

The Impact of Loneliness

Cathy is a spiritual woman. She and her husband are both church and community leaders and have decided that Cathy would be a stay at home mom. However, over time, Cathy began to experience loneliness. Initially, it was simply a frustration with the reality of waking up to the hard work of doing the same thing every day. She was bored with her life. Due to her leadership positions, she didn't feel she could tell anyone that she was struggling.

Cathy is not alone, studies show that midlife loneliness is on the rise. According to Cary Cooper, professor of organisational psychology and health at the University of Manchester. Midlife loneliness is reaching epidemic proportions among 30 and 40+. Gary Cooper said women can have greater social needs than men- they feel loneliness more acutely and seek out friendships in a way that men don't.

I decided to test this idea on a friend, and the result stunned me. I discovered that they were people close to me that were experiencing loneliness. My friend gave me an example of basically feeling alone and left out. She felt church was no longer a community and she was struggling to fit in. People she was once close to were growing spiritually and were making different choices. She was being left out of prayer groups and other events that some of her friends planned, and she is left wondering where do I fit.

Some things that can isolate us.

Working from home

Moving to a new town and not knowing anyone

Loneliness in marriage – everyone else seems so happy, will I be misunderstood and seem like a not a good enough Christian if I decided to share.

The introvert who sometimes finds it difficult to connect socially.

Ways to overcome loneliness

Children are good ice breakers, they connect with other children easily and as this could be an easy way to meet other parents.

Join groups of like-minded people, for example, leveraging your interest and hobbies could be another way of meeting people. Perhaps you could join the local writing group or book club. They may have a walking, flower arranging or bible study group. These are advertised in post offices, doctors offices and sometimes local supermarkets.

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- Own it, do not feel guilty about your social needs.
- Exercise – the gym is a great way to meet people. I hate the gym but love walking and so I have a friend that when I need a good long walk and some company I call her.
- Social media- makes it easy to stay in touch.
- Taking the first step may appear daunting but do not become frightened by the idea of trying, do not assume people do not want to make new friends.

Managing Negative Feelings

The idea of how to manage negative feelings has mystified the minds of many for years and the answer seems to still be eluding people today. Many people have questions such as; 'how do I control my emotions?' There seems to be a cloud over this topic and the struggle is real and is affecting many.

I have been asked this question on many occasions, how do I control the emotions that accompany hurtful situations? What do I do when I am overcome with emotions that I have not been taught how to deal with? The answer to these questions is not as elusive as we have been conditioned to believe. In this post, I will begin to help you make sense of that question and give some added help that will enable you to begin a new life unencumbered by negative feelings.

I will help you apply relevant scriptures to this very important area. For example, focusing on what is true will help you manage even the most difficult emotions.

You will learn that fear can hold you back from achieving your full potential. I will help you examine several truths that are calculated to combat fear.

1. Are you honest with yourself?
2. Learn how you benefit from negative emotions?
3. Learn God's truth about how to make sense of and change where you are.
4. Learn how to accept God's truth for you.

I am sure you do not enjoy negative emotions, I am also sure you do not enjoy the feelings left over after anger, frustration and bitterness have ripped their way through you and coloured an argument or damaged a relationship for the hundredth time. You do not enjoy it but you are also perhaps at the place where you are lost and need direction. The big question maybe how do I change? I agree there is a problem, but

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how do I change it. Watch this video until the end and also watch the others in their series <http://www.woundstoscars.com/healing-emotional-wounds-focus-on-truth/>

5. <http://www.woundstoscars.com/honesty-can-heal-emotional-wounds/> <http://www.woundstoscars.com/healing-emotional-wounds-five-day-series/>
6. Throughout the series, you will gain incredible insight into the reasons for negative emotions and learn the steps to overcome.

Negative feedback impacts emotional pain

Negative feedback impacts emotional pain, for example, 'this could never happen to me' stings and hurts in many ways. It hurts for me and on behalf of the many victims of abuse that I have the privilege of working with. These words hurt because it is usually the uninformed words of uneducated, ignorance. People who after hearing about the horrors of abuse as opposed to empathise they would proclaim, this could never happen to me. When tempted to say this remember negative feedback impacts emotional pain and that impact is rarely positive.

These words do not originate with the victim; it is an echo of many voices as they attempt to blame and unfortunately sometimes shame. It is the expressions of Individuals who are unaware of how to offer support and as such, they make declarations such as 'this could never happen to me' why didn't you do this or that. Demands that in retrospect seem so clear to them, they are unable to decipher how the person being abused could have missed it.

Consider your statement before making it, negative feedback to a victim is unnecessary, it is unlikely that you would have said anything that they would not have considered.

Sift feedback

If you are a victim of abuse and is battling negative feedback, sift the feedback given by others. Check it against your experience, what you know deep down to be true about you and also compare it with what God said about you.

An example of negative feedback

- **That could never happen to me**
- **Forgive them**

These two proclamations have the capacity to generate more pain; and further harm an individual working through the throes of hurt. From my years of working with abuse victims, listening to them and also reading stories of people who have come through some extraordinary circumstances, abuse is no respecter of person, it can happen to anyone irrespective of class, age, gender or ethnicity. Perhaps as you

listen to someone share their story you could commend them for overcoming and being strong enough to give you the benefit of their experience.

The latter (forgive them) is another possibly damaging comment, not because forgiveness is not an excellent idea, it actually frees the person doing the forgiving. Notwithstanding, people need to work through this process in their own time and at a pace that is comfortable for them. It would sometimes seem the people pushing forgiveness also have their agenda. Maybe they are uncomfortable with accepting that someone they know and love could perform such atrocities and they want their own world to be orderly again. This is prevalent especially in religious circles where victims can further suffer religious abuse. There is sometimes a push on one hand by friends of the abuser to forgive and on the other hand self-serving leaders encouraging forgiveness. What is consistent sometimes with these two scenarios is no one holds the perpetrator to any accountability.

You can support a victim by

Listening without judgement

Support without attempting to explain away someone's experiences.

'Be swift to hear, slow to speak.' James 1:19

At wounds to scars, we teach that people can heal, move on and find freedom in Christ.

Are you a church or organisation that would like to learn the essentials of effective listening? Would you like to learn how to support people working through the pain of abuse <http://www.woundstoscars.com> in conjunction with WHEL (whole healed and empowered living) conducts retreats that can help to give you the tools to be able to offer appropriate love and care to those in this position.

Heal Emotional Wounds by Focusing on Truth

Truth releases us from the bondage of the past and the things we have been fed.

Truth frees us to believe in who God says we are.

Do you know what is your truth? If you are struggling to answer this question do not despair, God has truth for you. If we focus on who God says we are and what He says about us, that is the best antidote against any emotional wounds.

This is our guideline for truth; whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if there *is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. Philippians 4:8

(for the full article and video visit our website. www.woundstoscars.com)