plus their attribution of this to a poor choice of mates rather than to the evolution of the relationship beyond the stage of falling in love. It is this latter factor that is leading more and more people to a repetitious life-style that has best been described as "serial polygamy"; a practice that is seen as a pot of gold only by those who haven't tried it.

Among those who remain married, many supplement the relationship with affairs. Sex itself isn't the answer; but it does overlap enough with meaning acquisition to be of some use. But while affairs may not be directly detrimental to a marriage, I think the dishonesty that typically shields them is.

However, I think there is a viable alternative. It lies in a reorientation in which the members of the couple become one another's partners

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<sup>1</sup>This explains two things, 1) why separation is so difficult, even for couples who feel they are getting nothing from one another; and 2) why jealousy - bank robbery panic- remains after conscious attachment has ceased.

<sup>2</sup>The breakdown of meaningfulness into separate factors of acquiring and possessing meaning provides an interesting frame of reference for looking back at the data provided by the respondents. It suggests strongly that the "symptoms" of loneliness can be broken into corresponding groups; and that deprivation of just one of the two aspects of meaning could be expected to lead to a "partial loneliness." While I have made no effort to prove this, I am proceeding under the assumption that it is, in fact, the case.

in the search for meaning, as opposed to one another's primary sources. Sometimes it may be possible for you to seek meaning together (e.g. working for the same cause, learning the same discipline, deepening relationships with the same friends). At other times a steeper path must be taken. You may have to stand aside, and give support to the other while he/she finds their own sources of meaning. For most people this isn't easy. The fear and rage surrounding the idea of someone possibly usurping your meaning to the most significant Other in your life goes all the way back to Oedipal and sibling rivalries. And programs, that primitive, are not discarded without a struggle.

Furthermore, if the Other does find new meanings he/she may change. This is also frightening from the standpoint of possible loss of meaning. But if the alternatives to letting go are fully understood, they should be even scarier.

Arguing that it is the role of old lovers to help one another to find new meaning elsewhere raises the question as to what they have left to give directly to one another. One possibility lies in the personal change that was just referred to. As individuals change, they necessarily become meaningful in new ways, and also become a slightly different source of meaning than they were before. Thus, in the light of what has been formulated earlier, change may be expected to precipitate renewed (though admittedly milder) episodes of falling in love.

A second important factor is the reservoir of meaning. No, it's not as exciting as the initial discovery of one another. And it is strange to look at someone, and know that if you were meeting him/her for the first time you would be tremendously excited - and yet not be excited. But despite what movies, songs and popular fiction would have

us believe, there is something more to love than finding it and losing it. In between these dramas lies the possibility of deep caring, and security in the knowledge that you are deeply cared for. And now and then, there are those moments when through separation, or emergency or spontaneous insight these things are not taken for granted. And it's all there again. No, not just like it used to be. But just as strong; and much more real now. For its roots are no longer embedded in fantasy.

The last factor lies beyond the realm of meaning. It is comprised of all those things that people who are committed to one another can do for each other, all those things that don't depend upon the novelty of what is done, or who has done it. Most of all, it is knowing that you don't have to go it alone. It is knowing that you have a partner - no matter what.

## APPENDIX I

### THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Probably all people experience loneliness at least sometime during their lives. Some people experience it a great deal of the time. Yet loneliness remains an aspect of human functioning that we know almost nothing about. You are being asked to participate in the earliest stages of the scientific investigation of loneliness. Please try to answer the questions that follow as thoughtfully and directly as you can. Through your memories we can begin to piece together an understanding of loneliness.

First, think of a time when you strongly felt loneliness.

- a. Describe the situation (When did it happen? Where? Were you with others? Who? What caused the loneliness? etc.).
- b. Describe as completely as you can what you thought and felt while you were lonely (What did you feel physically? Emotionally? Was your appetite affected? What sorts of things did you want? etc.).
- c. What did you do during the experience?
- d. How did the loneliness go away? (Did it just disappear? Did something you or someone else do remove it?).

After filling out the information below, please answer these questions on the pages that follow. Begin each answer on a fresh piece of paper.

Your age \_\_\_\_\_ Your sex \_\_\_\_\_

Ages of older brothers or sisters \_\_\_\_\_

Ages of younger brothers or sisters \_\_\_\_\_

Your age when the experience you are about to describe occurred \_\_\_\_\_

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APPENDIX II

VERBATIM RESPONSES OF THE RESPONDENTS

Respondent number: 1 Age: 18½ Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 23  
 Ages of younger siblings: 16½  
 Occupation: Student Age at time of experience: 13½

- A) This happened on a Sunday afternoon in June 1966. My brother had just graduated High School. Every summer we rented a bungalow in Rockaway. It happened the year that we moved in 3 days before all my summer friends finished school. All winter I was hoping to see my friends. (They came from all over the city.) When I arrived with my family and saw no one around I became very depressed. All my friends weren't there yet.
- B) Throughout the day I would look at my watch. Minutes turned into hours. I was very depressed. I had no patience to go swimming, watch T.V. or do any of the other things I enjoyed. My appetite was not affected.
- C) I tried playing with my brother. I would run around by myself trying to pass the time knowing that within 2 or 3 more days all my playmates would be here.
- D) The loneliness left as soon as I saw my friends come. When this happened all my tensions and depressed moods left.

Respondent number: 2 Age: 20 Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 32  
 Ages of younger siblings: 0  
 Occupation: Age at time of experience: 14

The first time I can remember when I was lonely was after the death of my parents when I was fourteen.

- A) The loneliness was caused by many things. I was the youngest child having to be very secretive of personal problems.
- B) When I was lonely I tended to be very shy of people and not very talkative - no physical effect.
- C) I tried to occupy my time with various hobbies but never stayed at one thing any length of time. I thought I wanted to be lonely.
- D) The loneliness has never really went away. I have overcome the death of my parents. But basically I remained a quiet and serious person. I'm not shy anymore.

Respondent number: 3 Age: 18 Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 31, 25, 21  
 Ages of younger siblings: 0  
 Occupation: Student Age at time of experience: 16

- A) At a party when I was 16 my date (girl friend) started getting too friendly with someone else.
- B) It may have been due to the anguish but I felt very isolated and just sat there chain smoking.
- C) There seemed to be no general thought, just a growing anguish.
- D) I was slapped and my cigarette broken by my date. We sat down to talk.

Respondent number: 4            Age: 20            Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 0  
 Ages of younger siblings: 16  
 Occupation: Auto mechanic            Age at time of experience: 17

- A) I was alone and depressed. The loneliness was caused by a breaking of a friendship.
- B) The thoughts I felt were:
  - 1) Is this what life is all about?
  - 2) Why did it happen to me?
  - 3) When is it going to be over?
 My appetite increased considerably. I wanted to be like other people.
- C) Sit in my room and sulk. Went to bed early. Hardly spoke to anyone maybe because I didn't want to.
- D) I built up my initiative. Became tired of hanging around.

Respondent number: 5            Age: 20            Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 0  
 Ages of younger siblings: 18, 16, 14, 10  
 Occupation: Student            Age at time of experience: 15

The state of loneliness which I experienced accrued for a long period of time before I actually felt the climax of it.

I had come to N.Y. just recently, before which I had been living in another state. I had been here for the summer and was about half way through my freshman year in high school.

It was always easy for me to make new friends, and yet by the end of the year I had only obtained 1 or 2 close friends. It became a problem which constantly strained and depressed me. Let me say that I would not consider myself snobbish, though this was the feeling people got from me. ( I was to find this out sometime later.)

I will say that I refrained from association with certain people. And at the time I felt the majority of the people around me fell into a rather negative category.

We were at the end of my freshman year and into the summer. The couple of close friends I had were usually occupied with other things which left me pretty much alone. At the time I didn't realize it, but I was the sort of person who definitely needed to be around people. It was extremely easy for me to relate to anyone in any type of "herd."

The problem was that there just was not anyone around, and the hours and days just kept slipping by. Pretty soon I started feeling the physical side of it. I'd get jittery and nervous simply because I couldn't stand thinking anymore about how lonely I was.

The summer came to an end and I was in my sophomore year and this time I was more alone than the year before.

There was a certain girl in my class who lived on my block who I thought was very immature and below me "head" wise (and I don't mean intellectually). I started a friendship with her just to walk home with someone and from then on it led to other people and a guy who I had an affair with for the next 4 years.

P.S. Let me tell you baby, it was heavy!

Respondent number: 6 Age: 23 Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 24  
 Ages of younger siblings: 21, 14, 9  
 Occupation: Computer Operator Age at time of experience: 20-21

The only loneliness that I can remember was about a year and a half after my father passed away. I was sitting in the barracks and I started to think about him. It was at night and I was very much by myself.

I was thinking of how we played ball and of all the things we talked about. I felt a really great desire to see him and talk to him. I was thinking so hard about him that I could almost feel him present.

I was greatly depressed by this experience. It was broken when a friend of mine called me. At that point I had tears in my eyes and I went to have anything to do with other people.

Respondent number: 7 Age: 22 Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 21  
 Ages of younger siblings: 20  
 Occupation: Student Age at time of experience: 21

My most loneliness came when I was in the midst of trying to get back in school last September (70). I was with several other students who share the same problem. In the midst of our struggle, I became very disenchanted, I felt as if I had no friends or no one cared for me. For I had exhausted all sources to get back into school and all sources seemed to want to pass the buck or not care at all. I felt very dry, I even began to shake because the charges for my suspension were unreal and exaggerated. I began to pull my hair. I couldn't eat. The only thing that I could see myself doing was to get really stoned. So, I got me a fifth of Vodka and drank it. As I began to face the reality of the times, to a degree my loneliness vanished.

Respondent number: 8 Age: 32 Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 33, 38  
 Ages of younger siblings: 31  
 Occupation: Administrative Assistant Age at time of experience: 32

The feeling of loneliness occurred when I was at home watching T.V. I was alone.

The loneliness was caused because I was thinking about my children,

ages 8 and 4 who were not with me.

I was watching T.V. and my mind drifted toward them. It was the first time they had ever been away from home for a number of days.

I felt very depressed, unhappy, and sad. I had no one to talk to or laugh with. Physically I felt tired, emotionally I felt near tears.

It was at night and I had already eaten. I did not feel hungry. I thought of drinking a can of beer so that I would drift off to sleep but rejected that idea. About 11:30 a friend called and I told her how lonely I was feeling.

We talked about the children, and just by talking about them, how bad they are, and how much noise they make when they are home, I felt much better and after the phone conversation I didn't think about it anymore.

