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Have you ever noticed that some people have a hard time spending time alone? That they lose their minds if someone else isn't with them? And then there are those who are like Matthew McConaughey in the Lincoln Continental car commercials--he seems quite happy to spend time alone, doesn't he? Of course we all like to have company at various times but spending some occasional time alone can really do wonders to replenish one's soul.

Sadly, there are lots of lonely people in the world, but in many of those instances, the feeling of loneliness can be reduced or eliminated by enhancing one's social interaction or by changing one's perspective about being alone.

Kent Nerburn, in his book *Simple Truths*, gives the following advice: “You should spend time alone. Not just minutes and hours, but days and, if the opportunity presents itself, weeks. When you spend time alone, you quickly find out if you are at peace with yourself or if the meaning of your life is found only in the superficial affairs of the day.”

We can easily fill our days with activities deemed as superficial affairs, can't we? In this hoopla of activity, we never get all of our work done. In fact, we ALL will die with unfinished work.

Nerburn goes on to distinguish the difference between solitude and loneliness. He points out: “Solitude is a condition of peace that stands in direct opposition to loneliness. Loneliness is like sitting in an empty room and being aware of the space around you. It is a condition of separateness. Solitude is becoming one with the space around you. It is a condition of union. Loneliness is small; solitude is large. Loneliness closes in around you; solitude expands toward the infinite. Loneliness has its roots in words, in an internal conversation that nobody answers; solitude has its roots in the great silence of eternity.”

The “silence” though, is not really silent. The universe has an eternal hum that runs beyond our individual birth and death. It is a hum that is hard to hear through the louder and closer noise of our daily lives. It is the unity that transcends us all and, as much as possible, reconciles us to the reality and inevitability of our deaths. It makes us part of something larger. In solitude alone do we become part of this great eternal sound.

Nature is the clearest source of solitude. Nature's vast greatness can overwhelm the insignificant chatter by which we measure most of our days. If you have the wisdom and the courage

to spend some time in nature alone, the eternal hum will make itself known to you. And when you find that hum, it will always be there for you. You will learn to embrace the feeling of peace within yourself and be able to call upon that peace at any time.

For most of us, this search for peace is not easy. It means slowing down from “hurried” to “quiet” to “still” to “peaceful.” The feeling that embraces you at the destination, though, is definitely worth the effort.

Nerburn further explains: “The awareness we experience in solitude is priceless for the peace it can give. It is also the key to true loving in our relationships. When we have a part of ourselves that is firm, confident, and alone, we don't need another person to fill us. We know that we have private spaces full of goodness and self-worth, and we grant the same to those we love. We do not try to pry into every corner of their lives or to fill the emptiness inside ourselves with their presence.”

So don't be afraid to spend time alone. Embrace those precious moments and enjoy the experience. If you can find the peace that exists within yourself, you will never know another moment of loneliness in your life.

~ The End ~