

LONELINESS IN LIFE

According to British Red Cross, more than nine million people say they are always or often lonely, out of a population of 65.6 million. Loneliness is a major problem in the modern world as traditional roles and relationships of both men and women have changed tremendously in the last few decades. Loneliness is a universal human experience that can affect us as badly as any physical ailment. The evidence shows that being lonely is bad for your physical and mental health. Loneliness is a warning sign that our needs are not being met. Hunger is a sign that we need food, thirst is a sign that we need water and pain signals that our body is sick and needs healing and repair. There is robust evidence that social isolation and loneliness significantly increase risk for premature mortality, and the magnitude of the risk exceeds that of many leading health indicators. Today, an emotional and psychological problem tormenting the elders is loneliness. Environmental factors like type of family, social network, transportation issues and place of residence, population migrations, etc. are also some other significant correlates of loneliness. Loneliness can be overcome through certain initiatives. Volunteering time and talent can help put one's own situation in perspective, bringing to light the positives.

One can fight loneliness, learn to love isolation, make use of discomfort of time on their own and come to realise that sometimes the best times come in solos. One of the reasons for feeling lonely is a lack of friends and communication in childhood. This has a strong impact of mature life and social relationships in adulthood. Loneliness may often grow out of some psychological compulsions. A person may suffer from an inferiority complex that he is unwanted or unloved. He will naturally avoid routine contact with others for fear of being repulsed or rebuffed. Lonely persons often aware that they are lonely but do not know how to deal with the loneliness. Feelings of loneliness don't have to be constant to call for action, but one will need to give himself a push to get back into the thick of life and re-engage with others to start feeling better.

Other studies have shown that changing our thinking altogether might be a more foundational way of dealing with loneliness. Loneliness can creep through your bones like a disease, wash over us unexpectedly as if a stranger's vomit, or sit in the pit of your stomach for weeks like undigested churning gum. Especially, it turns out, if you're young. The elderly should make efforts to make friends and meet new people, the kind one can turn to for emotional support. They could check with local senior centres and hospitals for opportunities to volunteer. Hobbies can keep them motivated and forward-thinking; they can help set goals. They could adopt a pet for company; caring for a pet can renew the meaning and purpose of one's life. They should recall aspects of their past life, which will enhance their emotional health. This will make an individual less likely to be lonely or withdrawn.

Vinod Chandrashekar Dixit

OFF 'D' CUFF

Easy tips for enhancing Emotional Health

April 7 is the World Health Day. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, i.e., health includes not just physical but also social and mental wellbeing as well. These days, we are very much aware of the importance of physical health, but why not give the same attention to mental and emotional health too. The mind thinks, studies, works interacts with relations and does everything for us 24x7 and it is the mind, which also strongly influences physical health.

Keeping the mind healthy is very easy. For proper care of the body, we need the right diet and exercise.

Similarly, to care for the mind, we just need the right diet of pure information and the exercise of Rajayoga meditation daily, even to begin with 15-20 minutes daily is enough. And, indeed, the mind is just like a little child. We need to know the art of keeping it busy so that it is not attracted by anything harmful. If anytime, it starts crying, i.e., it creates negative emotions like stress, worry, etc., just take a minute to withdraw from work, talk with it, resolve the issue, using divine knowledge and then get back to work. This also means that whenever we are very busy, we need to take a break for a minute or two and talk to ourselves and

give ourselves a few positive thoughts. In this way, the negative thoughts will be reduced and even be replaced in our minds. This will also ensure that the mind remains free from waste and is stable and peaceful throughout the day, which will reflect in all our works, relationships and interactions.

Going slightly deeper, the word 'healthy' means healthy self. Indeed, if we remain in the awareness of our true identity, 'I am a pure, divine being', this raises our frequency above ordinary waste thoughts, keeping us healthy inside, and full of purity, energy, bliss and joy. So, if at a certain point in time, the requirement of our mind is peace, say to yourself, "My real nature is peace and I am originally a peaceful being or energy."

Also, we need to look at everyone around us and create simple thoughts, "The energy of my peace is spreading to everyone around me and giving peace to them."

In a similar manner, if we are stressed because of a relationship, let us talk to ourselves, "I am a sweet-natured soul and I have to give love to everyone, even if I am not receiving the same from others."

"We can also think, "I am radiating love to my home or my office and changing its atmosphere to one filled with good wishes and good feelings."

