

# THE LONELINESS MEASUREMENT AND REDUCTION GUIDE

A Personal Loneliness Assessment Tool and 9 Actions to Strengthen  
Your Connections in Life or at Work

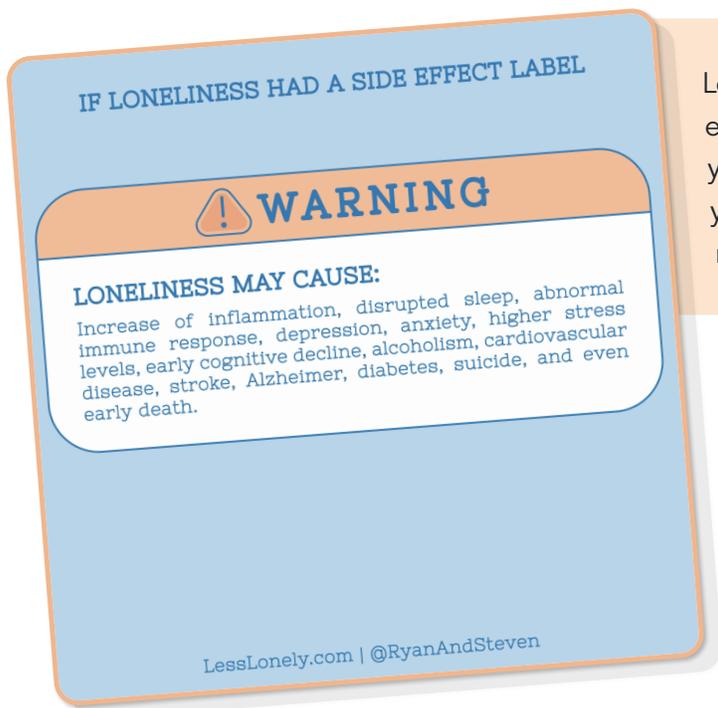
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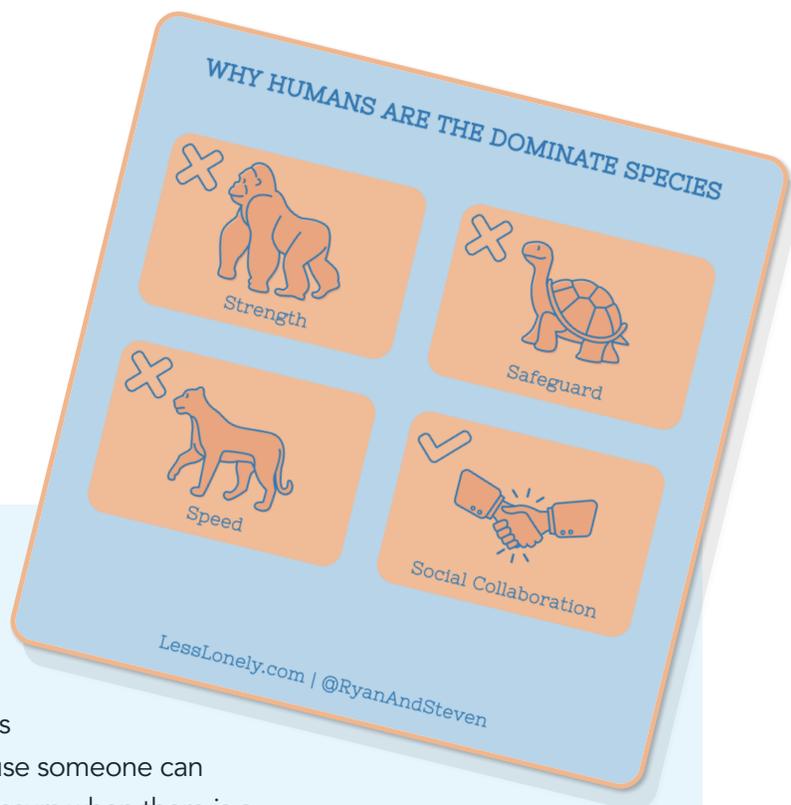
# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LONELINESS

If you experience loneliness, you are not alone. A colossal 72% of global workers feel lonely at least monthly; with 55% saying they feel lonely weekly. The impact of loneliness is stark. **Loneliness shaves 15 years off of a person's life**, -- an eye-opening statistic that should motivate all of us -- from individuals to business leaders to policy makers -- to address the issue.

In the workplace, employee productivity, loyalty, collaboration, and engagement all decrease when employees are lonely. Reducing isolation is critical for the health of our mind, body, and communities.



