



# Self-Love Journey

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## Step 13: Loneliness, A Lack of Self-Love

Loneliness is likely one of the most common and significant problems of our contemporary human culture. This problem is far more widespread, influential, and troubling than we might assume. It circles around the person in many forms and dimensions, and as I will show, it is closely related to a lack of self-love.

Before we connect loneliness to self-love, it is helpful to clarify the concept of “loneliness,” because it likely represents the roots of human anxieties and their possible consequences.

Human beings, in principle, are anxious about losing.

We fear losing our friends, our families, our health, our livelihood, our homes, our values, our habits, and almost anything else that we feel belongs to us or is part of us. We fear losing things.

More than anything, we fear losing the emotional connection to the place and environment in which we live. When we wake up in the morning, we arise into a reality that is mostly familiar. We move around our familiar home, eat our familiar food, walk our familiar streets, work at our familiar job, and maintain relationships with family and friends whom we have known for a long time.

Imagine for a moment that everything familiar, known, and connected to us disappears, and we find ourselves in a completely different environment, with a different language, with no one who knows us, with customs that are entirely different and not understood, with no place of our own, no profession of our own, and no connection to our surroundings. If we imagine such a situation, we can estimate the level of anxiety and helplessness that would accompany such a feeling. In certain psychiatric conditions, a person may temporarily feel that he is losing connection with what has always been in his life, and this further destabilizes his mental state.

This imaginary and of course impossible scenario reflects what we know as the experience of loneliness and the anxiety that surrounds it. If a person is left without a place and without people with whom he can communicate, relate, negotiate, share, consult, love, feel, and touch, he becomes a person who is very deprived, almost without value. In such a state, his presence appears to have no meaning or importance. Such a person is, in effect, alone.

Clearly, such a scenario is almost impossible. It describes the great dependence we have on the existence of relationships to which we are connected and through which we express much of who we are and what we can be. As long as we do not understand this unavoidable dependence, we have no tools to truly understand where we live and what guides us unconsciously. We will do almost anything to avoid such a state, including very strange and unexpected things. We absolutely do not want to lose what keeps us part of the general network. We do not want to be lonely.

What happens in practice, however, is a complication of our need to be connected.

That part of our personality that can develop only if we allow ourselves a certain measure of existing, functioning, and coping completely alone develops in many people only partially. We have become people who are very afraid to meet themselves, lest we lose all our social, family, and professional ties. We have flipped the situation and magnified a normal and reasonable dependence on the environment into a pathological, exaggerated, and distorted dependence. We have become people who struggle to know and recognize themselves, out of fear of losing what in reality cannot be lost except in entirely imaginary scenarios.

Thus people flee from themselves to every possible stimulus and distraction. Instead of enjoying social encounters, they turn interactions into a lifeline to avoid an intimate and essential meeting with themselves. They flick through their smartphones, which makes them less wise, they remain in unhelpful relationships only because they fear being alone with themselves, they work too much, tidy the house when there is no need, watch too much television, and surf the internet excessively, simply because it is hard for them to be with themselves, because being with themselves is perceived as a catastrophic loss which, as mentioned, can happen only in imaginary scripts.

The escape from true intimacy with ourselves only worsens our loneliness, reduces our positive social abilities, and makes us weaker and more fearful.

As long as we do not deal with the anxiety of losing everything, an anxiety that does not reflect a realistic scenario but strongly affects our quality of life, we condemn ourselves to living largely through various methods of escaping from ourselves and from our truth. We may reach a state in which we do not truly know ourselves, our desires, the path that is right for us, and the real promises that life holds for us.

Exactly here, self-love stands by our side, confident and strong.

That same self-love can always be restored, cultivated, and amplified. It reflects the foundation of love, the most direct and authentic connection of a person to himself or herself, the connection to spirit, to emotion, and to reason at the same time, in the most positive, constructive, and healthy way imaginable.

Self-love is the thread that links that deep anxiety about the lack of connection and the loss of all that exists to a creative, joyful, and optimistic way of life. Self-love is the true and primary answer to the experience of loneliness. Self-love is what is missing when a person finds himself in a state of excessive torment about what he perceives as oppressive loneliness.

We humans, like most creatures, are social and tend to connect, gather, organize, and create varied affiliations in-order to survive and develop. Yet all the interpersonal connections we create cannot truly nourish us and benefit us as long as their main essence is protection from what we perceive as the terror of loneliness.

To be genuinely social with the people and groups around us in a way that is right for us, we must first cultivate the social system we have with ourselves. As long as we are empty inside and there is no love between us and ourselves, we will always feel threatened by the painful and unavoidable encounter with ourselves. As long as self-love is absent, a person cannot feel comfortable with himself, and he will suffer in situations where he is alone, interpreting them as loneliness and even as depression.

As self-love grows and takes its place, a person finds more and more situations in which it is more comfortable to be with oneself than with others. As self-love develops and consolidates, options expand, and the anxieties about something or someone leaving, breaking apart, or disappearing become weaker. In such a state, the fear of loneliness shrinks, and in its place comes a courageous relationship that challenges social messages based on a compulsive need to flee from ourselves into togetherness, and gives us the freedom to choose quality time with ourselves, with friends, and with family, and any other way to express ourselves. Everything will begin with self-love, and everything will develop correctly only out of self-love. This is how it works.

### **Practice Questions (Answer in handwriting or share in a practice group):**

1. What do you think is the connection between a **lack of self love** and the **experience of loneliness**?
2. Have you experienced moments of **“togetherness with yourself”**, in which you felt comfortable with who you are and with what you were doing? Write a few lines about it.
3. Pay attention to moments or places in which you feel **more lonely**. What do you think might happen if, in those very places, you are able to **significantly increase the love you have for yourself**?
4. Loneliness can be seen as an expression of parts within us that are **isolated and not connected to one another**. Try to imagine a situation in which the different parts of your personality **connect with love and cooperation**. How does such a state feel to you?
5. How do you feel about the statement: **“I always have myself, and I will never choose to leave myself without my own loving and supportive presence”**?
6. Any other thoughts or feelings about this step that you would like to share?