Brahma Kumaris

USA-ally or bully, just think

DR KAPIL K SHARMA

Few days back, on April 7, 2021 movement of a USA Naval boat in Indian Ocean has stirred up polity in Indo-Pacific region. This deliberate act of USA has forced India to think again on its policy of Indo-pacific in general and QUAD in particular. USS John Paul Jones (DDG 53), a destroyer vessel of US Navy's 7th fleet ship entered in the close vicinity of Lakshadweep Islands, well within exclusive economic zone of India 'without consent, without notice and without permission' and carried out Military exercise. Such an act of US Navy was not expected at all that too at times when USA & India are working as partner in Indo Pacific region. Never before, two countries have come so close in defence cooperation. The act could have gone totally unnoticed had both countries ignored it but US authorities issued a statement justifying it and Pentagon endorsing the stand. It says USA has right to do so in accordance to UNCLOS 'United Nations Convention on the Laws of Sea', according to which US ships can sail through without prior notice. USS John Paul Jones carried out this Military exercise under 'Freedom of Navigation Operation', Leaving India with no option but to issue a meek statement as protest. Now, the question arises why this provocation by USA when Indo-US Military cooperation is all time high?

When QUAD an alliance of USA, India, Japan and Australia has just begun to become a formidable Force? When China a common target was really feeling the heat? Why all of a sudden USA started bullying its own ally? This act clearly shows that USA want to convey a message, a warning, but why? Readers must understand India's tactical posturing in relation to Russia and Iran is a big irritant to USA. Just few weeks back, Russian Minister Sergei Lavrov was in India and USA was watching it closely. Among many issues \$ 400 Missile Shield was a big flash point. India stood by its earlier stand and went ahead with various other issues like visit of Putin to India and purchases of more Mig-29 aircrafts etc. Obviously USA didn't like it.

Further, USA is not happy with India's vision of staying in QUAD which is formed with a clear objective of countering China. At the same time India is an active Member

of BRICS group of countries which include Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. USA sees this grouping as a threat to American Interests and USA's perception is that India must choose sides clearly as one cannot travel in two boats at the same time. USA wants India to embrace it in total without independent foreign policy as all its allies do. USA is in habit of total adoption, total control without ifs and buts where as India has never done that. Even during cold war era though we were in former USSR camp but India was having independent foreign policies under umbrella of 'Non Align Movement', but no such umbrella exists now. During that period, India was not having any issues with any other super power, as we are having direct confrontation with China now. It is a very tricky diplomatic situation how to partner USA alongside balancing Russia with an objective to counter China.

At the same time, Russia is also not fully satisfied. It wants India to choose between Russia or USA. In past, Russia was India's biggest arms exporter but recently Russia is losing this status to others including USA. Result of Russian dissatisfaction was evident soon after Lavrov visited Pakistan, and assured Pakistan of full Military exercises and hardware support. Though Russia is not same Economical Super power anymore but still it is a big Military Super power. Even today, more than 70 per of Indian Military hardware is of Russian origin. As such, India can't side-line Russia. At present Russia is playing second fiddle to China to the extent we can call Russia 'Junior China', for the simple reason that their common enemy is USA and for countering formidable USA, both need each other. Russia is a bridge between India & China at the same time Russia is a speed-breaker between India & USA.

Soon India will face another litmus test. Russia and Ukraine are on verge of war. USA has declared NATO forces will support Ukraine. In that scenario USA will expect India to stand by USA alongside other QUAD nations viz Japan and Australia. It will be very difficult for India to stay neutral as both Russia and USA will force India to take side. India siding Russia means India and China on same side opposite to USA. Supporting USA even symbolically means India ditching

Russia. Another event is going to poke both USA & Israel soon. India is going to make Chabahar port of Iran operational next month, which will not be good for Indo-US relationship.

Readers must understand personal rapport between Heads of two nations is missing. So far no one to one direct interaction between President Biden and PM Modi has taken place. It's clearly evident Trump - Modi personal rapport would have probably prevented USS John Paul Jones like issue. Incursion of 7th fleet destroyer in to Exclusive Economic Zone of India has created a big dilemma for India. Binding factor between India and USA is countering China militarily & economically. India definitely wants this but with our own conditions, in relation to independent foreign policy whereas USA wants India to follow it blindly. India wants status of partner whereas USA wants a blind follower. Now in my opinion three options are available, first follow USA for time being, go with flow and at the same time ascertain your wish whenever and wherever possible. China is a biggest threat - tackle it first. By annoying USA, India will be creating unnecessary adversary. Right now we just don't need another headache. Ignore issue of USS John Paul Jones and move on. Here, I would like to mention it's not first time USS carried out USS John Paul Jones like Freedom of Navigation Operation. It's been done many times earlier since 1985, but the difference is that earlier India and USA were not so close and also USA never used this exercise as tool of making statement.

Secondly, with the help of Russia start making good relations with China. Remember China and India are not born-enemies. India and China are having three major thorns in flesh, Border issue, unnecessary support to Pakistan and trade imbalance. If all these issues are taken care of, I don't observe any other friction points between India and China. If these issues are settled, Elephant and Dragon can definitely dance together. Third, India must go solo. Independently counter China, handle USA tactfully with arm's distance and create environment so that both super powers look towards us for support and cooperation. It is very hypothetical and can happen if India is an economical and military powerhouse in itself.