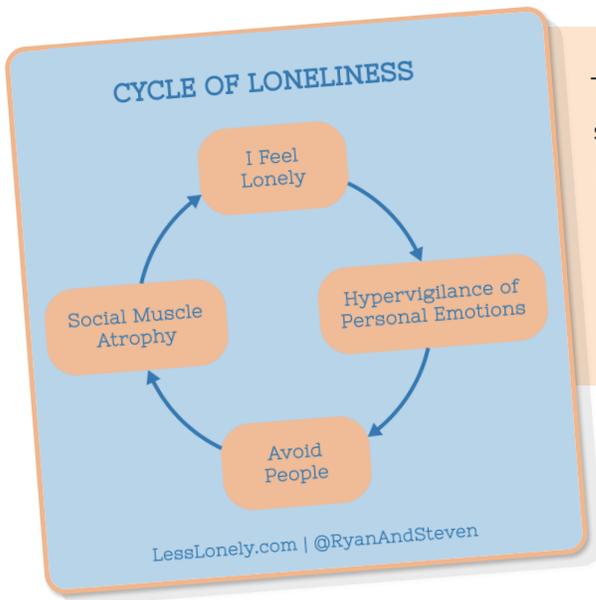
Loneliness isn't shameful. It's a signal. A signal that we need each other. When you experience loneliness, that means your brain works. Your brain is serving up a reminder that you need community because humans are wired to be social relational beings.



Humanity's strength has always been in our ability to work together. Loneliness is the absence of quality connection. Loneliness is a subjective feeling of the lack of trust, closeness, and affection of loved ones, close friends, and community. Loneliness is not defined by a lack of people being around, because someone can still be lonely while surrounded by others. Loneliness occurs when there is a perceived gap between the current closeness of relationships to the desired closeness of them.

As a social species, humans require more than the mere presence of others. We require the presence of others to dream, strategize, and work toward common goals with. We need to be in the presence of others who value, appreciate, and "see" us for everything we are.

**Loneliness is being seen through; connection is being seen as.**

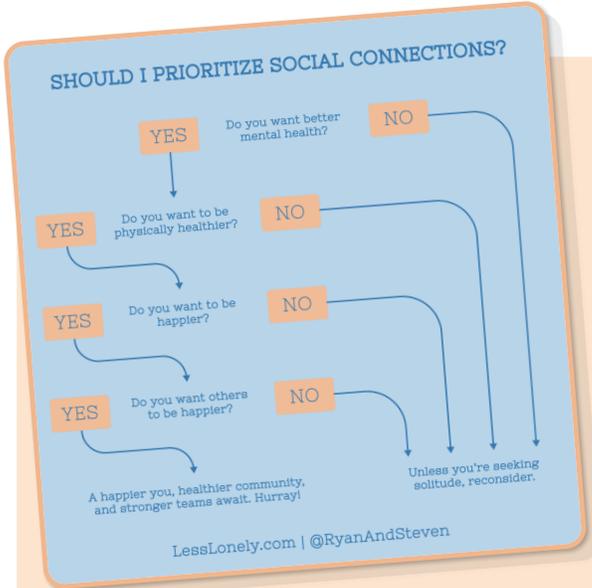
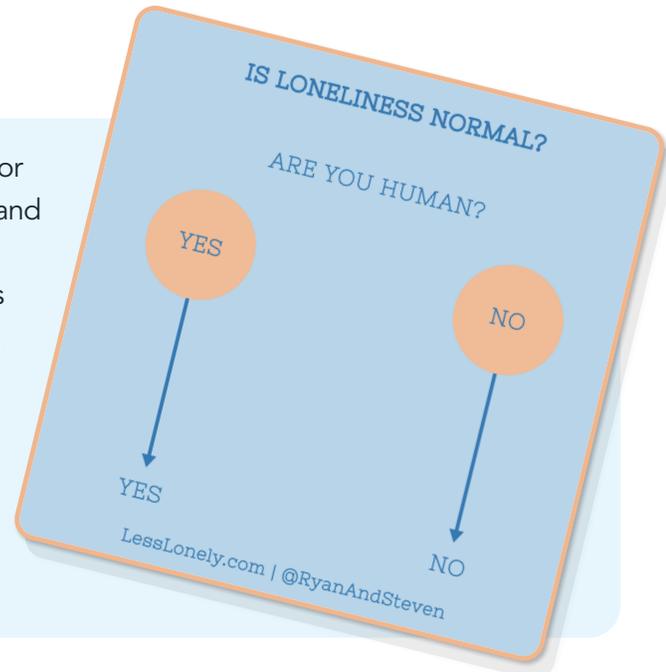


The 19th and 21st U.S. Surgeon General, Vivek Murthy, said, "During my years caring for patients, the most common pathology I saw was not heart disease or diabetes; it was loneliness."

