

BEING **UNWANTED**, UNLOVED  
UNCARED FOR, FORGOTTEN  
BY EVERYBODY, I THINK  
THAT IS A MUCH GREATER **HUNGER**  
A MUCH GREATER **POVERTY** THAN  
THE PERSON WHO HAS  
NOTHING TO EAT

*Mother Teresa*

celebquote.com

#### ABSTRACT

The issues of Poverty to include hunger, education, family, racial inequality, social inequality, disability and other issues all tie in with the issues of poverty. This month we look at loneliness and its role in creating poverty.

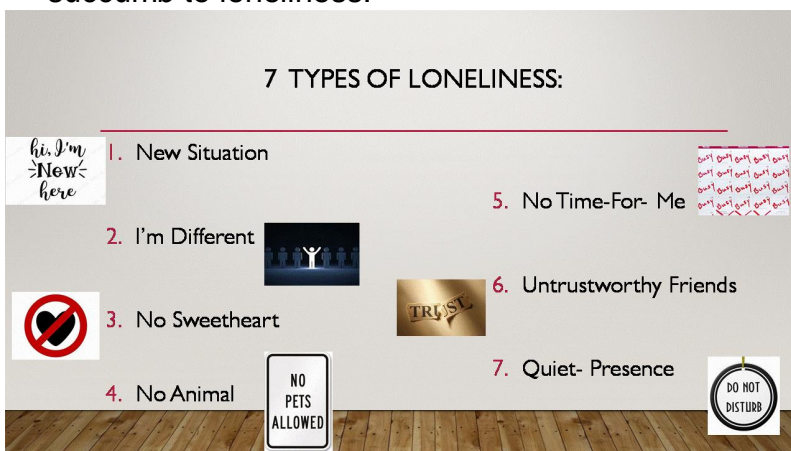
IS LONELINESS A CAUSE OF POVERTY?

# LONELINESS

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The dark blank empty feeling settles in her stomach then seeps into her mind and thoughts as her son says, “We are staying at our dads this weekend too.” This has been coming for a while she thinks. Since the divorce she has had to change things dramatically from being a military housewife who had her boys and husband to take care of to the person now who works 40 hours a week and tries to balance and spend time with her kids. Now they will be staying weekends as well. She will be alone, what will she do? Where will she go? How will she fill her time?

Loneliness starts very slow but is very progressive how it enters your life and changes things dramatically. The winds of change blow very fast and before we know it loneliness has completely engulfed us. Some explore different social settings and things that are new for us, some will begin their loneliness journey by exploring nightclubs and bars where drinking and/or drugs mix with loneliness to create a warm sense of comfort, others will become part of a church home & family, and others will simply stay home and succumb to loneliness.



Gretchen Rubin Author of “The Happiness Project” states there are 7 types of Loneliness

1. New Situation Loneliness ~ Moving to new city or neighborhood, started a new job or school where you do not have any connections, or know anyone.

2. I'm Different Loneliness ~you are in a familiar place but feel different from others and you feel isolated. Maybe you have a view that is different from others around you. It is hard to connect with others about the things you view as important.

3. No Sweetheart loneliness ~ no intimate attachment of romantic partner

4. No Animal loneliness~ many people have a deep need to connect with animals, human relationships do not replace this. Many people feel that something important is missing if they do not have a connection with an animal.

5. No Time-For- Me loneliness~ The feeling of everyone is to busy for me and already has enough connections.Why do they need a connection with me?

6. Untrustworthy-Friends loneliness ~ when you are friends with people but are not quite trusting of those friends, you may feel lonely even if you are having fun with these friends.

7. Quiet-Presence loneliness ~you miss having someone's quiet presence, you may have an active social and work circle but no-one to hang out with at home quietly.

Why do we feel lonely? Where does it begin? Where can it lead?

These questions and the ability to offer solutions are some things we hope to cover in this paper.

