



Seventh Newsletter

April 9th 2020

To state the blatantly obvious the vast majority of us are living in a time that has never been experienced before. Not since World War 2 have we been called upon to self discipline and live with our own company and have little social reaction. Rarely in living history has it been applicable to all countries of the world in and for a unified cause. It would seem the common denominator in this rare historical occurrence has been a pandemic and not the very real fear of self annihilation due to atomic war or like outcome from mans need to conquer. I found this situation to be intriguing and perhaps proof that we have also failed in the need to conquer our own demons. If you look at the behaviours of mankind across the globe it is saddening to see the pack mentality and the absurd actions taken by people of all genders, race, and belief systems. You would think that we had an incurable plague of dysentery and not a respiratory virus with the ludicrous actions of those wanting to hoard a readily available commodity in quantities that defy reason. The rush for toilet paper is as idiotic as it is frightening when we think of how easy it is to control the masses with fear based illogic.

It is also a time that is showing how kind people can be and fortunately our incessant and ghoulish media is managing to report the actions of those whose reason has allowed compassion to be their dominant and guiding force. Many are using social media in a variety of ways to entertain or suggest ways to prevent boredom and others giving practical help to those in need of food, money, or other essentials. It was "the best of times it was the worst of times" as Charles Dickens wrote. It is a time that highlights those who are comfortable with their own company and those who need other people or distractions to feel gratified. Those who know the difference between Loneliness and Aloneness.

I remember in those days of mine when I lived with the comfort that I knew everything; having a much older friend explaining to me that aloneness was a desired state of being. He also explained that it differed greatly from being lonely and how to achieve that state of being. I absorbed enough to remember his comments but as he was not as wise as I it was dismissed. After two divorces, several unnecessary life setbacks, and the death of my 11 year old son I finally decided to give it ago.

The restriction of self isolation means that nothing much has really changed for me. My very long "working" hours has always meant being in front of a computer or on the phone most of each day of every week and inside my residence. I am happy and at peace whilst being heavily involved with the drama that is leukodystrophy. Therefore, I was interested in noting how people were handling their alteration to lifestyle. The answers would appear to be very mixed. It also brought home to me how difficult it was for those who had difficulty with their own company and who have problems with boredom. Many people would appear unable or unwilling to sit alone and learn to enjoy the peacefulness of solitude. Some seem to need to be active all the time and afraid of its cessation. Others need to have social interaction and their fear is not being with their mates daily. It is almost as if they are saying "do not leave me with myself please!"

Please understand that I am not being critical of people here and it is much easier for me as I have no family other than an estranged daughter and I am 72 years extremely young. My observations are meant to present another perspective to add to the many being currently being offered as opportunities to "fill in time". It is my wish that some may learn to enjoy their own company more and increase their self respect or to use an old term; self love.



My wish is to create a more peaceful person who can enthuse others with exciting activities and who can sit at the day's end and be contented. Every day is brand new and is not seen as a time marker on a monotonous calendar.

Loneliness and Aloneness are total opposites and all of us know the feeling of being lonely but not all that feeling of being comfortable without company. I think put basically the difference is that one is more physically related and the other more a state of mind or being. However, they both have interrelationships. Have you ever been at a party and felt out of place or even not welcome despite being asked by your friends. Perhaps at work with many colleagues and unable to relate or feel part of the team. You feel rejected, hurt and as if you do not count. You are lonely, misunderstood and feel worthless. These are the only people you know and you struggle to see a solution to your isolation and pain and how to feel wanted, needed, and appreciated.

Loneliness affects our emotional life. We can start to develop negative thoughts and beliefs that can be very harmful and counterproductive to achieving the solution to our loneliness. It can also affect our physical wellbeing. We become unhealthy in all aspects of our life.

Aloneness is that ability, irrespective of whether people are present or not, of being comfortable with yourself and not reliant on anyone else to make you feel happy and peaceful. You are your best friend. You do not need. It is that ability to switch off the self talk and internal and incessant internal babble that often plagues our lives. Aloneness brings self sufficiency and completeness. You can produce serenity in the hustle and bustle of main street or on a beach or in the bush. You have great respect for your self and therefore others. You love this way of feeling and what it produces in you and as a result, all others. You don't feel lonely because you have you!

How do we find this inner peace or aloneness? The solution lies in slowing ourselves down so we can hear what we are saying and then doing some running repairs on those areas that are a bit fractured. The best ways are by practicing quiet time, mindfulness, or meditation all of which are the same thing and some loving learning. There are different forms of established meditation and you need to find the method that best suits. Do not get caught up in the scams of highly priced courses. Meditation is free or at the worst a nominal cost to cover some basic outlays. Do not fall for the lie that I cannot meditate; "I am one of those people who just can't." There is no such being. Everyone can meditate; some may find it a little more of a challenge to start with than others. Practice and perseverance will bring peace.

Start by having 5 minutes morning and night just being by yourself. It matters not where but preferably in a quiet place where you will not be distracted. Simply focus on a set point such as your breathing for that time. If you can find a local group who do not treat it as a secret for payment then it may be very helpful in getting started. It is not mumbo jumbo and many Universities such as Harvard endorse it use as the results in stress reduction are well documented. As mentioned mindfulness or simply enjoying some quiet time are simply meditation by another name.

We all need some "loving learning" as most of us have some areas that need a bit of attention and fine tuning. Some are habits that we need to abandon and others we need to encourage. Internally we all know them. We need to fix these by the best method that suits our upbringing and make up. Like meditation we do not need to buy a series of books or courses that have the magic words that will instantaneously change our lives. There is no such creation or charm bracelet that will turn you into perfection. Personal change will be slow but noticeable and therefore self encouraging. You may trip a few times but the fall will have some good lessons.



It would seem vital that we need to make some positive choices that engender hope and understanding rather than the incessant barrage of negativity from the media and the doomsayers. Do we really need to listen and watch the morbid media? No, we do not! Updates can be achieved quickly and factually through our national broadcaster the ABC and we can be spared the hypocrisy of commercial self interest. They are the hyenas of the broadcasting industry. We need to choose those areas of our lives that engender hope and avoid the barrage of gloom and bleakness. Constant repetition of negativity simply breeds fear, anxiety, stress, panic and poor thinking and judgement.

Focus on isolation and those who understood its precepts. Look at Nelson Mandela – 27 years of involuntary confinement, Viktor Frankl surviving years in a second world war death camp. Both experienced isolation and both inspired countless millions. They chose to be positive and concentrate on the benefits and their future intentions. They used their minds to be their servants and not their masters as Einstein urged us to do some years ago. Shall we join those who are using their time creatively and developing those countless options that bring about optimistic moods, dynamic energy, and joyous emotions? I think so.

Let us be hopeful for these circumstances will not last and remember the recent tragic floods and the fires, possibly the worst in our living history, and the stories of survival and heroism we witnessed. Those families that openly said we will start again and made that commitment.



Hope is being able to see that there is a meaningful future full of regrowth.

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