Respondent number: 9                      Age: 25                      Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 30  
 Ages of younger siblings: 0  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 21

The time I experienced my loneliness occurred when I was 21 years of age and found myself going into the army reserves. I had never been away from my home and my loved ones for any real great length of time before. When I entered the situation I felt that loneliness would be the least of my problems - what with thousands of guys around like me all in the same bind. However, I soon found out that just being with people who are mere acquaintances and you'll never see again, is not the same as being with those people who are really tight with you, such as family and friends. My loneliness was lessened I think, for in my mind I had a target date - a date when I would be out of the army and home with my people. The loneliness affected me more mentally than physically. I used to daydream and lie awake at night just thinking of my loved ones and being with them. Physically my body had no tremendous changes, nor was my appetite affected. However, I do think had the circumstances been different these occurrences would also have taken place. During this period I did all I could to maintain my connections with these people; I phoned constantly and wrote letters twice a day just to have a link, although it was a rather distant one. For me the loneliness ended peacefully enough - my due date came and I was free to come home. At that instant my loneliness ended.

Respondent number: 10                      Age: 21                      Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 36, 26  
 Ages of younger siblings: 19, 3                      Age at time of experience: 12  
 Occupation: Teacher - Economics, Accountant, etc.

- A) When I came to the U.S.A. 1969 August 1, was then I really experienced loneliness because I was in a foreign land where none of my relatives were around. It happened in the U.S.A., now I was alone. The loneliness was caused because I had none of my friends to talk to, especially my family and girl friend.
- B) Well, I thought, why did I leave my country to come over to the U.S.A. and be lonely and I felt like taking the next plane back to

my country. I lost a lot of weight (20 lbs.) that had some hinderance on me physically. Emotionally I could and did not want to go anywhere and could not eat or be funny. My appetite for every thing was affected. All I wanted was to go back home.

- C) I sat down after about a month and decided to bear out the loneliness, because someday, I will have to be on my own and face life like it is. Even though all the loneliness did not leave me, but at least most of it had wore away.
- D) Well, when I begin meeting friends and going to parties, school, church and other recreational places, they begin to wear away and eventually it all left me after about 6 months.

Respondent number: 11                      Age: 24                      Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 33  
 Ages of younger siblings: 0  
 Occupation: Butcher                      Age at time of experience: 24

Throughout my life I haven't been close with my entire family, but mainly my immediate family. My father is thirteen years older than my mother, my brother is almost ten years older than me.

At age eleven my brother was drafted into the army and I was sort of an only child for ten years. Not being able to relate very well to my family and losing my brother, who I was just being able to relate to, I turned to my friends as a replacement so to say. This turned out to be a bad replacement because it seems that they were just as screwed up as I was and it led me to foul my life up as far as an outlook on life, occupation, education.

Now after thirteen years I find myself back in school trying to do something with myself.

Getting back to the original point I still cannot help but think of my past and being afraid of the future.

Respondent number: 12                      Age: 18                      Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 28, 23  
 Ages of younger siblings: 11  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 18

I'm sure that if I had more time to think I would be able to think of a better situation but right now I have strong feelings of loneliness. In the past year I have found 10 people whom I truly love. These ten people have left the city for the summer and have gone out west. I messed up this year and am now facing the consequences of summer school and working.

I feel very empty and unhappy. I don't think I was affected physically except for my overeating, which I do especially more when I'm unhappy. Right now, all I want is to be with them.

The loneliness hasn't gone away yet but as soon as I have enough money I'll be going out west to be with them.

Respondent number: 13                      Age: 28                      Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 35

Ages of younger siblings: 0  
 Occupation: Pilot - N.Y.P.D. Age at time of experience: 19-20

- A) Approximately 8 years ago I went away to an aviation school down south to acquire a commercial pilots license. When I first arrived there, it was about one week before the school was to start. Although there were other students at this time at the school I did not know anyone, and not being the aggressive type I was by myself for a few days, away from home, friends, etc.
- B) Emotionally - Of course I was lonely and desired to make friends, & but it still took a few days. I used to sit in front of the school
- C) and daydream. Though I don't believe I thought much about home I think the greatest part concerned what flying was going to be like, if I would be successful, etc. Also I thought about the possibility of meeting a real nice girl that would make a good companion. Physically I was not effected, nor did my appetite suffer.
- D) The loneliness did not go away until the actual beginning of classes. There was too much work involved to even think about being lonely. After a few days friends came easy and the feeling was not experienced again. Though after approximately 6 months I was feeling lonely not because of not having friends, but not having a female companion. At this time I did meet a girl that I eventually married.

Respondent number: 14 Age: 18 Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 20  
 Ages of younger siblings: 15, 10, 10  
 Occupation: Student Age at time of experience: 18

- A) It happened in the evening after coming home from school. I was in my house; my parents were home, yet I felt lonely. I had called up all my friends and none were home (they had gone to a movie before I got home).
- B) I went through a period of pacing up and down my house going from one room to another to find things to do. I felt extremely depressed since I look forward to being with my friends at night. I had lost my appetite and eventually decided to lie down. I remember thinking of a girl who had refused a date with me. I had felt very disappointed after her refusal. Maybe I was trying to get myself even more depressed, because I remember counting all the problems I live with. These problems I thought range from the idea that I have bad breath to the fact that I have epilepsy.
- C) All I did during the experience was sulk and feel sorry for myself as I was lying down.
- D) I eventually went outside to my friend's house and waited until he came home. After not seeing him at 2:00, I left, went home, and after sulking some more, I finally fell asleep. Even my hobbies of photography and drawing didn't satisfy or quench the morose attitude.

Respondent number: 15 Age: 18 Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 23, 19  
 Ages of younger siblings: 15  
 Occupation: Student Age at time of experience: 18

- A) I suppose that I've never experienced real loneliness. There were times when I did not think there was a friend in the world. The reason for that was my disagreeing with people all the time, especially with friends. Most recently I had a friend who I considered my best. He had met a girl and as the old saying goes, "love over friendship." Not that I was jealous of him, but I warned him that he was getting involved at such a young age. He always needed security, so do I, but the security he wanted was had to be female. The best status symbol around.
- B) I thought about the girls I had met and how non-demanding they were. My mind then began to think along his philosophy, "get a steady girlfriend and be happy." So I attempted that role, and you want to know something, it sucked.
- C) I looked for that quote "special girl," "The woman of my dreams." And she did not appear because I found that there is no such animal.
- D) The loneliness went away because most girls I found to be flexible with the way I was and how she is. In fact, the true love I found is my opposite. And our love can last because it will always be there. What is there is the never ending struggle for truth, justice and the American way! Blah! Blah!

Respondent number: 16                      Age: 22                      Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 0  
 Ages of younger siblings: 9  
 Occupation: Secretary                      Age at time of experience: 20

The time I felt most lonely was when I was pregnant. This happened two years ago in New York. At the time I was living with my mother and brother. I was lonely because that was when I had a split with my boyfriend.

At this point I thought I had really made a mess of my life and that nothing was ever going to be right again. For the first two weeks after I found out I started behaving very strangely. I would not go to work. I got very annoyed when anybody questioned me and I would not eat. I felt like having an abortion or killing myself.

I then took a vacation to the Caribbean where my father resides. I told him what was the matter. I stressed the fact that I was not getting married. He then pointed out that this was only a temporary setback if I was strong enough to go through with having the baby. I felt very relieved at this because he is supposed to be what is termed a 'socialite' and I thought he would have been very disappointed. He was, but not to the point where he was going to turn his back on me. I then resolved myself to the fact that everything was going to be all right and that I was going to have something to live for and now I am very happy.

Respondent number: 17                      Age: 21                      Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 0  
 Ages of younger siblings: 18, 14  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 19

- A) The loneliness occurred when I was nineteen years of age. I had just broken off with the girl I had wished to marry. Coupled with this

was recovery from a spinal injury, the death of my grandfather (he was one I could speak to the easiest) and talk of placing my re-started brother into an institution. My parents were engulfed in their troubles and I had no one left to talk to.

- B) I felt pain physically due to the injury. Emotionally I was unstable. I literally ran from school or work friends. I spoke very little, hardly laughed (both are exact opposites of my personality), couldn't eat without getting pains in my stomach and at times prayed that I'd die.
- C) I tried to carry out my school studies, which at the time were my main occupation, as if nothing had happened. It was really fruitless. My concentration on studies was practically nill. When I didn't have to study, I would just stay in my room and listen to music.
- D) I broke out from this pain by forcing myself to confide in friends who weren't really close. At the same time I prayed and tried to think out my problem. I guess a big help was my improving physical health. For the friends who I thought weren't really close, they became close. They listened more than talked and it was just being able to tell my problems that helped me later when I started to feel back with it. I heard or talked with people about their troubles and I told myself repeatedly, "See, they're worse off than you, be happy just to be alive." Eventually, I came out of it (I took about 14 months to become happy and cheerful again). But I learned a lot from the experience and it has left some scars.

Respondent number: 18                      Age: 20                      Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 25  
 Ages of younger siblings: 0  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 20

I had a car for two years. I had different ones over that time. One day, last month, I sold mine. I had no more. I was so lonely, oh God. I felt empty, useless, wasted, isolated. By the way, I live with my girlfriend (so I really was upset, lonely, though I have her).

To alleviate my great emptiness (I can't describe it any other way) I called up a friend who came over. We went to Chinatown to eat.

I don't feel lonely anymore. I really felt lonely without a car!?! I can't describe it any other way.

P.S. I haven't bought one since.

I'm very happy, anyway.

Another time I was lonely was at Newport Jazz Festival '68. I ate ACID, and had flashes of loneliness and companionship over and over. It was strange. I knew how lonely we really all are.

I feel that the more we analyze loneliness, or ourselves, the further we grow apart. I believe that if we can regress (this may be a personal wish) to our animal soul in the jungle, then, maybe we can leave our hangups behind, and travel together, feeling to be a part of God's kingdom, not of man's or someone else's.

I find great pity in that fact that we are all lonely, and remain that way forever. Yes, even when married, we must only live with ourselves and can never escape our bodies. People who take drugs sometimes try to escape their bodies, "prisons" of loneliness. Sex 'totals' one's body with another. You cannot LOVE-BALL someone and be lonely. That's

why homosexuals exist. They double the possibilities of sex - and  $\frac{1}{2}$  the loneliness in the world. Face it, men are as attractive as females. I'm not bisexual, but God is.

Love is the opposite of loneliness. Love is contentedness, satisfaction, care, companionship.

You can LOVE anyone. Some people's chemistry directs them to certain people; be they fun loving or not, sad or happy, intellectual or not, fat or skinny or ugly or green-eyed or pimped or male or female.

We fear Love.

We want Love.

No "sick" man loves.

No Lover is sick.

Respondent number: 19                      Age: 20                      Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 22  
 Ages of younger siblings: 19, 16, 18  
 Occupation: Receptionist                      Age at time of experience: About 1

The first time I can ever remember being lonely was when I was a baby. I woke and the apartment was very quiet and I didn't see anyone, my brother and sister I can't recollect. Anyway I remember feeling afraid because everything was so quiet. I remember crying and I kept crying until my mother came. She picked me up from my crib and I remember feeling better.