Reverend Sheri Heller, LCSW writes that Relational trauma in childhood pertains to a "violation of human connection" most loneliness begins at a very young age, where attachment issues result in loneliness. Relational trauma includes a large range of

violations including childhood abuse, domestic violence, entrapment, rape, bullying,

**Relational trauma includes a large range of violations including childhood abuse, domestic violence, entrapment, rape, bullying, rejection, and bonding with parents early.**

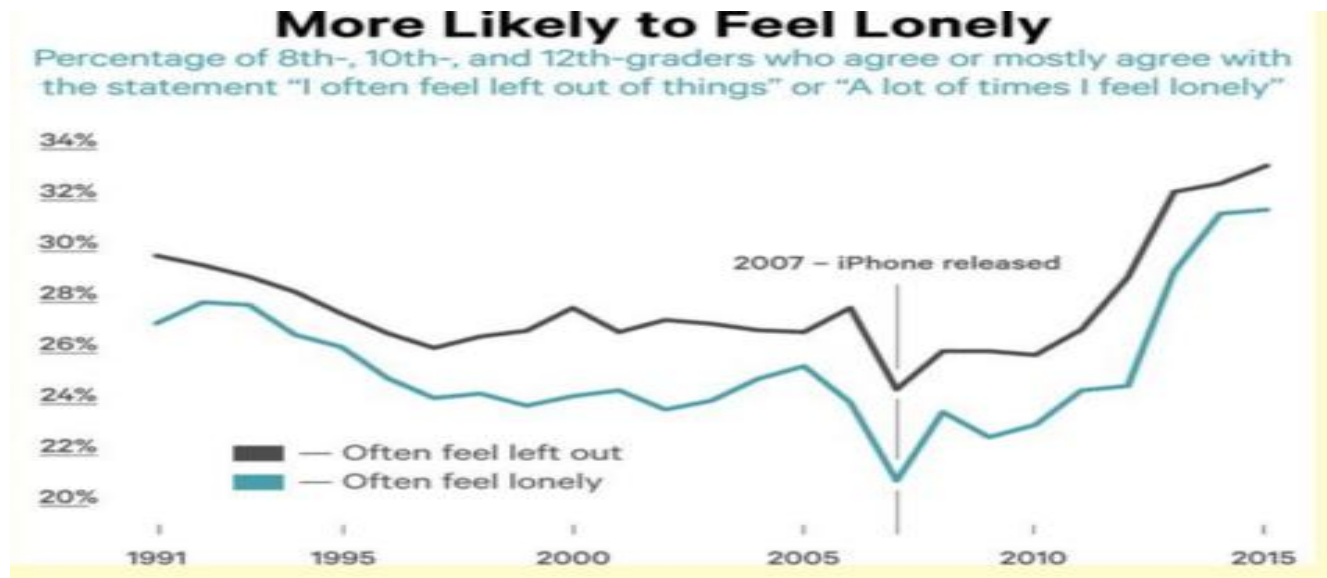
rejection, and bonding with parents early. (“Loneliness Rooted in Relational Trauma”). The consequences of these are profound, early failure to bond results in annihilation. (Gerald Alder) Abuse and neglect within the parent-child parent bond between an infant and its primary care-giver impacts the function of the infant’s brain and will not be absorbed as a cellular memory, which will cause the child to self-comfort. Therefore, isolation and loneliness occur. Some repercussions of this are desperate neediness, seeking rescue, rejecting real intimacy, inability to empathize with others, fear of hurt and rejection, yet hungry for attachment, difficulty regulating emotions, self-hatred and hopelessness, repeated cycles of destructive behavior, among many others.

|                        |
|------------------------|
| Compassion Energizes   |
| Empathy absorbs energy |
| Choose: Compassion     |

*“When a person realizes they have been deeply heard, their eyes moisten. In some real sense they are weeping for joy it is like they are saying “Thank God somebody heard me,*

*someone knows what it is like to be me” in healing these Loneliness traits when we love and respect people , revealing to them their value , they can come out from behind the walls they have built to protect themselves, then they can begin to give and receive love.”-*

Carl Rogers, Psychologist



Teenage loneliness can often suck them into solitude. Teenagers with many friends, often do not recognize those without friends, because they are so able to “isolate” themselves to become socially invisible. They tend to avoid the world and become more involved in gaming or social media. Social media plays a key role in loneliness escaping reality. This confuses the intimacy of real relationships and the true feeling of sharing your life with others, and sharing when you are sad, happy feeling joy, give touch, hugs there is no one to reassure and encourage and cheer them on. As the graph above shows oftentimes teens and pre-teens feel “left out” and then often feel lonely. Jean Twenge an author for the Atlantic, in an article related to above graph states “as tough as it may be, to help our kids cut down on phone time.

We would add that part of that solution is to make it easier and more natural for kids to be part of the real world, on their own, as early as possible. Give them that foundation of confidence and competence — getting around, playing, making things happen — that they can build on later.”

