



## **Responding to Loneliness in our Clients**

Handouts

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## Loneliness from the Psychological Angle

The following excerpt is taken from the book by Yolanda Koumidou and Renate Moritz entitled, *Responding to Loneliness and Longing*

### **How Loneliness Is Dealt with in Relationships** **Yolanda Koumidou**

In relationships loneliness is unacceptable and is often directly or indirectly blamed on the quality of the relationship itself. There is an expectation that if one is in a relationship one should not be experiencing loneliness. Many people get into relationships out of loneliness to begin with. They view the relationship as the “solution.” If loneliness appears, the other person or the relationship is to blame, and often, a Point of Disconnection is chosen to focus on.

Relationships of any kind carry three built-in aspects: Points of Connection, Points of Adjustment, and Points of Disconnection. At their Points of Connection, two people connect with each other without having to try or ever work on it. These are points that are present from the very beginning of the relationship. They are the initial subconscious reasons two people are attracted to each other. The Points of Connection are unique to each relationship. They do not exist, in identical form, in any of a person’s other relationships. They carry their own particular color, which is usually not easily visible to others and even to the people themselves. If these Points of Connection are removed, people may find there is no longer a reason to stay together (though people may break up for other reasons while the Points of Connection remain intact)...

The Points of Connection between two people might be safety and security on a physical or emotional level. It might be sexual compatibility or the way they handle the practical/business aspect of life together. It might be their children or the way they connect on the spiritual level, like Peter and Pam. It might be memories shared from earlier years in their life as friends. At times the connection is how they inspire each other through dialogue. Whatever the Point of Connection is, it soothes their loneliness, because in that connection, for that moment, the loneliness disappears—but, as I will explore later, only up to a certain point.

Points of Adjustment are areas in a relationship where there is disagreement or conflict, but it can be worked on. These areas can and do get resolved when people are open and willing to make adjustments in the patterns that contribute to these ongoing problems. Points of Adjustment often involve repetitive themes surfacing in relationships. People might seek professional help or successfully resolve the problem by themselves...

Points of Disconnection are built-in differences that two people will never be able to adjust, change, or resolve. These are areas that, once identified and understood, can be surrendered. People can learn to live with Points of Disconnection. Or, if this is not possible, they will continue to suffer due to the unresolved problem, or decide to separate.

**A frequent misunderstanding I see in my practice is when a couple treats a Point of Disconnection as a Point of Adjustment.** One way to differentiate them is that Points of Disconnection are habit patterns that, no matter what kind of psychological intervention or how long one tries to change or make adjustments, they do not shift at all. Ever. At least, in this lifetime. When loneliness cannot be explained in any other way, this tendency to stay focused and insist on “resolving” Points of Disconnection prevails. As people don’t surrender to Points of Disconnection but push on to change them, they are keeping themselves discontented, and disconnected from each other. This uses an incredible amount of energy and time and, in so doing, takes the focus off the feeling of loneliness. One cannot feel lonely while in the middle of a fight. Fighting can and often is a way of connecting, even if intensely unpleasant. It is quite certain that zeroing in and arguing about Points of Disconnection can keep someone quite "busy" for a long time and thus escape loneliness even when the theme of the fighting is about loneliness itself. When Points of Disconnection are identified in therapy, it is suggested and encouraged that the focus turn to recalling and enhancing Points of Connection and placing more attention and energy on working on Points of Adjustment.

## Loneliness from the Spiritual Angle

The root of loneliness is:

Primal

Universal

Not a disease needing cure

To be understood, accepted and handled

The following excerpt is taken from the book by Yolanda Koumidou and Renate Moritz entitled, *Responding to Loneliness and Longing*

**...Oneness stands for the Soul's original home, being one with God.**

**Loneliness is the pain of the Soul having experienced separateness. Longing is the yearning of the Soul to return to Oneness.**

Whenever loneliness besets us, we might explain it away: for example, it is because we do not have a close person to be with, or friends to support us. At times, we may think it illustrates an inability to socialize or a lack of attractive personal qualities altogether.

Proposing that the experience of loneliness has nothing to do with any of the above interpretations. **Proposing that loneliness is a fundamental experience of the Soul in creation.**

Spiritual traditions open up a huge landscape, and many ways to perceive the Soul's loneliness and the Soul's longing.

Examples from spiritual sources use different metaphors, yet point to a fundamental constellation, namely: Oneness and separateness. Both are connected to loneliness and longing. **Oneness stands for the Soul's original home, being one with God.** And then there is separateness, different from separation. Separation is a frequent aspect in our lives. We separate from objects, places and people. Separateness, however, happens only once on our long journey to Oneness. **Loneliness is the pain of the Soul having experienced separateness. Longing is the yearning of the Soul to return to Oneness.**

## **INFORMATIVE BOOKS**

Koumidou-Vlesmas, Yolanda and Moritz Renate, (2019) *Responding to Loneliness and Longing*, Companion Books

Koumidou-Vlesmas, Yolanda (2015) *The Inner Eater Selves, Integrating the Parts of Personality Involved in Overeating*.

Roszak, Gomes, Kanner (1995). *Ecopsychology*, Sierra Club Books

Stamboliev, Robert (1992). *The Energetics of Voice Dialogue*, LifeRhythm

Stone, Hal and Sidra:

(1989). *Embracing Our Selves*, Nataraj

(1993). *Embracing Your Inner Critic*, HarperCollins

(2000). *Partnering*, New World Library

Tolle, Eckhart (1999). *The Power of Now*, New World Library

## **INSPIRING BOOKS**

Hoff, Benjamin (1983). *The Tao of Pooh*, Penguin Books

Meher Baba:

(1967), 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. *Discourses*, Maharashtra, India, currently carried by Sheriar Books, South Carolina

(1989), 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, *Listen Humanity*, New York, currently carried by Sheriar Books, South Carolina

Kornfield, Jack (2000). *After the Ecstasy, The Laundry*, Bantam

Ruiz, Don Miguel (1997). *The Four Agreements*, Amber-Allen Publishing, Inc.

Watts, Alan (1957). *The Way of Zen*, Pantheon Books Inc.

Welwood, John (1990). *Journey of the Heart*, HarperCollins

## **VIDEOS**

Videos can be accessed through:

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