Respondent number: 20                      Age: 17                      Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 20  
 Ages of younger siblings: 0  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 17

- A) When you are with someone, Joe, almost everyday of your life and share every aspect of each other, separation for even one or two days brings the worst and most painful loneliness. In the fall my boyfriend and his friend decided to go to the car races in Watkins Glen, N.Y. I was invited but it would have caused too much trouble in my house, which at the time, wasn't worth it. My boyfriend offered not to go at all, but because I really didn't want him to go, I made myself tell him to go.
- B) When he left I cried which was pretty ridiculous to do since he wasn't leaving me mentally, just physically. Although I haven't seen him plenty of times for 1 night, I knew he was away having a good time while I was sitting home doing nothing. He left Saturday morning and he said he'd call Saturday night. My whole day revolved around that call. I just sat in my room picturing how I could have been there. I sort of felt a piece of my stomach eaten away, that a part of me wasn't all there. I had no appetite. I just sort of sat and stared with no particular thought in my mind, maybe just concentrating on a single object in my room. I wasn't quite sure what I wanted. I wanted him home, yet I didn't want him home just because of me. I wanted to be there, but then I thought I'd probably spoil his time if I went.

- C) I realized it was ridiculous to mope around so I went for a walk. I kept on putting it out of my mind by concentrating on trees, houses, etc. I sort of was a walking zombie. Then I went home and sat and waited, feeling sick (physically) and waited for the call.
- D) The loneliness went away as soon as he came back. I once again felt loved, secure and protected. I had something to do, someone to talk to, be with. It was as if my life force was reinstated.

Respondent number: 21                      Age: 19                      Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 0  
 Ages of younger siblings: 13  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 16

- A) This situation occurred while a student in a large out of town university. Having applied late, I was housed in a dorm with a senior 5 years older than me, and my room was "in the boondocks" of the dorm. Most students were 2 years older than me, and I am very shy in the best of times, and for several months I had no friends whatever to just "pal around" with.
- B) My appetite was fine, and physically I felt OK. However, I was extremely depressed and wallowed in self-pity. I wanted to transfer to another school and study especially hard so I would get into a better school next year. Emotionally, I felt terrible.
- C) I did very little, and daydreamed quite a bit, while going around my normal activities.
- D) After many months of this, late at night two students were in a "duel" with soda or some similar prank. Being a fencer, I brought out two swords and presented them into the conversation, so to speak. One thing led to another, and I was soon integrated into the clique, and was typically "one of the boys."

Respondent number: 22                      Age: 19                      Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 31, 28  
 Ages of younger siblings: 0  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 19

- A) I am very seriously dating a guy and because of the circumstances existing this summer we are only together on weekends. Besides being very much in love with him I am dependent upon him for my happiness and security. This is not too difficult to understand considering that my parents have just been divorced and my brothers no longer live at home. (I live with my mother.) When I am not with him during the week I often feel depressed and stranded. This feeling was much more frequent at the beginning of the summer than now. On a Tuesday night a month ago or so I spoke to him on the phone for a few minutes - then we had to hang up because my brother and sister-in-law came over for dinner. I was in my room alone and felt a tremendous emptiness when I hung up - realizing that I wouldn't see him till the following weekend, which was 3 days away and seemed like an eternity. I cried for a while lying on my bed and then composed myself to go down to dinner. My brother, his wife and the children were already there.

- B) I felt lost, empty and unhappy. I had a headache - perhaps from crying. I was hungry and ate more than I usually do for dinner. I felt a tremendous urge to run out of the house, jump into the car and drive the hour's distance to my boyfriend's house. At first seeing my brother and sister-in-law together made me envious since I couldn't be with the one who made me happy. I wished that they would leave.
- C) I cried and then talked to my sister-in-law. She was sympathetic. I tried to forget how I felt and get involved in playing with the children. Still I couldn't rid myself of the queer feeling in my stomach and a feeling that something was wrong so I started to pity myself and my situation.
- D) I began to rationalize my feelings away by saying something like "everything's for the best." It succeeded in part but talking to my brother and sister-in-law about my boyfriend and our relationship helped more. I forced myself to look at the 3 days realistically and felt better. Then I watched T.V. to escape the situation and succeeded. My loneliness didn't hurt as much anymore.

Respondent number: 23                      Age: 26                      Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 28  
 Ages of younger siblings: 24, 20  
 Occupation: Registered Nurse                      Age at time of experience: 22-23

- A) When I was 22-23 I discontinued a relationship with a gentleman (whom I thought I was in love with). After this happened I felt totally empty and lonely. The feeling of loneliness was mainly felt when I was with my friends who had a stable relationship with other males. I felt very left out at these times, especially at parties or other types of social gathering where people were happy with someone they loved. I guess the loneliness was caused by feelings of being left out - no "boyfriend" therefore feeling of emptiness and loneliness.
- B) Thoughts felt while being lonely: Sometimes I'd feel that people were cruel. "How could he do that to me." "Why do I deserve this." I had thoughts of hostility towards a person at times. Well he wasn't worth it anyway. Appetite was extremely poor. Felt depressed. No desire to be sociable, yet if one of my friends called I'd feel better.
- C) During the experience I would sort of nag myself. I'd be miserable. Talk very little to my friends. I just wanted to be left alone to meditate and think over the "whole thing."
- D) The loneliness went away when this person or love was replaced. Then I'd start dating others. Now I'm totally happy. I can't say I have really experienced such loneliness since. In other words when I "fell in love again" the feeling of loneliness disappeared.

Respondent number: 24                      Age: 19                      Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 22, 28  
 Ages of younger siblings: 0  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 19

- A) I belong to a very strong close-knit group of friends. I receive

almost all my intellectual and social outlets through them, and am constantly with them. All of us work in this youth organization that has a summer camp. Except for the 3 or 4 of us going to summer school they all went up as part of the staff of the summer camp. The night after they left I felt very depressed and lonely. I thought that during summer school I would be bored and would have no one to talk to.

- B) I thought during this bout with loneliness that I would be very bored, would miss my friends a lot and probably wasting much of my time doing nothing (constructive) as I'm very active with these kids. I thought I would become apathetic, and just be miserable. My appetite was not affected, but for a while I had a dull feeling in my stomach which I assume was because of insecurity.
- C) I talked to the remaining kids about how lonely I felt and how boring it was going to be and how I could hardly wait to go up to the camp next month and be there the whole time. I took up the slack by preparing more educational material for the organization and started reading as much as I did before entering college. (College is definitely detrimental to your education.)
- D) When I saw that I wasn't going to be bored, and when I went up to the camp on the first weekend my loneliness disappeared.

Respondent number: 25                      Age: 19                      Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 0  
 Ages of younger siblings: 16  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 19

- A) The situation where I felt most alone occurs on Sunday morning. Something is on my mind, but there is no one around that I can talk to. I feel trapped within the problem. It happened after I had woken up and was sitting in my bedroom. There was no one else around. The basic cause of my loneliness was finding myself faced with a problem with which I needed help. There was no one around that I could talk to.
- B) When I feel loneliness I can't eat. I have absolutely no desire for food. My feelings of loneliness are shadowed by feelings of depression. The feeling that nothing is going right. I find myself thinking that maybe things will never improve. I find that I am in an emotional and physical slump.
- C) During this experience I tried to seek out help. You want to find someone to be with. You try to find something else to occupy you. You try not to think about it.
- D) My loneliness did not just disappear. It took the help of someone else to bring me out of this state. I had to rid my mind of what was troubling it.

Respondent number: 26                      Age: 19                      Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 23  
 Ages of younger siblings: 9 months  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 18

- A) I felt as lonesome, like I was the only one upon the earth. Really

I had my parents, brothers and sisters around, but for me they amongst everyone was just out of existence. It happened after I made a trip to my country. It started from down that side until I arrived up here. One cause was an embarrassing thing that had happened between my parents and the other was, I was away from the one I cared for most of all.

- B) While I was feeling lonely, I thought of all sorts of crazy things to do. First I thought to move out of my family sight; but not seeing the way to support myself at that time, I thought of dying. My appetite was affected a great deal. I didn't eat sometimes for a whole day. Although I tried it didn't make any difference. Well, a few weeks later I regained my appetite after the one I cared for came around. It was amazing the way I ate so much.
- C) During that experience all I did was to come home from work, go to my room, watch the T.V. (so my mind could be clear for a while), just stay there until I went to bed.
- D) The loneliness went away after I stopped and think I should accept life as it comes. "It's no bed of roses." As I said before, the one I cared for came to New York, so nothing else didn't matter to me.

Respondent number: 27                      Age: 31                      Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 30  
 Ages of younger siblings: 19  
 Occupation: Nursing                      Age at time of experience: 20

- A) The time that I have felt more loneliness than ever was when I first moved into my own apartment. I had been used to living with my relatives and that was a lot of company. When I moved I was alone. No one in the house to talk to or listen to but the radio. I always wanted someone to talk to at all times like I had been used to. This loneliness wasn't all the time because I did have friends come in once in a while. But that wasn't like what I had been used to.
- B) When I was lonely I felt as if I had no friends, nothing to do. When I get lonely the first thing I want to do is eat, although I am not really hungry.
- C) During this experience I would cook or clean or whatever, or go for a walk.
- D) I finally got used to living alone. Not having someone around all the time, then I wasn't lonely anymore.

Respondent number: 28                      Age: 18                      Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 21  
 Ages of younger siblings: 7  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 18

- A) I felt the loneliness while away at out-of-town college, living in a dormitory room. I had my own room since my roommate had moved out to go into a co-ed dorm (with boys) and I had stayed in the female dorm. I was in my room at about 10 o'clock at night and had nothing much to do. The girls in the adjoining suite (shared a bathroom) had all their friends in the room and were having a good time, i.e. lots of sounds, laughter. I didn't know them well enough to go in (I had

- been living there for a few weeks and they had been friends for a few years). It was too early to go to bed. I had no work to do so I just sat on my bed and felt lonely and out of it.
- B) I physically felt differently. I didn't feel hungry but I felt like eating just to give myself an excuse for sitting in my room alone. It was as if the social implication of being left out of the fun was too horrible to bear. I didn't want other people realizing my position. I had to put up a front, i.e., have a reason for being alone while the other girls were having fun. I physically felt a deep, nauseating depression like anxiety.
- C) I just sat on my bed and re-read a Time magazine.
- D) I read until 11 o'clock (the earliest possible time I could rationalize that I was tired) and went to sleep. The next day my boyfriend came up for the weekend. He didn't remove the loneliness because I still felt it when I was with him and I knew the girls next door were getting together.