If the most common ailment among people is loneliness, then it's fair to assume loneliness lingers everywhere.

Now more than ever, we need to be more vigilant about fighting for less loneliness and more belonging in a world full of convenience and tempting distractions. Smartphones, email, remote working, social media, one-click ordering, binge-watching, and texting, present us with subtle daily choices to trade connection for convenience. Left unaware and unchecked, these modern tools can silently march humanity unknowingly into the deep dark sea of loneliness.

Lessening loneliness isn't a problem to solve but rather a tension to manage. It will be a tension to be managed as long as humans are fully human.



This isn't about getting over loneliness; it's about getting through loneliness. You don't get over loneliness once and remain free from the emotion thereafter. It's a process. Loneliness is a part of life. You'll never get over loneliness for good. But you can minimize its effects and the frequency you experience it.

Loneliness is a universal human condition. The question isn't if you (or your team) are lonely but how lonely are you (or your team). To uncover that question, one must take a closer look at loneliness.

This short assessment below helps uncover an individual's loneliness levels. The assessment is adopted from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Loneliness Scale which is the most commonly used and widely accepted measure of loneliness.

# THE LONELINESS SELF-ASSESSMENT

If you already took the assessment (online, in the book, etc.) then skip down to "Recommendations to Lessen Loneliness".

## How often do you feel the way described below?

Score each statement using the following scale:

Rating: 4-Never | 3-Rarely | 2-Sometimes | 1-Often

- |  |       |   |   |   |   |       |
|--|-------|---|---|---|---|-------|
| 1. Not in tune with people around me.    | Never | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Often |
| 2. Lack companionship.                   | Never | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Often |
| 3. Don't have anyone to talk to.         | Never | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Often |
| 4. Don't feel part of a group.           | Never | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Often |
| 5. Not understood by others.             | Never | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Often |
| 6. Starved for company.                  | Never | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Often |
| 7. Isolated or excluded by others.       | Never | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Often |
| 8. Social relationships are superficial. | Never | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Often |
| 9. Interests aren't shared by others.    | Never | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Often |
| 10. Unhappy being withdrawn.             | Never | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Often |

Add up each of the ten scores to get your total.

Your Total Score

## Scoring

Total Score	Loneliness Level
10-20	Low Level of Loneliness
21-30	Medium Level of Loneliness
31-40	High Level of Loneliness

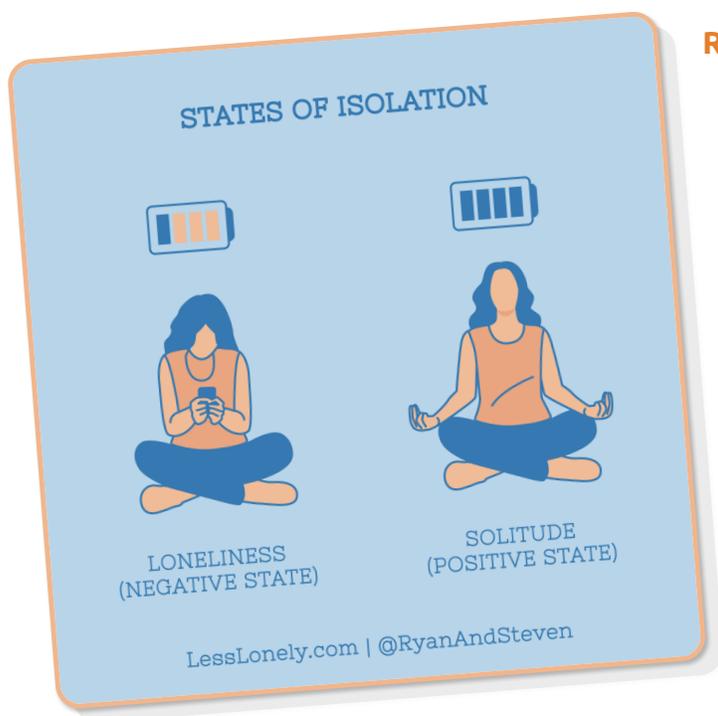
# RECOMMENDATIONS TO LESSEN LONELINESS.....

