

QUESTION TWO

WHY LONELINESS?

It has been estimated that approximately 60 million people in the United States, or 20% of the total population, feel lonely.

Some surveys say up to 40%!

One study found that 12% of Americans have no one with whom to spend free time or to discuss important matters.

More than one in ten people...have NO ONE.



THE TASK:

By loving ourselves, the anxiety of false guilt and shame is conquered. And by embracing ourselves—we have the ability to embrace others—and they, in turn, to embrace us.

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THERE IS A BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING ALONE AND FEELING LONELY.

GOD, I HAVE A QUESTION...OR TWO

BIG QUOTE:

"The more we can embrace our own separateness, and the more we can live with ourselves, the better our relationships will be."

—Dr. James Hollis



IF YOU HAD TO PICK JUST ONE THING, WHAT WOULD BE THE SECRET TO A HAPPY LIFE?





"ALONE IS THE MOST TERRIBLE WORD IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE."

-STEPHEN KING

REFLECT

When we sense our questions teaching us or drawing our attention to something, it's important to stop and reflect on what they might be trying to tell us. Use the following questions and big quote to guide your thoughts about the teaching and stories you just experienced.

BIG QUOTE:

"THE KEY IS IN THE QUALITY, NOT THE QUANTITY OF THOSE WE REALLY KNOW."

— JESSICA OLLEN

1. How might knowing our story help others connect with us? How would it impact our credibility as a friend and lover?

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2. In the video, we heard that a crowd grows smaller not only when we learn other people's stories, but also when we share our own story. Which is harder for you to do—listen to others or tell your story?

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3. How does hearing about others' struggles draw us closer to them?

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RESPOND

Now that you have spent some time reflecting on the importance of asking the right questions, let's consider how you will apply the wisdom you have learned from the video and your reflection time. Then think about practical steps to take in the coming week to live out what you have learned.



ACTION STEPS

Take some time to share your story with someone you trust. An easy way to do this: Share three life “milestones”—one significant event from childhood, another from adolescence, and a third from adulthood. Remember, the key is in the quality, not the quantity of those we really know.

We all need several people on whom we can depend and who depend on us in return. But could it be that beyond the terror of loneliness, beyond the deafening crowd lies the riches of one's personal journey? Psychologists say the best cure for loneliness may not be seeking the company of others, but rather, just the opposite: They say we must focus inward and address the negative thoughts that underlie loneliness in the first place. We must confront and embrace our loneliness.

Take some time to write down honest answers to the following two questions: Why do I run from myself throughout life? Why do I occupy myself with doing instead of being?

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WE MUST RESERVE TIME TO FREELY ESTABLISH
WHO WE ARE.



DAILY READINGS

Ask honest questions of yourself, others, and of God.

READINGS

Day 1.

READ "EPIDEMIC OF LONELINESS"

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/connections/200905/epidemic-loneliness>

QUESTIONS:

Why do some people, despite their best efforts, alienate rather than engage others?

Day 2.

READ "OVERCOMING LONELINESS"

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/making-change/201401/overcoming-loneliness>

QUESTIONS:

What are the healing agents for loneliness?