Respondent number: 29                      Age: 22                      Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 27  
 Ages of younger siblings: 0  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 16-17

- A) The time when I felt the loneliest was prior to and during and after the death of my mother. This period lasted from approximately the age of 16-17 or 18 years of age. It was one in which I felt detached from everything. I felt as if nothing was a part of me and yet I was carrying an unwanted burden of the whole world on my shoulders. The closest feeling which I can associate with it which can be induced is one in which one is on heavy medication (approx. 1000 mg. Thorazine). (It's as if you have a shield around you and all sound, motion etc. are on a completely different level or reality.) The analogy in regards to being heavily medicated lies in the fact that you're completely into yourself and any contact with the "outside", whether an effort is made on your part or not, is impossible. Loneliness to me at that point in my life gave me the feeling, in regards to relating to the "outside," I was in a room and there were pictures (motion pictures) projected on all the walls. I was trying to communicate with the people in them but it was an impossibility because I was on a different plane of reality -- all alone.
- B) I felt weak, soft (like I wasn't solid, as if all of my molecules had spread apart), sad, unhappy, fed-up with everything. It was probably like being on the edge of death - nothingness. I ate more - trying to keep in touch with some other aspect of reality other than myself.
- C) It was strange because even though I wanted to come out of my loneliness I didn't want to come out of my loneliness. For I felt that if I came out of it I would only eventually go back into it again - so why experience death twice.
- D) It was a matter of letting someone become a part of me without the fear of them leaving me in that state again.

Respondent number: 30                      Age: 19                      Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 24, 22  
 Ages of younger siblings: 0  
 Occupation: Secretary                      Age at time of experience: 19

The situation was a part of "vacation" weekend trip with two couples, one other single friend ( a sister to one of the couples) and myself. I was very much alone because the couples consisted of my best friend - her sister, her boyfriend - his sister and his best friend. I just felt like an outsider. And even now when I look back and see what a really great time we did have and how I know I didn't seem outcast to them and that we all got along great - inwardly I felt awful that weekend. The basic loneliness, I suppose, was the lack of a boyfriend of my own - and seeing everyone so happy, it made me worse.

When I felt the loneliness come on I definitely did lose my appetite. I felt like a child with older people even though I was one of the oldest. I felt or thought I was an outcast to society and that nothing I did ever seemed to go right. Actually, I suppose I felt paranoid. I wanted more than anything to be wanted, to be liked, to be talked to, and I suppose, inside, to be the center of attraction.

During the experience I tried more than ever to get away from myself, it didn't work - every chance I'd hide away and cry or just walk away from them and keep to myself. It finally did pass though, when I started up conversations with my friend's sister, who's only a few years younger - she felt very lonely also. So we just discussed our problem, took walks together and just got away from the whole situation.

I must add that this is the one outstanding experience I can recall right now, even though it sounds childish - it really was the people and the situation we were in that really made me feel lost. I know I got out of the loneliness easily and that it might have been worse but at that time I never cried or was as depressed as I was then.

There were other factors that contributed to it also - I had argued before we left with another friend who could have shared my situation equally - but she decided not to go. I had a very bad cold, the weather was miserable and cold at a time when we were expecting to get some sun. Also my closest friend was the person with me and she, of course, was with her boyfriend, someone she had been dating only a short time.

Respondent number: 31                      Age: 53                      Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 61, 64, 70, 73  
 Ages of younger siblings: 0  
 Occupation: Secretary                      Age at time of experience: 45

My brother, of whom I was very fond, passed away in the spring. That summer, all my children were away. One was in camp, one at an out-of-town school, and one in the Peace Corps. My husband went to work every day. That left me alone during the days. I do not play mah-jongg or cards, and my friends seemed to go their own way.

There were periods of great loneliness and sadness. Also restlessness. I was put off doing things in the house which I had originally planned to do. There's always tomorrow, but tomorrow was the same thing.

I do not readily talk to people about my loneliness and sadness, so I kept it inside. It may be that this loneliness gave me some sort of comfort.

However, one day I went to the city with the idea of going to an employment agency. I thought that maybe I could run away from myself - be with people - talk to strangers about topics different from the usual - something interesting.

I walked on Park Ave. and looked at the directory. Not recognizing the name of an employment agency, I asked the elevator starter if there was employment agency in the building. I may add that at this time, I did not know what my capabilities were, except that I could type. The operator said there was no employment agency in the building, but that he knew someone who needed a secretary. I went to the designated office and I was hired. I worked a few years at this office and loved it. It did a lot for my morale, ego and loneliness. I didn't have much time to be lonely, and being with people and having work to do, did help enormously.

Respondent number: 32                      Age: 21                      Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 0  
 Ages of younger siblings: 17  
 Occupation: Clerk-typist                      Age at time of experience: 21

- A) I was with 4 people who work in the office. The boss was angry with me and succeeded in making me feel lonely. The thing which made me feel alone was the boss would not speak to me. Instead of telling me what he wanted done, he would tell someone else who would tell me. I generally did not know what would be the schedule for the day. The boss talked to me only to say unpleasant things. Whenever anyone came to talk to me they were sent away by the boss on an errand.
- B) I felt very nervous during this period, although I knew the boss was angry and why I felt very apart from the office group.
- C) I did not change or act differently during this experience.
- D) The experience ended as soon as I left the office. It did not return the next day, although the office experience was the same the following day.

Respondent number: 33                      Age: 19                      Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 35, 30, 28, 26  
 Ages of younger siblings: 17  
 Occupation: Legal Secretary                      Age at time of experience: 19

- A) I went to bed on Saturday night after having a silent fight with my boyfriend. He told me that he would call me during the week - I really didn't care one way or the other. Thoughts kept going through my mind - he is taking advantage of you, you fool, forget him - so I did and slept quite soundly. When I awakened on Sunday, I found the house soundless, motionless. My mother and sister had gone visiting in New Jersey (I live in Brooklyn), my father had gone to New York - so said the note that was waiting for me. I turned on all the radios in the house and began to cook breakfast. (I had hardly had a morsel of food the day before because my boyfriend is cheap.) A song came on the radio that I had heard and heard and was sick of hearing but all at once the tears began to run down my cheeks. I could not stop, my bacon was burning because I couldn't see it.

- B) I tried to tell myself to stop but I didn't. Finally I calmed myself down and asked why I was crying. I really didn't believe it was because of my boyfriend, so I thought of everything else - my job - I want to quit and become a full-time student; part-time worker; my home situation - if I could afford it. I would get a place of my own, my boy friend - I guess it really boiled down to losing him. But I chose that way, so why the tears.
- C) I looked at my cat (they're really my sister's) who I really can't stomach, and I felt sorry for it. Such an empty life - no one to love or get into personality wise.
- D) I stopped the tears and called my sister in Staten Island and prayed that she was home. She was and practically immediately asked me to come over - no questions - I'll tell her when I get there if I like. I then ate my breakfast, got dressed, wrote a short note to the folks and took my two busses and small town train to people. As long as I was doing something - going somewhere, I was all right. I forgot that when I got up and found no one to talk to, I began cleaning the house, but I ran out of things to do - that's when I began to feel lonely. When I'm alone with my feelings, they seem worse than they really are. Association with my sister and her family all day, playing with the kids, telling my sister all about it, going over all the pros and cons of my relationship with this guy, made me see that I was doing the right thing and that it was better to be a bit lonely one day out of my life than to be very lonely later on with him.

Respondent number: 34                      Age: 43                      Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 0  
 Ages of younger siblings: 41, 37  
 Occupation: Teacher                      Age at time of experience: 38

- A) The loneliness that comes to my mind is when I was notified that my position as a "youth director" in my Temple was being terminated. It took place in the Rabbi's home, and only he was present. It seems that the officers of the Temple could not tell this bad news to me face to face.
- B) When I first heard this - financial worries were uppermost in my mind. 30% of my income was going "down the drain," and the administrator asked the Rabbi to be the "Hatchet Man." I felt that 14 years of loyal service was not appreciated. I came home feeling low and down in the dumps. I felt rather empty; not wanting to go anywhere, not willing to mingle socially. I felt rejected and unsuccessful. It did not affect my appetite. I ate but the food was not as tasty as usual.
- C) My wish was either to be alone, or to become immersed in my other work as an excuse for not having to go out of my room and talk to people.
- D) My wife finally brought me out of this depression. She explained that the family could manage just fine on a lower income. She stressed good health is what counts, etc.... I agreed with her outwardly but the circumstances of my dismissal still bothered me. As it turned out, 2 months later an offer twice as rewarding turned up. I've been at it ever since. I've since taken the attitude that if something goes wrong, it is only for the moment. Things were meant to be and better times will come along.

Respondent number: 35                      Age: 18                      Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 0  
 Ages of younger siblings: 0  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 17

Last year I began university life away from home and the confines of my parents and lifetime friends - I had been away before - at camp - where homesickness was an impossible feeling. I had missed my parents on occasion (I am an only offspring and thus was quite close). When my parents left school that afternoon I had made several acquaintances, but friends take a while to develop. I was far from alone. The second day I knew (was familiar with) most of the 48 girls on my dorm floor and quite a few of my friend Kenny's mates. He and I had the good fortune to go to the same university together after high school.

Anyway, the first 2 weeks were torturous because there was no one I could talk to, to talk to. There were times I felt like calling the operator just to hear a voice. My roommate was very hostile - she had a superiority complex, was quite wealthy and totally not "my type."

I fell into lapses of extreme fatigue. Waking up at noon, I'd go to sleep at 4 p.m. and wake up 2 hours later, to return to sleep at 10 p.m. My appetite diminished (I lost almost 13 lbs. in 2 weeks) and were it not for the fact that I keep a journal, I'd probably have gone home. As it was, I called my friends - 1 or 2 daily which became expensive. I longed for N.Y. television stations, even got to the point where I missed hearing Roger Mudd and Walter Cronkite. As soon as I became involved with classes - and meeting people, I was not exposed to in the seclusion of the dorm, it ceased.

I am basically very alive, but when orientation began, selling myself at school parties, dances and get-togethers does not thrill me. That's where my shyness overtakes my vivacity.

Classes made it better, much better, because the girls on my floor were dummies and classes made it easier to meet people more involved with my major field.

I enjoyed taking this. If I had more time, I could go on forever.

Respondent number: 36                      Age: 20                      Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 0  
 Ages of younger siblings: 15  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 19

- A) I can recall several times during my life when I have been lonely. Perhaps not so much recently, but in the not-too-distant past - last year, for instance - I have been lonely. I think that this emotion was brought on from boredom - I remember I had nothing to do to occupy myself; school was out. I had no job, my friends were all working, and, in general, I had no one at all to associate with. The time I'm referring to specifically is last summer, and I can remember vividly the emptiness I felt. This feeling is not unique to only that period, for as I mentioned before, I can remember other occasions when I have experienced loneliness - they too were brought about from boredom, and the absence of people to be with.
- B) My feeling at the time when I felt lonely was one of emptiness. I was moody, bored, and would wander aimlessly from room to room, having

nothing to do and no one to be with. Physically - my loneliness has reached the point where I have felt so dejected that I became drowsy and weakened. I don't feel as if my appetite was affected to a great degree - perhaps I ate a little more to fill the empty time. My emotions were certainly affected by the feeling of loneliness - that itself is a strong emotion. When I was very lonely, I remember having little patience for things that bothered me; my sister's pestering annoyed me more than it would normally and we would have more frequent disagreements. In general, I felt moody and almost worthless as if I had nothing to look forward to in life, and my existence was without purpose. My view was very pessimistic at the time - it was an awful feeling, for I almost hated myself.