No matter where you scored on the Loneliness Self-Assessment, establishing and nurturing social connections should always be a priority in order to maintain our health and well-being.

Based on your score, here are some science-based recommendations to strengthen your connections and keep loneliness at bay.

## SCORES OF 10-20 = **LOW** LEVEL OF LONELINESS.....

Because loneliness has been increasing over recent years it means that it is malleable. What goes up can also come down. **Because your levels are low** now also means your levels can increase. The goal in the low loneliness level category is to be proactive about keeping loneliness at bay within yourself and others.



### Recommendation #1: Seek Solitude

The negative state of isolation is loneliness. The positive state of isolation is solitude. Solitude is a state of being alone without the emotions of loneliness. **Solitude is peaceful aloneness created by a state of voluntary isolation.** Solitude can take many forms such as self-reflection, meditation, mindfulness exercises, or a quiet break from the demands of life. Solitude offers the opportunity to connect inwardly with oneself. Emotional wellbeing, clarity, creativity, and perspective are some of the benefits of intentional and healthy solitude. when solitude is fought for and done right, it helps to strengthen the connection with ourselves which in turn equips us to connect more deeply with others. Ironically, solitude is insurance against loneliness.

### Recommendation #2: Acknowledge Someone's Progress

Point out the progress you've noticed in a friend or colleague. Whether it's accomplishing a small win, overcoming an obstacle, learning a new skill, achieving a breakthrough, or completing a goal, give them a virtual or in-person high five. When you focus on uplifting someone else, not only will the other person feel seen (*reducing loneliness*) but your well-being will also be lifted. **In other words, helping others is a form of self-care.**

### Recommendation #3: Arrive Extra Early

Plan to arrive 10-15 minutes early to your next meeting, appointment, or social meet-up. **Research proves that time constraints severely limit our willingness to engage with others.** If you are constantly rushing from one thing to the next, you constrain the opportunity to connect with someone along the way. Don't let busyness blind you to the needs and presence of others around you. Create more margin to create more connection.

# SCORES OF 21-30

= **MEDIUM** LEVEL OF LONELINESS.....

Your well-being battery is always depleting, and it takes seeking and establishing meaningful social connections to replenish it. The goal in the medium loneliness level category is to adopt pro-social behaviors that can be maintained to reduce loneliness and keep levels low.

## Recommendation #1: Trade High-Tech for High Touch

Trade one email, text, or chat message today for a phone call, video chat, or in-person conversation. As work flows shift more and more to technology, automation, and artificial intelligence --**without a counterbalance--our loneliness and disconnection will grow.** To avoid confusion, consider prefacing the communication by stating, "Today, I'm prioritizing connection over convenience, let's talk live."

## Recommendation #2: Welcome an Interruption

Be interruptible today. When someone interrupts you during a task, embrace it, and turn your complete attention to them. **Don't let tasks and deadlines override your relationships.** Create the necessary margin and self-permission to say no to the urgent and lean into the important. Besides, never drifting off task is for robots. Be wonderfully human.



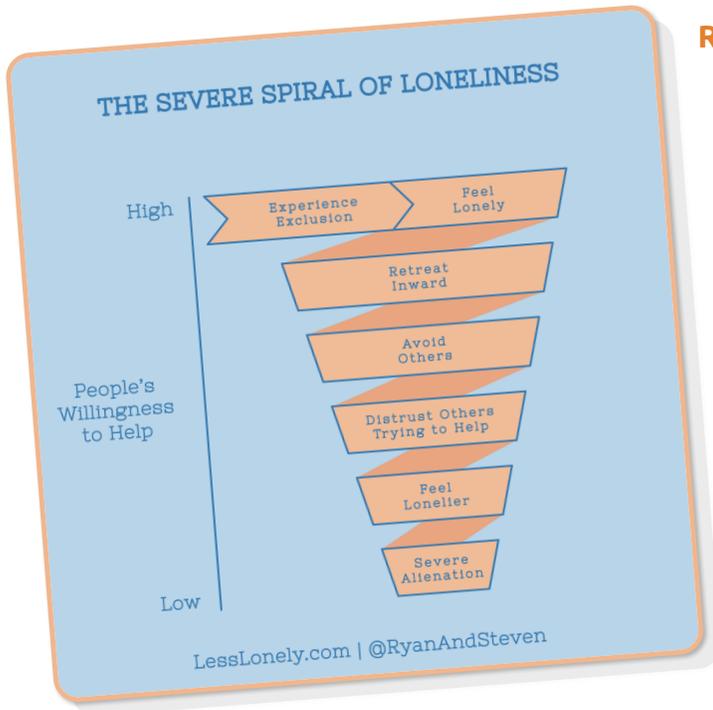
## Recommendation #3: Schedule a Lunch

Ask someone to lunch. Meals lower our guard and open us up for deep connection. When people choose to eat a meal together, their body receives signals to calm down because human biology knows we would have never eaten a meal with a person from a threatening tribe. **People who say they have colleagues they like eating lunch with are less lonely.** Also, studies show eating with another person actually makes food taste better. Bon appétit!