Worshipping Shakti in India

G L KHAJURIA

The Devi Purana has a very interesting and astonishing narration as how Sage Narad perplexing supplicated Lord of Lords the supreme Shiva, 'Oh Mahadev, yourself, Brahma and the Vishnu are unison the supreme trinity. But it is mystifying that all of you are in deep adoration.' He further asked Lord Mahadev to let him know about his deep meditation, which lasts for centuries and centuries together: Who then is above and superior in Shakti (Super Power). Smilingly, Mahadev said, "Muniraj, we adore and worship the Prashakti, the primordial." She is superb and supreme. She is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of all the worlds. 'The Shakti Goddess is one with varied manifestations or embodiments. She is knower of unknown, perceiver of unperceived and the controller of all times-The present, the past and the future. She is the Aditi, the mother of Gods. She is overflowing with love of mother to all and is benign enough to forgive even the erring. She protects, safeguards us against all oddities and squabbles.

Though formless, her manifestations come to the world as Mahashakti, Durga and Saraswati, in unison epitomise as Shri Mata Vaishno Devi. The worship of Shakti is a widespread cult in India. It is as old as human civilization and along with Shivism and Vaishnavism, constituting thereby one of the three principle divisions, though never with rigid demarcating line of Saguna worship viz worship of gods with attributes.

In prehistoric times, in the cities of Mohanjodaro and Harappa, Shakti worship was believed to be common. As per a Professor of Archeology, the numerous clay figurines of women suggest that some forms of worship of mother goddess in which their figurings played their prominent part in house hold shrines which was very much common in India during Indus Valley civilization.

In Vedic times, the mother goddess was being worshipped as Usha amongst Aryans. In Rig Veda as Srigayatri and in Yajur Veda

as Mahalakshmi and Durga in other Veda and Puranas. Mother Goddess has as well been signified as Uma and Umaivati in the Upanishads and other Puranas. In Agamas, she has been addressed and worshipped as Maha Kali, Tripura Sundri and Raj-rajeshwari.

As such, there is an unbroken tradition of Shakti worship as a mother goddess for unknown years in India. In this long tradition of Shakti worship in India two prominent aspects of godliness can be discerned, first, the fierce form which is most fearful and is propitiated, and the second most benign aspect of her love and benevolence.

The first on is, of course, most primitive and Tamasik are Rajasik personification of the Maa Shakti. Fear, of course, is predominantly related to emotion in the devotee. And in disrespect, the fear of natural climates, illness, poverty, ignorance and even death are apprehensive. Her frightening form is imagined with multihued heads and hands, carrying deadly weapons. She resides in secluded forests, cremation grounds and is worshipped to win favours for personal objectives. She is offered wine and sacrifice of living being such as goats, buffaloes, other animals and birds, to the extent of human beings.

The second being 'Sativik' form of Shakti which more sublime. And this concept is as a result of the project of Upanishadic thought, virtues and actions and under the shadow of mother sublimity, the devotee shed the fear of ferocity and attains great good of knowledge and wisdom. He feels utmostly affectionate towards Shakti. The goddess mother is found sited in lotus, gardens, beautiful lakes and other multihued surroundings of peace and tranquility. She is being worshipped with the sole objective realizing higher and higher reaches of consciousness of knowledge with offerings of flowers, milk and honey. She is Maha Saraswati object of Shakti, who present the aspirant with the ultimate reality, leads him to self-realisation. Shakti Hinduism or Shaktism or tantraism, the lat-

ter name is derived from the word tantra. The worship feminine form of divine power had taken a particular exclusivity. Here, the worship focuses exclusively on goddess so much so that the male aspect become secondary.

As per Hindu epics, myths and legends, 'In order to understand the idea of Shakti, and the part that this concept plays in Hinduism, one should start from fundamental idea of universal unity, which involves both a continuous division into pairs of opposites in conflict with one another and a continuous merger of these into a harmonious synthesis. The absolute splits into pairs of opposites, in conflict as well as incorporation with one another. The most common of these pairs is expressed by the opposites and complementary character of the two sexes'. On the parallel, and on the same level of worship of the supreme Tridev (Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva) stands female deity or female expression of the divine. In Hindu mythology, this is a fundamental and infinite aspect of the trinity, and it takes the shape of a woman par excellence, daughter of Himalaya (Parvati), spiritual means the one from mountains or Parvat.

As per a story, Kama, the god of love was sent to evoke Lord Shiva who was in deep meditation. After doing his all bits of tricks Kama fled and ultimately he arrowed the fore head of lord Shiva. The lord Shiva overwhelmingly infuriated and when opened the third eye, Kama was reduced to ashes. Mata Parvati understood the entire episode and so she planned to divert the Shiva's attention. She ascended the Himalayas and did an arduous penance of Shiva for thousands of years to win his favours, after which Bhagwan Shiva realised that she was worthy of becoming his wife.