- C) All I did during the experience was try to end it by finding something to do. Again, I felt moody and very dejected.
- D) The loneliness eventually disappeared - when something came up to take my mind off the situation, the feeling went away (a temporary job, or a friend visiting for example).

Respondent number: 37                      Age: 18                      Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 0  
 Ages of younger siblings: 0  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 17

I have sometimes gotten a feeling of strong loneliness when I have been home alone with a feeling that I have been deserted by my friends. When I know that some of my friends are out together and they did not ask me or some similar thing, I felt left out and deserted. If I was home doing nothing because of this I felt unwanted, unliked and lonely .

I looked for things to do like, watch T.V. or eat but I did not have very much patience for anything.

This lonely feeling was very strong but went away very easily and quickly when I got something to do or even better someone to talk to.

Respondent number: 38                      Age: 19                      Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 0  
 Ages of younger siblings: 14, 8  
 Occupation: Computer Programmer                      Age at time of experience: 14-15

- A) When I was about 14 or 15 years of age I felt terribly rejected and lonely. Partly because I felt inferior to my social circle, and myself in particular. I was with many friends and found I wasn't happy. I felt very distant and lonely like I didn't belong. Most of my friends had boyfriends. I didn't. They were able to go out and meet new people. I wasn't. I felt I had no one to care for me or ever would.
- B) My thoughts were negative. Everything I attempted turned out negative. I felt useless, unwanted, unloved and just plain miserable about myself. I began eating excessively, sleeping a lot and I completely withdrew from everyone. Nothing seemed right. I felt terribly self-conscious and acquired complex on top of complex. I didn't care at all about myself.
- C) I cried a lot, wanted attention and pity from people and went to extremes to get it. I also slept and did drugs in the hope of

relieving my anxieties.

- D) I finally realized that drugs wasn't the answer. I got physically and mentally more depressed. I would go out and ponder things out on my own. I finally met someone who was willing to listen, and poured out my troubles. This person offered sensible advice and comfort. Through this person and my own analysis, I started to change and become more of an extrovert.

Respondent number: 39                      Age: 19                      Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 0  
 Ages of younger siblings: 17, 16  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 19

I was at a party at SUBO one Saturday night. It was being given by the Puerto Rican Alliance. For entertainment Ray Barreto and Markolino y Su Sabor were the guest artists, both being Latin bands. I arrived there and almost immediately, I felt that somehow I was not able to communicate with others. Many of my friends were present but here, too, I felt that there was no real exchange of feelings. I felt that the feelings I normally receive from these people were missing and were being replaced by hollow and meaningless gestures.

As the evening went on, the more I felt being alone. I felt terrible. Only one person later on made me feel that I was noticed and that I was substantial and not, for want of a better term, a visible spectre. I felt so pleased I did not know what to do. But I felt good. Earlier I felt so empty. I wanted to leave. I lost my appetite. I was beginning to feel sorry for myself.

To add more light on this subject, my ability on the dance floor and my ability to converse in Spanish could have been major factors and the more I think of it, I firmly believe that they were. Without both of these skills, my social existence for that night was almost nil. I don't think I ever felt more lonelier in my life than that Saturday night.

Respondent number: 40                      Age: 27                      Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 50, 45, 35  
 Ages of younger siblings: 24  
 Occupation: Nurse                      Age at time of experience: 25

A combination of factors. Essentially a boy with whom I thought I was in love stopped calling and I had too much pride to pursue him or to let casual acquaintances know how I felt. The 2 or 3 close friends in whom I might have confided were out of town for the summer. And my father had just died.

I felt almost completely isolated. I wanted comfort but there was no one to comfort me. I remember that the time - the whole summer - was the most agonizing period of my life. Every day was just another one to get through, everything seemed lost forever. I thought about him (the boy) constantly and got almost no pleasure out of ordinarily pleasureable activities. I felt I was completely alone and everything was pressing on me. The pain was almost physical. And everything was indifferent and no one could help. After a while I only wanted the pain to stop. Neither my appetite nor health were affected.

I carried on my normal activities and finally the loneliness became so unbearable that I found myself going out more and seeking out people

I liked for various activities. This helped a little.

It finally went away. I had told myself that when the fall came (my favorite season) I would be all right. It seemed to work. Also I spoke to him (he was 35 but I always think of him as a boy) and settled that in my mind. For a long time afterwards I was on a very even keel emotionally. I felt like a person who had survived a very serious illness and was too exhausted for anything but convalescence. Yet all the time this was going on I realized that the situation was largely of my own making.

Respondent number: 41 Age: 48 Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 55,58  
 Ages of younger siblings: 46  
 Occupation: Registered Nurse Age at time of experience: 30

I used to live in the nurses' quarters. Most weeks when the nurses were gone away I would be left alone. Then a feeling of loneliness would take me. I am not married and at those moments wished I had a husband. I wanted companionship and sometimes sex.

On these occasions I would pray that for a husband. Then I would not concentrate on it, for by concentrating it makes me feel worse. In a short time it would just disappear.

There are other times when I am with a loving family the lonely feeling would come over me too. Then the desire for a companion would come back.

This isn't solved yet. So there are frequent repetitions.

Respondent number: 42 Age: 19 Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 0  
 Ages of younger siblings: 10  
 Occupation: Student Age at time of experience: 19

- A) During the spring term of 1971, I had gone to visit my pre-med counselor. At that time I was not doing too well in college because of personal problems and a problem of finding out where I belong. When I talked to the counselor he told me the thing I never wanted to hear; that it was most unlikely I would get into a med school and that I should look for another career.
- B) That same day, when I went home, I really felt alone. For the rest of the day I was feeling depressed and very jumpy. I was very silent to people around because I kept thinking about what my counselor said. I was not very hungry. For the next 4 days I really felt sick. I thought that everything was finished and I had no future. What I wanted most was to be left alone to daydream about the possibilities of other chances.
- C) During the next 3 days, I went on with the normal school routine. However, I could see no reason with finishing school. I acted very belligerent and strange to others around me. I think I felt very inferior to the person beside me. I did not know where to turn and who to go to.
- D) On the fourth day I found out something that woke me up. I discovered a paramed program at Downstate med center that I would be able to get into

and spent 2 years studying medical technology. I thought this great because that day I also found out about a few doctors that had graduated med school when they were 35 years of age, and also about a person who entered med school when he was 27, who, after graduating college with a very low index, went to work as a lab technician and was then able to get into a med school. After I heard this, I think I had experienced the most happiest moment of my life. I now had something to work for.

Respondent number: 43                      Age: 17                      Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 0  
 Ages of younger siblings: 16, 13, 13  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 17

When I came home from no particular place and I take the key out of my pocket, open the door and start yelling is there anyone home, no one answers, I get the feeling of being left out, that no one cares where I am at the time because there is no one there to talk to or even to look at, just a feeling of emptiness all around. So I just end up going from one place in the house to another. I turn on the TV, go to the phone and really I have done nothing, a complete emptiness all around me.

The experience is not a very pleasant one at all but when it is over it brings great joy to see someone and to talk to that person or persons.

Respondent number: 44                      Age: 23                      Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 33  
 Ages of younger siblings: 0  
 Occupation: Teacher                      Age at time of experience: 21

- A) I felt a strong period of loneliness in 1969. The situation being & here described occurred in New York City, involving myself and my  
 B) relationship with both girls and men in society. The situation involved my ambivalence to the House-Plan situation at Brooklyn College a situation which I know is duplicated elsewhere. It is simply that people tend to act as they think they are supposed to rather than are. The kids in my house plan did things as a group and on schedule rather than by individual thought and by impulse or desire. There were nights for parties, nights for drinking, days for sports and conversation centered around these in a very general sense. Nothing was ever discussed that had any substance to it. Everything was done because this is the way - because my friend went to - because everyone does or thinks. The girls duplicated this behavior. I found this intolerable - a threat to my identity. I went with a girl who appeared to be different. It appeared as if we were as one in this (a new uniformity) but events occurred that proved me to be wrong. Her mother died and she relied more and more on her friends. Her friend's opinions ruled her. She lost her individuality and I was alone. When her mother was living, perhaps she thought she had to prove her independence - which, in retrospect, was a new kind of dependence. My appetite was not affected. I am not the type of person to submerge my identity into the unusual comforter of sorrows but I felt an emptiness because of (a) the waste of emotion involved on all sides, (b) the waste of potential,

(c) a feeling of loneliness in that I knew that for social purposes I was expected and perhaps even wanted to conform but for individual purposes, I couldn't. I required things of more substance philosophically.

- C) I tried meditation but the same sense of unwanted uniqueness remains, & although perhaps not in its original intensity.  
D)

Respondent number: 45                      Age: 20                      Sex: F  
Ages of older siblings: 0  
Ages of younger siblings: 10  
Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 20

- A) Each time I begin going out with someone and hope things will work out with this guy - by this I mean, lead to a lasting relationship, I become elated. However, when I realize that he's 'not the one' I get terribly depressed and lonely. I get the feeling that the right guy will never come along. At such times I feel disgusted and lonely. The loneliness usually lasted for an extended period of time, thus I felt just as lonely when in a group or not. Being in a group with other couples made me feel even worse.  
B) While lonely I usually got tired easily - though I often couldn't sleep but wished that I could. I also began to eat like a horse. Why stay thin when there's no one who cares. I felt sorry for myself.  
C) I just tried to survive, sometimes I tried to throw myself into doing something. There were times when I'd try desperately to meet new people, other times when I'd pull into a shell.  
D) Meeting new people helped and going out with someone new. Sometimes it just takes time to heal wounds.

Respondent number: 46                      Age: 19                      Sex: F  
Ages of older siblings: 1 older brother  
Ages of younger siblings: 0  
Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 17

I can think of 1 time when I felt loneliness. It was New Year's Eve and I was seventeen. I went to a New Year's party with a girlfriend. It was a friend of her's party and I didn't know anyone there (except her). I was there and no one there meant anything to me. The people were very cliquish and I sat at the party alone trying to make attempts at socializing but feeling very alienated. The people there didn't seem to be friendly and I felt very unhappy and a depression came over me. I wanted someone to be with who meant something to me. I wanted to bring the new year in with someone special and I felt quite alone at that time.

I felt empty - nauseous and nervous at the same time. I walked around the basement - watched Guy Lombardo switch the scene to Times Square and after everyone was through kissing one another I told my friend I was leaving. We left and when we got home I felt better talking to her and being secure in my own home.

