

Road Out of Loneliness

Exercises Overview

Exercises within social situations:

1. **Ask yourself:** What do I truly think about this? What do I want to say or do right now? → Say or do it if it's not obviously hurtful.

2. **Ask yourself:** What can I do or say to make my situation a little bit better right now? What can I say or do to make me laugh right now? What would be the most exciting thing to do for me now? → Say or do it if it's not obviously hurtful.

3. **When a conflict occurs:**

- Name what you feel internally.
- Do not take anything personally.
- Ask questions like: *"What do you mean by that?"*
- Paraphrase their answers.
- If necessary, draw boundaries and leave the situation.
- Address the conflict later on assertively.

4. **Carefully listen** to what other people say, hypothesize what they are feeling, and get their feedback on that regularly.

5. **Share the positive things** you notice in others honestly, graciously, expressively, and in detail.

General Exercises

First Aid	Use the <i>Naming and Breathing meditations</i> for quick help when you acutely feel the pain of loneliness.
Barriers to Social Contact	If there are any and it is possible, work on overcoming your barriers to social contact.
Cognitive Distortions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Whenever you have a negative emotion, look at the negative thought that preceded it. 2. Challenge the thought with logic and objective evidence by asking: <i>“Do I have evidence for my initial interpretation? Are there alternative explanations? Am I overly focusing on the negative aspects? Would I tell the same thing I’m telling myself to a friend in a similar situation?”</i> 3. Find a more rational and balanced replacement thought.
Authenticity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Count the times when you didn’t say or do what you truly wanted; keep the count somewhere as a note. View it as a game with the goal of reducing the number day by day. 2. Look at the situations where you became inauthentic and ask yourself why. Is there an underlying issue you can address? Seek help from a counselor if needed. 3. Ask yourself with everything that you do: <i>“Why am I doing this? Is this aligned with what I want to achieve, with my values and beliefs?”</i> If not, stop doing it. The <i>Naming and Breathing meditations</i> can help with avoiding harmful behavior.
Self-Fulfillment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Write down what would need to change for your life to be how you want it to be. If it’s within your power to make the changes, what are the practical steps to get there? Give yourself just one major goal for the next 12 weeks that is realistic, yet challenging. Outline the exact practical steps you need to take to achieve it. 2. Generally, take care of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Your health ● Your hygiene ● The tidiness of the space you live in ● Your clothes ● Paying the bills on time ● Your work ● Your savings ● Your passion and fun

Confrontational Ability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Try watching or listening to comedy frequently. 2. Write down silly jokes and remember them. 3. Consider taking up improvisational theatre classes and martial arts like boxing and grappling if you are fit enough to do so.
Empathy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read fiction that you like, e.g., 15 minutes before going to bed. 2. Learn about human psychology, e.g., by reading books about emotions, motivation, and social dynamics.
Appreciation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gratitude journal: Write down the things that you appreciated during the day, every day. 2. From time to time, remember the preciousness of everything that exists and that everything changes.
Taking Action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build a lifestyle that enables you to see the same people around three times a week. 2. List things that excite you and look for groups, locations, and events, and go there to meet new people.

Develop a Routine

Read through this overview once a day to keep the exercises in mind. Find a way to stay on track and set a fixed time each day to do these exercises, even if it's only 10 minutes. Try to remember the five points mentioned at the top before every social interaction. One way to keep yourself on track with the exercises is to tick off in a list whether you have worked on the respective points today, which you can fill in after you have written your gratitude journal, for example. You can find a simple example of such a list below.