# SCORES OF 31-40

= **HIGH** LEVEL OF LONELINESS.....

Loneliness is a universal human condition. And remember, loneliness isn't shameful, it's a signal. A signal we belong together. Unfortunately, the tendency of people with high levels of loneliness is to retreat inward, the exact opposite of what is needed. (See the "Severe Spiral of Loneliness" below.) The goal in the high loneliness level category is to take small steps towards positioning yourself to connect with others.



## Recommendation #1: Ask Someone, "How's your day going?"

No matter personality types, people increase their well-being when they interact with people they randomly meet. A brief 40-second positive interaction can alleviate loneliness as long as the moment leaves an individual feeling seen. Connecting with strangers matters to our well-being more than we think. Connections don't have to be lasting to be meaningful. It doesn't take much to move yourself or someone else from disconnect to connected. Be proactive when the little moments arise to connect with someone around you. Keep fighting for your connections! You got this. We got this.

## Recommendation #2: Express Gratitude to Someone

Tell someone one thing you appreciate about them. Express your heartfelt and personal gratitude via a phone call, email, text, handwritten note or during an in-person conversation. Expressing gratitude is scientifically proven to improve our well-being. Consider taking a few minutes every day to express gratitude.

## Recommendation #3: Identify The Beneficiaries of Your Labor

Take an interrogative approach to understand who exactly is benefiting from the work you do. When people can connect a straight line from the work they do to the person(s) benefiting from their labor, purpose follows. And purpose is a premier loneliness suppressant and connection booster. For example, cooks were more motivated and worked harder when they saw those who would be eating their food and radiologists were more accurate reading x-rays when shown a picture of the patient. So, who are the direct beneficiaries for what you do?

## Mental Health Professional Resources

If you or someone you know is dealing with chronic loneliness, depression, or other mental health issues, use the following free 24/7 support resources.

- ◇ **Crisis Text Line:** Text "BRAVE" to 741-741
  - Text from anywhere, anytime, about any type of crisis. A real-life, trained crisis counselor will receive the text and respond, all from a secure online platform.
- ◇ **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
  - Call from anywhere. You will be routed to the closest crisis center in your area. Call for yourself or someone you care about. Your call is free and confidential.

# AVAILABLE (AND FUN) RESOURCES

Here are additional resources to help lessen loneliness and boost belonging within yourself or a team?

## ◇ The Team Connection Assessment™

- The world's first validated assessment to measure the strength of connections among a team.



## ◇ *Connectable: How Leaders Can Move Teams From Isolated to All In*

- The world's first book to address workplace loneliness.



## ◇ Hire a Loneliness Speaker or Consultant

- Hire the authors that literally wrote the book on lessening loneliness at work.



## ◇ The Connect Deck™

- 30 simple research-based daily activities to connect you with humanity and your team.



## ◇ The Connectable Course

- 8 interactive and immersive 10-15min modules to help lessen loneliness and strengthen connections with a team, manager, and organization.



## ◇ The Connectable App

- This app combines research and science to give individuals and teams the resources they need to build meaningful social connections at work and beyond.



# CONCLUSION

If humanity was successful in seeking isolation, nothing would exist. The book you read, the phone you check, the building you sit in, and the car you drive all came into existence because a group of people came together to build it. Nothing of significance is ever created alone. Together we dream, build, and prosper.

**We seek each other. We help each other. We heal each other.  
We build together. We grow together. We thrive together.**

## TOGETHER ANIMALS ACCOMPLISH MORE

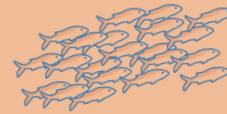
Wolves hunt more successfully in packs.



Penguins share warmth in huddles.



Fish swim in schools for protection.



Birds migrate in flocks to conserve energy.



Humans team up to ghost bust.



LessLonely.com | @RyanAndSteven