Respondent number: 47 Age: 19 Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 22  
 Ages of younger siblings: 9  
 Occupation: Student Age at time of experience: 19

- A) The last time I felt loneliness was a few days ago in my own house after being left alone when some school friends left after a meeting at my home. I was totally alone - parents and brother away. The cause of my loneliness was a feeling that no one really cared. I must have looked a bit "off" as my friends left - partially because they were leaving so soon (all that had been done was discussions about a newspaper - strictly business and no socializing) and because the meeting had been interrupted by a long distance call from my boyfriend who'd been in Washington for a week. The call was upsetting and no one cared why. I guess I'm the cause of my own loneliness.
- B) I felt lost and unwanted - purposeless in life. My appetite was non-existent, although I usually eat to take my mind off my troubles and inner feelings. What I wanted most was someone to talk to who I knew cared and would try to assure me somewhat that I belonged somewhere and was necessary to someone or something.
- C) During this experience, I sat, thought and cried until I realized that crying accomplished little and besides, I'd promised my boyfriend that I wouldn't cry when I thought of him and how far away he was.
- D) The loneliness gradually dissipated since my brother and sister-in-law dropped in and I realized that being lonely and depressed didn't help me any.

Respondent number: 48 Age: 19 Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 20  
 Ages of younger siblings: 18  
 Occupation: Student Age at time of experience: 18

It happened the 2nd or 3rd month of my freshman year. I was living in a dorm in N.Y.C. and I would go home on weekends. I feel that one of the factors that may have brought it on was that I had decided to stop daydreaming, something that I continually did in any situation in which I had to do something or rather anything that was imposed on me. Examples would be school, doing things for family, friends, and that meant that I was daydreaming most of the day. Not dreaming may not have been the only factor involved that had brought on that feeling that I will state since many other things had started also happening when I decided that I would not go on dreaming and I had never tried to stop daydreaming after that episode of loneliness or whatever you may call it.

I had a feeling of nothingness, along with that nothingness came a feeling of fear or maybe apprehension. I felt that I had to be with people most of the time. There were no physical effects.

During the experience I still kept on attending classes and doing all the required things that I had always done.

It went away as I stated earlier, when I started daydreaming.

Respondent number: 49 Age: 19 Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 0

Ages of younger siblings: 15  
 Occupation: Student Age at time of experience: 18

- A) The first time I really experienced loneliness was after I graduated from high school. I didn't know what I wanted. My family started making decisions for me and started telling me what to do. Everytime they came home from work they would always start talking about my future, which in a sense messed me up. I got so sick and tired of hearing what they expected from me, that when it came time for them to come home I would always go to walk around the park near my house which was close to the river. And there I would just spend hours looking at the river.
- B) As I stared at the river I would ask myself, "What do I really want out of life? Or what did life want out of me?" At that time I felt no one really understood what was happening to me. Physically I felt very depressed and everything around me, including my parents, bothered me. The only place I felt at ease was near the river because there I could sometimes think about my problem and at other times I couldn't think, my mind would just go completely blank. And no matter how hard I tried to think, I just couldn't. My appetite started to decrease but after a while my appetite came back to normal.
- C) During this experience I always went to lonely places. I didn't want to talk or listen to anyone. Sometimes just hearing a strange person talking got me so frustrated that I would have to leave and walk off to get myself cooled off. I felt angry towards the whole world in general. I just didn't want to be bothered with anything at all.
- D) The loneliness is still inside me, but it doesn't come on strong like before. I still don't know what I want out of life so I'm letting time pass by and trying to get into things to see what I'm interested in. I know that the only thing I don't want is to be left out of something I should be in. Even though I'm still searching for "I don't know what" there is a place that I belong to. And I won't stop searching. I don't intend to become a failure. I don't care how long it takes, I'll wait, with the help of my boyfriend who gives me advice sometimes, not always cause I just couldn't stand a person to give advice all the time.

Respondent number: 50 Age: 18 Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 19  
 Ages of younger siblings: 15, 13, 9  
 Occupation: Student Age at time of experience: 16

- A) I had just completed my last Regent Exam ending my high school career. I was absolutely elated, filled with energy and therefore rushed home to gloat over, scream to, hug, punch any willing or unwilling member of my family. When I got home the house was quiet. The telephone was not good enough for me - it interfered with my mode of expression. I began to feel jumpy, out of place, and lonely.
- B) The loneliness I felt was a mixture of depression, need for belonging, desire for others to share my feelings at a time when there are no others, and a strong feeling of emptiness - what would I do - how could I possibly live without talking to someone immediately.
- C) I began to pace the floors and talk to myself. I addressed my self

with the fact that people do not talk to themselves and answered myself that I know that. Since I had no one to tell about my initial happiness, I began to tell myself, rather shout to myself, in a normal manner - I'm through! I'm through! However, the normal elation which followed that shout turned into sadness.

D) My feverish feelings calmed down after a time and I played piano and then went to watch television and stopped feeling lonely. But I never did gloat the way I wanted to.

Respondent number: 51                      Age: 18                      Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 22  
 Ages of younger siblings: 16  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 17

- A) The situation I am about to describe took place about two years ago here in N.Y. I was born in Romania and came here about 3 years before this situation happened. I befriended some young kids, my own age group, who were also from Romania or Russia, Czechoslovakia, etc. We formed a group relationship and started organizing parties to relieve the boredom of school, work, etc. At one of these parties I met a girl whose name was Susan. I did not know her age at the time I met her but that didn't make a difference because we got to know each other and started going out together. She was two years older than me, I found out later but still it didn't make a difference to me because I really liked her. My friends told me that the relationship would not last but I didn't listen. "Love is blind." After a while we broke up and as usual in such situations, I was very depressed and frustrated which led to boredom of studies and I even had "neurotic symptoms." I felt nothing is worth doing and I became withdrawn from the rest of my family and friends. I was in a sense lonely because I wanted to be.
- B) Physically I was not too disturbed, although I did work and clean myself, but my appetite was down. Emotionally I was "unstable." I would do things which I never did before such as forgetting events, being in a state of mind which I would just sit and think about everything that happened since I would remember, thinking what would become of me, etc. In my usual state I like to be with people but in this situation I did not care for anybody and mostly watched TV in order to get my mind off the situation.
- C) During the experience I didn't do anything which normal people do but I did things which are said in part B. I retired and kept all to myself. I did try to make a go of the relationship again but Susan just refused in a blunt way and kept giving unreasonable excuses for it.
- D) The loneliness did not go away by itself nor did anybody else remove it. I had time, and as I wrote in part B, I was thinking over the situation and how she refused to reconcile. I went over the relationship in every event and I realized that I was not at fault because I knew that I had a genuine like for Susan and helped her with school work, gave her advice sometimes on family problems, etc. So how could it be my fault that the relationship failed? The only answer I came to was that she never really wanted or thought of it as a relationship but only as having someone to talk to or company for when you don't have anything else to do. After this hypothesis I went over

the events again and saw them in a different light, a worse light. Because of this I developed a hate for Susan which I could not forget but I still liked her. We still see each other sometimes but down deep I know that I would not want to get involved with her. We are just friends - but from a distance.

(Note - The frustration and depression which I experienced were incorporated in the word loneliness.)

Respondent number: 52                      Age: 21                      Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 22  
 Ages of younger siblings: 17, 12  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 17

- A) I experience loneliness practically every day. It is not a long period but a short interval of it. In my house there is not much communications between my younger brother and younger sister. My older brother is married and lives in the apartment below us (we have a two family home). My sister-in-law and I had a disagreement once and didn't speak to each other for 3 whole months. During those periods I guess I felt the most lonely. I don't talk to my father much, my step-mother and I don't communicate as much. I feel lonely when I see other people and seeing them very happy. I wonder how it feels to be happy, gay and being loved. I feel I am missing something and I cry very much. Sometimes I can be with a group of people and I would feel alone. If I'm not in the mood, I would be turned off. I would have a long face expression on. I try to snap out of it by laughing, but it usually does not work. I would sit in my bedroom with the stereo on but I would hear no music at all. My mind is thinking of everything else. I try to collect my thoughts but it's scattered too much. I remember I began to feel lonely when my mother passed away. I was 16 then. I would think of the times we had together, the goods and bads. I'm envious when I see my friends talking with their mother. Ever since my mother passed away two of my paternal aunts and my maternal grandfather also passed away. Is this the cause of my loneliness? I don't know.
- B) I guess I answered this question in with the first. I would think of other people and see how happy they are. I would cry and cry (all done in my own bedroom). I would say to myself, "If only you were different, then you can be happy too." I say that I'm dumb and ugly and stupid. I have a low self-image of myself. I'm in my bedroom a lot and that is where I think too much. I don't want to do anything at all. I just sit on the floor and think. I don't hear the music going on. I feel that I'm lonely all the time. The same mood has been with me for a long time as long as I can remember. I would eat or do anything. Just cry a lot.
- C) I cry. I try to forget about everything and read a book or listen to music, but it does not seem to help. My mind wanders. I blame myself for all the troubles. My girlfriend had a talk with me and tried to comfort me. Now my sister-in-law and I are getting along as we use to before she got married (we were best friends). I would feel happy, but inside me there is this feeling. I don't know how to discuss it or why I feel this but its there and it causes me to be unhappy.

- D) My loneliness did not really disappear. I don't have a period where I am lonely and then feel happy again. To tell you the truth, I would sit in class and while looking out the window I would think about how I feel. It feels like an empty feeling. Is there something wrong with me?

Respondent number: 53                      Age: 17                      Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 0  
 Ages of younger siblings: 16  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 15

- A) I felt lonely at the beginning of my junior year in high school. I thought that I was studying too hard all the time and I was wasting chances to have a good time, all because I was too shy. This feeling came on all of a sudden. What probably had the most effect in starting it was my math class. It was a very hard honor math class and everyone worked very hard, and all they did was talk about math. The teacher said if you didn't work hard you would fail. All I could think was, "is it all worth it?" Is this what I really want to do for a whole year? Should I be enjoying life more? This caused a great conflict in me. Talking to anyone in my family would have been stupid since they would wanted me to study as much as possible. My friends would have told me to transfer out of the class. I didn't know which way to go. Also, my father was pushing me to graduate a year early and he put a lot of pressure on me. I didn't like the people I used to hang out with on the block either. They became a bunch of jerks and I got fed up with them. Another thing that bothered me was the prom. I wanted to go but I never went out with a girl before so I didn't know if I should go or not. I guess all this coming at me at once caused my loneliness.
- B) When I felt lonely, I didn't know which way to go. I didn't know what was right or wrong. I did lose my appetite a little. I didn't feel like talking to anyone when I really had to, especially with people in my family. I lost interest in all my hobbies and thought that everything was a big waste of time. I saw everything as being stupid and having no real cause behind it. People seemed different and much more harsh. I felt that I need a long vacation to see things and learn what life is about. I also couldn't sleep at times. In fact, when I did sleep all I saw was math problems in my dreams and I was never able to solve these problems. I really was uptight.
- C) During this experience, all I did was try to forget what I was thinking of and try to get interested in doing things. However, it didn't work. I felt depressed doing everything.
- D) This experience just went away. I became very interested in math, and even got 100 on the final. I began to look at it through interest and not as work. I was even happy about the fact that I was going to graduate a year earlier. I became very optimistic. I made many new friends later that year and even started going out with girls. But this was after my loneliness had been already over. These things did not have a direct affect or end my loneliness. It went away all by itself.

