

The loneliest feeling does not come from being single.

feeling alone is often different from actually being alone. Maybe you feel as if your partner only comes home to eat or sleep, and for all other purposes you're on your own. Perhaps your partner has "checked out" or left the relationship emotionally, and communication between both of you seems broken.

Many times a crisis of some type precipitates this; however, sometimes it's hard to determine when the problem started. One of the first signs you may notice is that your partner no longer values your judgment or opinion. You may also sense your partner is creating distance through reduced verbal communication or simply a lack of engagement.

When couples first begin feeling lonely in a relationship, they don't automatically get help. They often try to understand what is going on in the other person's life. One might ask the other, "You OK?" "What's the matter?" Those questions are usually answered by, "Oh, just work," or, "I'm just tired." Sometimes the partner will come back with, "Nothing I say is good enough, and you fight me on everything." When this happens, the person trying to get to the root of the issue may begin feeling even more alone and more entrenched in that loneliness.

If you're feeling alone in your relationship you may reach out to friends and family, or begin reading self-help books. Friends may advise you to leave your partner, validating that he or she is cruel, insecure, having an affair or all of the other things friends say to make you feel better. The bottom line is this: You are in a bad position. You are committed to someone yet very much alone.



Married BUT ALONE

When children are involved, many couples that are experiencing emotional distance in their marriage tend to focus on the children. This is not good for the children and certainly not healthy for the couple. The children may get an exaggerated idea of how important they are to the relationship's survival and will share the sense of loss at an exaggerated level if the relationship fails. A marriage must always be strong regardless of the children, or it has a greater chance of failure when the children are gone.

The amount of distance in a relationship is determined by the couple. Just as some people are very private and others extremely open, some couples can't go to the grocery store alone while some can travel across the world without each other. It's a personal preference, and neither is right or wrong. Your spouse may be in Africa and you

in Texas, but if you are talking on the phone and sending silly texts or emails, then you're connecting, and your partner will feel close to you. If that person is at your side but no longer engaging with you, talking to you, wanting to be with you, your partner might as well be in Africa.

Loneliness is one of the underlying feelings that cause couples to split. There are ways to prevent it from developing; as with most things, however, once the damage is done, it is difficult to fix.

Humans need love, acceptance and security to grow and evolve. Our relationships are a way of satisfying those human needs. Study after study has shown what happens to babies that are isolated from human love, acceptance and security. We never outgrow that need. To be physically and emotionally alone in a committed relationship is unbearable because the hope of connection is lost. ♡

TIPS FOR FEELING LESS ISOLATED IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP

- Ask yourself if you really want this relationship. Sometimes we become lonely when we long for someone or something else. Your partner may sense you feel stagnant in the relationship or want out but are unwilling to say. Your partner may be withdrawing as a way of not getting hurt.
- Talk to your partner about how you feel. Does your partner know you feel unloved or ignored? No one can read your mind, and acting out in an extreme way, such as by having an affair, won't help the situation.
- Are your beliefs about money, sex or faith getting in the way of connecting with one another? Couples who are fighting may project the anger from a disagreement onto the relationship. The distance created is actually about disagreeing over a topic. If you talk about this, it could help bridge the distance you feel.



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