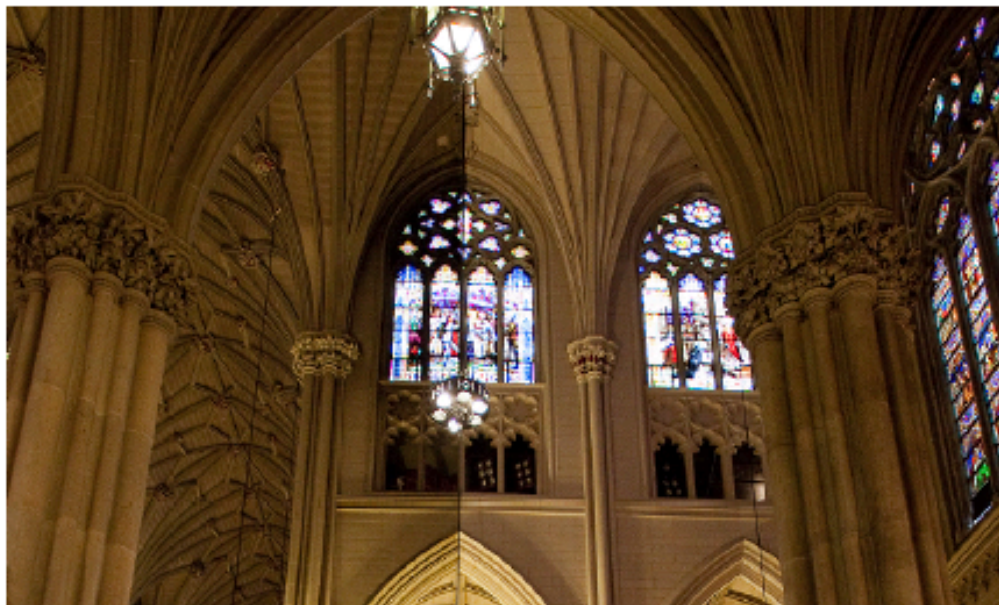
Day 3.

READ "LONELY TRANSITIONS"

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/web-loneliness/201409/lonely-transitions>

QUESTIONS:

Why do troubling undercurrents tend to rise to the surface during times of transition?
What are some tips to help with transitions?



Use these daily readings to go deeper into this week's question. Each day read the information given. Take your time. Ask honest questions of yourself. Listen and respond as you meditate on the new thoughts. Once the study has ended, you may want to continue this habit of reading, questioning, and reflecting. You may want to work your way through more books that you come across on your own, reading just a few pages a day as you have in this Daily Readings section.

READINGS

Day 4.

READ "IS LONELINESS JUST ANOTHER FORM OF DEPRESSION?"

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/web-loneliness/201404/is-loneliness-just-another-form-depression>

QUESTIONS:

How are loneliness and depression different?

Day 5.

READ "10 QUOTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS ON LONELINESS"

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/turning-straw-gold/201204/10-quotations-and-reflections-loneliness>

QUESTIONS:

Which of these thoughts best describes your feelings about loneliness?

Day 6.

SUMMARY:

Use the following space to write any further thoughts that are in your heart and mind about the questions you have asked in this session and during your reading times this week. You may also want to write down observations or questions that you'd like to keep close as you continue.

NOW WHAT?

We hope this study has encouraged you to ask even deeper questions. Remember, good questions lead to freedom, and the right questions lead to meaning. Good things come from asking questions. As Euripides is purported to have said, “Question everything.”

The goal for this video series and self-coaching guide was twofold.

First: To provide a foundation of understanding about these eight questions that every one of us deal with throughout our lives. These eight universal topics are not “dragons” to be slain—they are dragons to be tamed—to be understood and managed.

Second: To help you become comfortable asking questions of God, of others, and most importantly, of yourself. We have been trained by the institutions of life not to ask questions—we would like to continue to champion and celebrate your courage to ask candid and honest questions.

If you have enjoyed this study and want to go deeper in your search for meaning, we have provided an extensive reading list on the next page. These authors provide wise guidance—several of them timeless wisdom—in the quest for a free and clear life.

Randy Elrod has given the remainder of his life to encouraging others to be who they are meant to be. Through the re:Create Conferences and his non-profit Creative Community he has designed gatherings and re:sources to provide wise guidance and mentorship for those who seek it.

He believes that the smaller and more intimate the group, the better the questions. That is why even the largest of the gatherings, the annual [re:Create Conference](#) in Nashville is limited to no more than 150 people and other medium-size gatherings such as [re:Quest](#) are much more intimate with even a smaller number. He has also allocated time each month for a very limited number of one-on-one coaching opportunities.

You can find more information at: randyelrod.com/encouragement.

Thanks so much for taking this journey with us. May your questions be many.