Depression is a disease of loneliness (Solomon). Many people who go untreated for depression do not have many friends, because it just zaps all their emotional energy, making it hard for them to hear words of comfort (Solomon). Love, both given and received is helpful. Love doesn't make the symptoms of depression disappear but does give people hope that life may be worth living if they can only get better. It would be selfish for those with friends to pity those without. Some friendless people may be close to

**To force depressed people into relationships is not likely to solve the depression crisis**

their children or parents rather than extrafamilial friends, or they may be more interested in things or ideas other than people. To force depressed people into relationships is not likely to solve the depression crisis. Insisting to people who do not want friendships that they would be happy if they were less lonely is often not a

useful intervention. Loneliness cannot be fixed by medication, though pills may open up & instigate the stability to have an open-mind about new relationships. Many of us are more alone than we need to be, living in happy exile. Friendships are impulses buried deep inside us, but it is also a skill, and skills can be both taught and learned.

Why do we feel lonely? Have you ever wondered why you feel alone in a room full of people?

Loneliness is a real emotion and

studies show if you're feeling lonely you are absolutely not alone! In a 2014 study released from Relate magazine stated that one in ten people feel they do not have a single close friendship. This breaks down to 4.7 million people feeling alone and lonely.



That is a large number and a devastating sad one as well. Loneliness can have serious effects on your physical and mental health. Chronic loneliness can lead to heart disease, weak immune system, unhealthy eating habits, hurt your sleep patterns, increase risk for early onset dementia, or suicide.

There are several reasons people experience loneliness even when they are not alone. As humans we crave closeness. You can have many relationships. If the relationships lack closeness and are without deep connections, they aren't real, and you will feel lonely, unfulfilled and without connection. You can have a million acquaintances but if you do not invest time and energy into them it is highly likely you will still feel lonely. It is all about the feelings not the numbers. As Marie Hartwell-Walker points out in her article "*The roots of loneliness*" you should be mindful to keep your expectations of others realistic.

Sometimes when new friends cannot be friends on the terms you want you feel "burned" again and isolate more. Thus, causing you to have your guard up more and won't allow others in. When your guard is up it is very possible people do not genuinely know you, and you are surrounded by people who are not emotionally available to you, you are not sending out clear messages that you are available for new relationships or connections. Even if you are not physically alone you can still experience loneliness says John T. Cacioppo of the *New York Times*, meaningful relationships require strong emotional connection it is the quality of friendships not the quantity of friends that plays a part in loneliness. Our body language in social settings can tell a lot about us and some simply lack the social graces to make connections because they were not taught generationally, making eye contact, actively listening, not interrupting, being engaged in

what others are sharing with you. Socially bonding with others is key to building trusting lifelong friendships.

Some blame the growing numbers of loneliness on smart phones, social media, television, to a lack of social skills as mentioned earlier in this paper. What if loneliness was a classic case of an inability to mentally cope with being in social settings such as people with anxiety, depression, manic disorders and other mental health related issues. There is a stigma the population puts on these individuals as being “different” or “crazy”. People in poverty, who cannot even afford to go to the doctor or afford prescription medications for

. Japanese term, kodokushi, or “lonely death” refers to people dying alone because they are estranged from their friends or families.

depression, mental disorders or anxiety etc. due to lack of health care, often become hopeless with the cycle and just simply give up. They sometimes choose to be alone rather than deal with the labels put upon them. Japanese term, kodokushi, or “lonely death” refers to people dying alone because they are estranged from their friends or families.

AARP reports their study showed people who have lower incomes are more likely to be lonely than those with higher incomes. 55% of people who rated their health as “poor” were lonely, compared to 25% of people who stated they were in “excellent health.

Genesis 2:18 tells us “it is not good that man should be alone” When interviewed Tony Reinke on [desiringgod.org](http://desiringgod.org) quoted **“we live fully human lives only when we live in communion with God and with other human beings”**. Others play a role in keeping our sense of identity intact. We know who we are because our parents gave us a name and keep calling us by that name, unless we continue to be called, by Our name, our sense of identity dissolves. If you do not have anyone in your life close enough to know



your name and call you by name, then understandably loneliness would set in. Unless we seek our true identities in the Lord, so we may know who we are AND whose we are, so as to not get lost in the identities of the world. We all have a dependence on people, but what we all each need is a deep and personal relationship with God.