Respondent number: 54                      Age: 20                      Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 26, 31  
 Ages of younger siblings: 0  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 19

- A) It occurred on several occasions during which I and a group of friends went out for the evening to a show or more often to a party. It was due primarily to the presence of a girl I was deeply in love with. For example, at a party: I would be with my closest friends, including this girl. I would be having a real good time then at some time during the evening, I would go into a deep depression. I felt totally isolated from all present, completely by myself as if I were in the middle of a deserted street. The loneliness was due to great anxiety over my love for this girl. She and I were best friends, but I had grown to love her. Her feelings, though, were not the same as I constantly felt depressed in such situations, especially.
- B) I felt greatly depressed. Although I knew my friends liked me I had a sensation that they just didn't care about my feelings, though I knew they did. I felt hurt. I felt that I wanted to cry, though for no specific reason outside of the fact that I loved this girl. Physically: I felt an emptiness in my stomach, almost on the verge of nausea but not quite. I knew that I wanted this girl - to possess her emotionally and physically. I wanted my feelings for her reciprocated by her.
- C) I sat by myself. I conversed very little with others for a while. I generally moped. Even my friends remarked about my depression.
- D) My sense of loneliness usually did not disperse during the evening, but rather the next day, away from the girl and my friends, after being at home with my family.

Respondent number: 54a

- A) Another time I felt a sense of loneliness occurred late at night (or rather early morning). I would be at home and everyone would be asleep. Usually I would be sitting alone in the kitchen or my room. The sensation of loneliness was caused by my being alone at that moment, plus the quietude that enveloped the house, the darkness, and knowing what time it was.
- B) The sensation was not the same kind of loneliness I felt that I have previously discussed about the girl. Physically I had no upset at that time. Emotionally I felt somewhat depressed, though maybe not so depressed as discussed before. Though during this time I recall, somewhat, a sense of security. I also felt as if I were alone in the middle of an island, desolate and dark, though still a bit secure (I don't know why though). I felt I just wanted to sit, possibly write poetry or maybe read some poetry at the time.
- C) During the experience, which occurred several times, I have either written poetry, read poetry or listened to music.
- D) The loneliness disappeared usually in the middle of writing a poem, in the middle of reading, or during listening to music, kind of suddenly, by itself.

Respondent number: 55 Age: 22 Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 0  
 Ages of younger siblings: 20, 19  
 Occupation: Student Age at time of experience: 21-22

- A) I guess the first time I felt lonely was when I quit my job and had too much free time to think about what, where and how my boyfriend was. When entering college I felt it more because I had lots of time to think about him. The reason I felt lonely was because he has children to look after and his job is dangerous. I found myself having periods of loneliness on and off at different times of day. When I was working I didn't feel lonely because I had people contact every minute and children to attend to. At night is when I felt the loneliness because of my position as a student and his job at night we now don't get an opportunity to express our love like we use to. He taught me to love and got me used to certain things that with the sudden change of jobs and time, at night the loneliness hurts the most. Maybe we ought to quit each other and I would not be lonely anymore. I don't know if that's the way out of being lonely.
- B) While I was lonely I thought sometimes of the good times me and my boyfriend spend together. The first time we had sex and found out (both of us) how much we really liked each other. At other times I felt he might have had an accident on the tracks, slipped through or missed a signal, something physical that has happened to him. Other times I think of being with his youngest daughter, Veronica, and being her mother or looking after her. Or playing with him and his dog, Cindy, in Central Park at 3 o'clock in the morning. Physically at some times of the day I might feel like crying because I want to be with him or just see him. I might develop loss or gain of appetite or drink a large amount of alcoholic beverages. I felt he didn't want me anymore. I didn't want to see him anymore. I got upset and started to shout at certain people who I was with or try to hurt their feelings. Sometimes I wish I was dead.
- C) Sometimes I would cry. Other times I would go and meet him at his job at 3 or 4 in the morning. Or I would just put my mind on a movie or read or listen to music and sing. Other times I would go to the gym and work out and go swimming.
- D) I still have the loneliness on and off. I guess it will be with me until we both (me and boyfriend) can arrange our times to be together more often. Maybe I need to have a child of my own.

Respondent number: 56 Age: 21+ Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 46, 49  
 Ages of younger siblings: 35  
 Occupation: Teacher - Housewife Age at time of experience: 25

- A) The strongest feeling of loneliness occurred just before the birth of my first child. It happened while I was in the hospital in labor. The nurses were the only ones present at this particular hour. The sudden realization that for the first time I was separated from my family and experiencing something different not only brought on some fear but loneliness.
- B) After my fears were (sort) calmed down the prolonged stay before the

birth really brought on more loneliness. The sudden need for my mother came over me. I guess the need to talk to someone who could keep my mind off coming events. Physically I was already in pain; but emotionally I don't think I'll ever forget the deep feeling that I was completely isolated from my mother, husband and family in general. In the labor stage of child birth very little food is given and at this point I had no desire for it.

- C) Finally I was allowed to call and speak to my mother so that eased the loneliness somewhat. Because of the prolonged labor the hospital finally allowed me to have a visitor. But still the aloneness when one has to face a situation where there is only strange faces about seems to leave a lasting memory of this kind of experience. Crying was another outlet but that only gives a little relief.
- D) This loneliness only lasted about 24 hours but the memory still has remained with me. The loneliness disappeared as soon as I had my baby and all was right with me.

Respondent number: 57                      Age: 19                      Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 21, 23  
 Ages of younger siblings: 16  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 19

- A) It happened three weeks ago. I was at a beach party with 3 of my best friends and some other people. There was this guy there that I had gone out with a few times who I really liked. One of the causes of my loneliness was that he was there and just ignored me. It really left me depressed. I felt so bad that I just wanted to talk to someone and "cry on their shoulder." But when I asked one of my friends to take a walk and talk to me, she refused (for her own selfish reasons, I later learned when she apologized). This didn't help my situation at all. Now I had a guy who I really liked ignoring me and a close friend of mine not caring enough to talk to me. I really felt lonely and depressed. So I took a walk by myself and cried. Later on another "close" friend of mine took a walk with the guy that I liked and I saw them making out with each other. By this time I felt crushed. Nobody gave a shit about how I felt.
- B) I felt depressed mostly. My appetite wasn't really affected because my loneliness didn't last that long. I felt hurt. I just thought that nobody "gave a shit" about me. That's what hurt. All I wanted was for my friends to care enough about me to talk to me and "comfort me." And for the guy that I liked to at least talk to me. I guess I was really feeling sorry for myself. That's why I cried. I also wanted to beat the shit out of the girl that was with "my guy." So I was angry too.
- C) I cried and felt sorry for myself. I stayed by myself cause I didn't want to be near anyone and I thought they didn't want to be bothered with me. And I took out my feelings on the guy I like and the girl who was with him by telling them both off and how they made me feel.
- D) The guy that I liked came over to me, we had a long talk and straightened things out. He explained why he didn't come over to me at first and exactly how he felt about me. It turned out that we were both good friends and he proved that he had the respect for me that he didn't have for my "friend" he was with. This really made me feel

great. I knew that he cared about me. My friend that didn't bother to talk to me, apologized. She knew she was wrong and she was sorry. We're still good friends. As for my other friend that was with the guy that I liked, we're not talking and I'd like to keep it that way. She proved that she wasn't a friend.

Respondent number: 59                      Age: 18                      Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 20  
 Ages of younger siblings: 11  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 10

- A) Maybe I've repressed it, but I don't think that I have ever felt loneliness, although I have been alone quite often. If this aloneness is considered loneliness, then I was lonely, but I don't think so. I can describe many situations in my childhood when I was completely alone but wasn't lonely. Even this past year when I went to Florida and traveled by plane alone and for the first time, I wasn't lonely. I've always enjoyed being with myself and my own thoughts. There was a time when I was completely a loner, but not lonely. It was in sleep-away camp. I was too old for the kids and too young for the counselors, although I was only ten. So I stayed with myself. And as I said before I enjoy myself.
- B) I went on nature walks and played with turtles, snakes, etc. I felt & good. Good? - I enjoyed what I was doing. I went swimming, I ate the
- C) regular three meals, I climbed mountains, I even played games with the kids and still remained alone. I wrote a lot of poems during those three weeks, good ones, I can't write like that anymore. From what I remember, I had tremendous insight into the "games people play" at camp. I didn't feel that I wasn't wanted, for I was accepted (I was good in sports) but I was thought of as a snob. Throughout my childhood I ended up being the "leader" but I didn't feel part of it. I was outside of the group.
- D) The aloneness never went away. I still enjoy being with myself. But now there are a few people with whom I get along and don't feel that I am alone.

Respondent number: 60                      Age: 18                      Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 0  
 Ages of younger siblings: 9, 12  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 17

- A) I had just moved from Brooklyn to another borough. It was about a year ago. I was sort of uprooted from the neighborhood where I had spent 17 years of my life. I had left behind my friends and acquaintances, the people I had grown up with, the people with whom made my life a little brighter. My family and I moved into a development of newly built homes. At first I was sort of excited because I felt I could meet new friends and start totally new experiences. But to my surprise I found that in this new development of maybe 300 homes, there was not a single solitary person of my age to whom I could call a friend, who shared my likes, hobbies, dislikes, etc. As of this time I did not drive a car and I was virtually stuck in the midst of

no man's land, or so I thought (I had good reason because where I live if you don't have a car you don't exist).

- B) The feeling of being all alone was sort of frightening, I thought I would go out of my mind. My sister and brother found it easy to make friends because there were a lot of young children to play with and I had nothing in common with them so they couldn't satisfy my need for companionship. I was getting so bored and tired of not having anybody to talk with that I resorted to the refrigerator. I began to eat up everything in sight, no wonder I gained a lot of weight.
- C) During this time I would stay in the house all day just moping around watching TV and listening to the radio, but after a while TV and radio gets to your head. And its enough to drive you right up the wall.
- D) Finally college had started and by that time I had finally gotten my license and my own car, now life seemed a little better. I could finally move around freer. When I finally started college life was a bore because the place is so big that nobody knows nobody. It's just like one giant train station at rush hour. So I decided to join a house plan, I did, and from there on I made more friends and did more things, and the funny part about it is that I now spend more time in Brooklyn than I do in my other borough and when I do go home (once in a while) I'm like a stranger in my own home.

