

Ask Your Therapist

By Krishnabai, MSW, LICSW, the Ashby Center for Counseling

Loneliness

People contact me for counseling for many reasons: depression, addictions, marital problems and many of Life's other difficulties. But scratch the surface of those complaints and what I often find is - loneliness. Loneliness is what makes the depression unbearable, the addictions harder to shake, the marital issues much worse, and are an underlying problem in our culture. The pace of our lives leave us so little time to just "be", just "connect", just "hang out" with those we know and who know us. We are losing the village of friends and family that homosapiens have depended on forever!

This became clear to me recently when I attended a function where a friend I have known since 1977 showed up and while we were talking she made a simple statement to me about me and I was so moved by her words because they came from a place of such knowing of me. She spoke from a place of knowing me for 30 years. How wonderful - and how right she was about me!

We are so focused on the quantity of our activities that we have lost track of the quality of our interactions. The new status competition revolves around who is busier: "I'm SO busy", "I'm flat out", "I can't make time to see you for weeks!" We equate busyness with value. I equate busyness with emptiness and loneliness.

Perhaps one of the reasons why people get so caught up in sports and television shows is because people in these activities come into our homes and become a kind of virtual family or neighborhood. It is possible to not know our neighbors, never see our friends, ignore our relatives, and yet be engaged with the dramas of people's lives as they unfold on TV which feels as if they are real relationships. The busier we get, the more we fill up our lives with virtual or fake connections with people we have never met. American Idol becomes important to us rather than how our partner or sibling is. We rush to the computer to check in with our online friends and neglect the real "flesh and blood" people in our lives.

If you are feeling disconnected, depressed and fatigued, look into the real connections you have - or are missing - from your life. Maybe it's time to call up a friend and go for a walk and catch up!

To read all the prior Ask Your Therapist columns go to www.krishnabai.com where you can also send Krishnabai a general question for her column.

Krishnabai, MSW is a therapist in Ashby and Wellesley Hills where she sees adults, older teens and couples. The core of her work is the discovery and expression of the Authentic Self. She focuses on the identification, expression,

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