*A DEEP SENSE OF LOVE AND BELONGING IS AN IIRRESISTIBLE NEED OF ALL PEOPLE. WE ARE BIOLOGICALLY, COGNITIVELY, PHYSICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY WIRED TO LOVE, TO BE LOVED AND TO BELONG. WHENTHOSE NEEDS ARE NOT MET, WE DO NOT FUNCTION AS WE WERE MEANT TO BE. WE BREAK. WE FALL APART. WE NUMB. WE ACHE. WE HURT OTHERS. WE GET SICK. "BRENE BROWN"*

Reverse back to the beginning of the paper where the young single mother has suddenly become thrust into a sea of change, caused by divorce and shared custody, the weekends and some evenings are left full of loneliness, she struggles to find her identity and how to fill her time, Being a mother since she was 17 years old she struggles to find social connections, she has long ago detached from a relationship with Christ because she feels He has also left her. She seeks out social clubs, bars, night venues, chat rooms, which leads her to surround herself with others who make poor choices to indulge in drinking staying out all night, waking up too hungover to make it to work in time, or to be present with her children mentally when they are at home with her.

**We become like those we hang out with.**

Like many others the choice of people we hang around with, and peer connections can lead us down a long road of unwise choices and displacement of priorities, the amount of social support that is being received now is neglecting what is normal, and diving into

poor choices. Choices such as calling in sick, missing a lot of work, therefore losing our jobs, which with no job no money so no way to pay rent, mortgage, car payment, and the cycle begins. We continue to hang out with these same people, the vicious cycle continues. Once a person becomes without housing and a lack of poor social connections and resources and network a way to regain a center balance, they stay stuck in a cycle of day to day “tyranny of the moment” solutions. The problem at the center of homelessness policy isn’t money, housing, jobs, food, mental illness or addiction it is loneliness Eva Witesman Desert news. Psychecentral.com reports that approximately 42.6 million adults over the age of 45 in the United States are estimated to be suffering from chronic loneliness. UCLA does a study including a loneliness scale and asks some basic questions about being lonely they found that 61% percent of people are lonely, and homeless persons counteract their loneliness in very unhealthy ways. 34%commit crimes in hopes of being taken into custody, 30% went to the hospital hoping to be admitted, 27% form unwanted sexual relationships. Ami Rokach asked 266 homeless people who use the services of rescue missions in Canada to answer questions on the strategies they used in the past to cope with loneliness. She found that they are more likely to use distancing and denial, excessive drinking. Loneliness hurts everyone it comes into contact with. Homeless people are especially vulnerable but we as humans epically Christian humans have an amazing way to reach out and minister the love of Christ to everyone.

So now it is our time to come to helping and finding solutions to this topic of loneliness and alleviate it from being a cause of poverty. Or is loneliness really a cause of poverty? Or is Poverty a cause of homelessness? Age old question, which came first the chicken or the egg? Loneliness is not a fact but a feeling.Loneliness comes from a deep place that

only God can touch and heal. What could be some solutions to offer people we feel are lonely?

Help find social activities of interest for the person. Check community volunteer activities. Seek out garden clubs, recovery groups, and/or church homes. Check community volunteer activities, Mentor, make yourself available to listen actively. Help create an active goal, assist them to find social events to get involved with so that when they become lonely, they have other options rather than just isolation. Help them learn to meet new people from other cultures or new to them. Pray with them.

([Campaigntoendloneliness.org](http://Campaigntoendloneliness.org))

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# UCLA LONELINESS SCALE

Indicate how often each of the statements below is descriptive of you. Circle one letter for each statement:

O -- "I often feel this way"

S -- "I sometimes feel this way"

R -- "I rarely feel this way"

N -- "I never feel this way"

- How often do you feel unhappy doing so many things alone? OSRN
- How often do you feel you have nobody to talk to? OSRN
- How often do you feel you cannot tolerate being so alone? OSRN
- How often do you feel as if nobody really understands you? OSRN
- How often do you find yourself waiting for people to call or write? OSRN
- How often do you feel completely alone? OSRN
- How often do you feel you are unable to reach out and communicate with those around you?  
OSRN
- How often do you feel starved for company? OSRN
- How often do you feel it is difficult for you to make friends? OSRN
- How often do you feel shut out and excluded by others? OSRN

**ADD UP YOUR SCORE**

**4** for each O, **3** for S, **2** for R, **1** for N

Scores between 15 and 20 are considered a normal experience of loneliness. Scores above 30 indicate a person is experiencing severe loneliness.

# Loneliness Questionnaire

Describe loneliness: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Would you say loneliness is a Cause of Poverty? YES

or NO.

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Who would you say gets the

Loneliness? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_