Respondent number: 61                      Age: 19                      Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 21  
 Ages of younger siblings: 0  
 Occupation:                                      Age at time of experience: 12

- A) I felt very lonely once when I woke up from a dream. I was talking to my mother the night before and I asked her to tell me about the experiences that she and my father had while they were in concentration camp. My mother started to talk about her various hardships and how lucky she was to still be alive and to have survived her ordeal. After about two hours of talk I finally lied down to go to sleep. As I was laying there I thought of what my mother had said and I started to think quite irrationally about how life would be without them.
- B) That night I dreamt about my parents and I actually saw them in my dreams.
- & At the point where I saw them they were very filthy and they were
- C) wearing ragged clothes. In the dream I saw them walk into a place labeled "bath" in one of the concentration camps. I tried to scream but I had some feeling of helplessness (although I wasn't part of the dream). Moments later the gestapo was dragging out their bodies and piling them onto a truck. Seconds later I woke up and just sat in my bed feeling very lonely and with a rapid heartbeat. After a few seconds when I realized what I had just saw, I sort of went hysterical. Finally I raced into my parents' room but it was empty. I started to scream very loudly, then I quieted down and started to think about myself and what I would do.
- D) A couple of minutes later my mother walked in the front door, I can't describe my feelings at that time but I can say that I've felt that way since. After seeing and talking to her I went into the den and sat down. At this point I felt loneliness because I was thinking of how life would be without them but then I snapped out of it quickly because I was no longer facing a present reality. As for an explanation this was a Friday morning and my father had gone to work and my mother went to the beauty parlor because my Bar-Mitzvah was the next day.

Respondent number: 62                      Age: 18                      Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 20  
 Ages of younger siblings: 0  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 18

- A) I was just getting into this chic, Elizabeth, when it was time for her to go abroad to Europe with her school. After a while I began sitting in my room playing my guitar and feeling lonely. Prior to her leaving I felt I was on a threshold of a dream, for I never met a girl as kind and thoughtful as her.
- B) What I wanted most was her. I would just sit down and think about her. Then I would feel these outrageous rushes flowing through my body; I missed the thing I always wanted, someone to love. I know it will be her. What really was annoying was that she dug me too. I'd go into moods of depression, not speaking a word. Other times I'd just walk around in a daze. To sum up everything - I just wished I had her in my arms.
- C) I was responsible for part of my loneliness. During this experience I wouldn't go outside as often as I normally would. Then I began to play and sing songs about love and Jesus Christ.
- D) I think I removed it. I began to think its only (her absence) for six weeks so why can't I want. It gradually disappeared.

Respondent number: 63                      Age: 20                      Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 23  
 Ages of younger siblings: 0  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 20

- A) The clearest recollection of loneliness that I have just occurred about two months ago. It involved a girlfriend and it happened in a bar. We had developed a very deep relationship and we were always very wide open to one another in all areas. When I first started to go out with her, she had just broken up with this other guy who wasn't very good to her. He was a real smooth talker, rich, and he had a way that made a lot of people look up to him. My girlfriend was telling me how different things were with me and that she was foolish for going out with him. He still was after her and she was refusing to see him for over a year. Well, one night she decided to see him again and this really hurt me. It just happened that they came into the same bar that I was in with my roommate.
- B) When the experience first presented itself, I felt almost angry. It seemed as if we were the only three people in the bar, even though it was packed. I was with my roommate, who is also my best friend, and it still seemed like I was just there with the two of them. I just wished that I wasn't alone and I wanted to be either by myself or with the girl alone.
- C) I just seemed to lose interest in what my roommate and I were talking about. I felt insecure and wanted the entire feeling to end. It was really unpleasant and I tried to forget it. This stage and the preceding in B didn't last that long. After about 3 to 5 minutes I began to escape from the feeling.
- D) I tried my best to ignore the situation. My roommate realized what had happened and he began to pick me up. We talked about it and I began to

feel a little better but there was still a lonely streak there. I guess that I increased my liquor intake which also probably made me forget a little bit. The traces of loneliness, however, are just about completely gone now. It wasn't the length of my loneliness that stood out in my mind, but that was the moment when I felt the most alone. I'd have to say that it was one of the most agonizing feelings in the world.

Respondent number: 63a

As you can see from the form that my father is deceased. He died when I was three months, so I never really experienced him to be lonely. But during my younger years that was a recurring source of loneliness to me. There were times when there was nobody to turn to or nobody to go to the father-son sports nights but this was a long-term experience that was much less intense or as agonizing as the first one.

Respondent number: 64                      Age: 21                      Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 0  
 Ages of younger siblings: 0  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 17-21

- A) I cannot think of any specific times when I have felt loneliness. However, going back through the past four years in college I have experienced it at certain times on and off. Being an only child I have been used to being alone a lot for my entire life. Most of the times where loneliness was experienced in the past four years was as a result in a lack of interest in everything surrounding me, at those times there was nothing in the world that at those moments would catch and keep my interest and attention. This lack of interest was a result of unhappiness within myself and with the environment surrounding me, for instance, school, home life, etc.
- B) This unhappiness brought about feelings of depression and anxiety - I used to sleep a lot or just lay in bed, pace through the house or just go for walks for hours with no final destination. Most of the time my unhappiness was tied to finding a meaning for what I was doing, for life, was it worth it? Questions about me and my future that no one but me could have answered - in that respect I felt very alone, but I never felt alone for lack of somebody to be with or something to do. I found that most of the times that I was bored, I was unhappy with myself. I did not like myself as I was.
- C) Throughout the experiences, I did nothing but think and try to get my head straight as to what values I was going to attach to certain things.
- D) I'm sure that I removed the causes of my loneliness to a great extent since my head is fairly straight now. I know pretty much what I want out of life and how to go about getting it. However, at times when I have to make a big decision I still feel alone but the effects are not as bad as they once were.

Respondent number: 65                      Age: 21                      Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 24

Ages of younger siblings: 0  
 Occupation: Student Age at time of experience: 18-21

One extreme experience of loneliness occurred when my boyfriend left to go to school 350 miles away. We had been going together for 4 years previous to this and were in very close contact with each other up to this time (seeing each other every day). I felt the loneliness even before he had left me the night before he was leaving.

My thoughts during this time and each successive time that he has left was that I was never going to see him again. I believe I am comparing this to when my father went to work one day and never came back. I fall into a deep depression and experience fear from imagining all the things which could possibly happen to him on the way back to school. This fear only disappears when I hear directly from him and know that he is safe. During my times of loneliness I feel a great need to be able to talk to my friends and want to see them often. I also can sit for hours imagining the future when he and I will be married. I find it difficult to get into doing other things but when I do, I get into them completely. Many times I get into reading (usually easy reading - mysteries, etc.) and can go through 5 or 6 books a week.

My appetite is affected but I think this is due to the boredom I experience because I am not doing as much as when my boyfriend is here. However, it is negatively affected - I eat a lot less. Physically, I do not feel any changes. Emotionally there are many. Hatred, jealousy, anticipation, much more nervous, adventurous. I often feel that I want to do something different. Sexual fantasies also change. The longer my boyfriend is away the less fantasies I have about him. The objects of the fantasies change but not to any specific type.

During these experiences, as I have described before, I am more easily bored, usually falling into a state of not having the ambition to do very much. Get into reading and manual crafts - knitting, etc.

The loneliness goes, naturally, when my boyfriend comes home and returns when he leaves. However, even during the time he is home I can anticipate the feeling of loneliness and experience it when I do not see him for a day or two.

Respondent number: 66 Age: 19 Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 20  
 Ages of younger siblings: 0  
 Occupation: Student Age at time of experience: 8

- A) The situation where I felt loneliness was when I moved and started to attend a new school in the new neighborhood. It was the first day for me in the new school and I was put into a class where of course all the kids knew each other and I didn't know anyone. Being only 8 years old, its very difficult to make friends by conversation. So I just sat in the class with the feeling of complete loneliness. The loneliness was caused by not knowing anybody at all. I felt as if i were isolated from the whole world. Nobody to talk to and nobody to think of as your friend.
- B) I think I felt a sense of fear. I wanted desperately to go home and never go back to school again. I felt I would never make it through the day. I really felt sick, my stomach was tight and my heart was beating rapidly. I was really scared. I don't know why but I felt

like I was a million miles from home, and at 8 years old that can really be an ordeal. My appetite was really affected. When we were dismissed for lunch, I sat at a table with my class. I couldn't even eat. I just sat there scared. Nobody to talk to and nobody even paid attention to me - who was the so-called "new kid in the class." Again I felt like running away. All I wanted was to go to a place where I knew someone. I really wanted to go back to my old school and be with my friends.

- C) I didn't do anything. I just sat around the class doing my work, but not enjoying it at all. My mind wandered, thinking of the time in my old school with my old classmates.
- D) The loneliness went away a few days later when the class was taken out to the schoolyard to play punchball. All of a sudden, some of the kids came over and asked if I wanted to be chosen in. I said sure and we began to talk and had fun during the game. From then on everything was okay. I had made friends and wasn't scared anymore.

Respondent number: 67                      Age: 19                      Sex: F  
 Ages of older siblings: 21  
 Ages of younger siblings: 7, 15  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 18

- A) It happened at my new home the day following my honeymoon. It was the 1st day my husband returned to work. He wasn't to return until 10:00 p.m. Before my marriage I lived with my parents and 3 sisters. Having so many sisters one of them was bound to be home at the times that I was home. I constantly had company. Sometimes I even wished I could be alone and have some privacy to think my own mind. Searching your mind could be very difficult with a 6 year old sister constantly there, begging to read her a story or play "Cherries in the Basket" (a game) with her. Well, here I was in my 1st brand new home of my own and I wasn't even happy about it.
- B) First of all, my appetite - I knew I wasn't hungry, but it gave me some satisfaction to have my mouth going. I would constantly need something to chew on. It had to be something crunchy. That 1st night I finished off a whole box of Ritz crackers. I don't really know what I felt physically, but mentally I know I was depressed. No matter what TV show was on, I couldn't stay interested. I remember how bitter I felt to my husband for leaving me alone all evening long, the 1st day after the honeymoon. I remember saying to myself, "My God! The honeymoon's really over!!"
- C) During the "experience" I did several things. The 1st one was eat. Almost the entire evening I was munching on crackers and jelly. Another thing I remember I did was walk aimlessly around the apartment. The TV was on but I know I wasn't really watching. I cleaned the entire kitchen even though it was not dirty. After all, how dirty can it get in about 8 hours? I lay on the brand new king size bed and I said my god, this bed is so big even when Saul is here we can be about 3 miles apart. I spotted his old dirty books on the shelf. I began to read one of those. Shortly afterwards, my husband came home!
- D) It completely disappeared and I forgot (or thought I forgot) all about it when Saul got home. I was a happy newly wed once again. And I still am! I don't think he did anything special to remove my loneliness.

All he had to do was come home. I think, however, that any doubts that might have crossed my mind during the evening were totally disappeared and discarded.

Respondent number: 68                      Age: 23                      Sex: M  
 Ages of older siblings: 0  
 Ages of younger siblings: 22, 20  
 Occupation: Student                      Age at time of experience: 15

I was 15 years old and away from home for the first time. Camp life up in the mountains was a totally different experience for me. The feeling of being away from the people I knew made me realize I was on my own. This caused me to fear everything I thought and knew.

My appetite was not as good as it was at home. I felt full at dinner, breakfast and lunch. The main problem was I only wanted to fulfill the feeling of emptiness with joy, not food.

During this experience I set myself to work at great lengths of time until I accepted what I felt filled the empty feeling.

The empty and lonely feeling left me after a few weeks because I began relating to other things, people and ideas which made me realize that you have to accept and work things out without falling into a total wash-out experience.

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