

# Isolation, Loneliness and Solitude

Bhante Bodhidhamma · Tips of the Day · 2 min read

---

Feeling isolated is quite different to loneliness. It comes from being unable to commune with those who we feel close to or affiliated to. I, myself, here at Satipanya, live isolated from the Sangha. As a monastic, I feel at home in the company of other monastics – of whatever creed. This is the same as anyone in the trades or professions. Anyone in the building trade feels at home with their mates. Anyone in the professions does so with their colleagues. In the same way we can feel isolated from our friends and families when we don't have enough or easy communion with them, but we don't necessarily feel lonely. These days this should not be such a problem especially with skype. Loneliness can be a very painful state. It can come after the death of a loved one, a loss of a friend, when we move into a new area and don't seem to know anyone and so on. And whenever we feel loneliness, it dips deep into those times we have felt lonely, perhaps unloved and even abandoned in childhood. Loneliness tells us we are dependent on someone to feel worthy, loved and wanted. Sitting quietly with our feelings of loneliness, arising for whatever reason, can allow old buried and unresolved feelings to arise. And they usually centre around a belief we have of ourselves that we are unlovable. The heart longs to divulge her secret pain, but finds no-one to trust. And in that vulnerability, touches upon the fragile nature of her existence. To sit with loneliness is to discover many things about ourselves. It can be an eye-opener. It's a healing process. And we need to wait until all feelings of loneliness disappear. What then arises? Solitude is of a different order. It is often what we seek when we have had enough company, enough excitement. It's 'such a relief' sometimes to be on your own. But this is poor solitude. It doesn't last very long. As soon as we have rested, we get fed up with ourselves and off we go into the helter-skelter of excitement seeking. Solitude, at its true spiritual depth, is to have found one's home within. As a Latin saying goes: never less alone than when alone. This is the gift of a heart no longer in 'need' of the other. A heart that is content. I wonder if you can catch this solitude, an inner sense of a self-embracing all-one-ness, when you've sat in vipassana with a bout of loneliness and waited patiently for it to sublimate.

---

*Transcriptions produced locally using Swiss low-carbon electricity. Corrections and rewriting by cloud-hosted AI.*