As heat cannot be separated from fire, Shakti is inherent from Lord Shiva. Both are in unison and inseparable. So, the worship of Maa Durga, Parvati or Mahakali is ultimately the worship of Bhagwan Shiv. Shiv-Shakti is a combine super - power and the supreme.

circled Mohanji to stop his movement while security guard took out every item. The policemen were then re-inspecting his personal items with additional interrogation about their origin, purpose and why they were being carried. As I have travelled enough internationally, it would not difficult for me to recognise that it was not a standard check. No other passengers coming through the business class line were subjected to this.

What was even more embarrassing and infuriating was the sheer contempt and disregard for Mohanji as a human. It was the complete abuse and purposeful humiliation that shocked me the most. Until then, I hadn't witnessed an event like this, and instinctively, my blood began to boil at the outright injustice on display. Mohanji always carried a wallet in his bag that contained many important and sentimental items, pictures of his wife, family and masters like Sai Baba. These were being tossed one by one like playing cards into nearby trays as if it were a trash, right in front of his eyes. This was all under pretext of searching for 'explosives'. Not once did they ask him who he was or the purpose of his trip. As I looked more closely, I could see that Mohanji had followed all the usual security guidelines as he had already emptied his hand baggage of all electronic items, putting his laptop and chargers, including jacket he was wearing, hard drives, and connection cables on separate trays.

Mohanji left humiliated as the combination of the security guards, assault police officers, and handling of his belongings drew the attention of all the other passengers at the nearby security lines. For no reason, a large scene had been created, which was visible to all people passing through the security area. The whole event lasted approximately 45 minutes, and Mohanji was left in bewilderment, having just landed in Frankfurt after a 9-hours overnight flight.

As a final display of contempt, the security guard took Mohanji's empty water bottle (stainless steel), which he prefers to use instead of purchasing and throwing away plastic bottles. The contents were finished on the plane, but the security guard insisted there was water inside. Mohanji asked him to check the bottle, but security guard refused to give it back. Ignoring Mohanji completely, he passed the water bottle to another guard to be thrown into the bin. Even the other guard looked confused and visibly uncomfortable as clearly there was nothing in the bottle. With the security and police not finding any "Explosives", the trays scattered with items were thrown to us without any sign of an apology, recognition of the disruption it had caused to our travel or even an acknowledgement for the ordeal Mohanji endured for nothing.

I can only classify this as outright racial profiling. Nobody else was subject to this treatment, and not once did they ask Mohanji who he was.

It took us 20-30 minutes to repack the bag to ensure that no important items were missing. Unfortunately, I've since understood this is a common experience for people of coloured skin when they travel through Frankfurt Airport. Numerous horrific incidents of racial profiling exist on internet, and it's deeply worrying that if this can happen to a public figure like Mohanji, I dread to think what a person of lesser-known would be subjected to. Trying to ridicule this incident is cowardice. Not addressing it is escapism, and marginalising it as a one-off incident is a lack of responsibility. Everybody, regardless of colour of their skin, deserves to be treated with respect.

Christopher Greenwood @facebook

Choosing right career

VIJAY GARG

Choosing the right career can be difficult, but having a defined career direction will help you with getting a job. But with a little hard work, some planning, and some serious self-reflection, you can set yourself on a path towards a fruitful, fulfilling career that can provide for you and your family. Think about your dream career: There is an old saying that if you're trying to choose a career, you should think about what you would do if you didn't have to work. If you had a million dollars and you could do anything, what would you do? Your answer to that question, while maybe not literally the best career choice for you, may give you insight into what you should do. If you want to be a music star, consider going into audio engineering or music composition. These careers are easier to pursue and you will be much more likely to succeed and provide for yourself in the future. Assess your hobbies. It is very easy to turn your hobbies or something you love doing into a future career. Many hobbies correspond to real world needs and positions. Consider what you like to do and how that might fit into a career. Remain humble as you work toward your goal. You may want to work part-time as you get referrals and experience in your desired career. Consider what you enjoy or enjoyed in school. Academic subjects translate well into future careers but may require more schooling than other types of careers. Your favorite class in high school could very well launch you into your future career but you have to be willing to work for it. Think about what you are or were good at in school. Think about the subjects you excelled in school. Though it may not be your favorite thing to do, choosing a career based on something you are skilled at can help you excel and provide yourself a secure future. Consider what skills you excel in. If you are particularly good at certain skills, such as fixing things or making things, this can provide you with a great future career. Schooling may or may not be necessary, but skilled labor is often in demand and you will find it fairly easy to find work. Assess your interpersonal skills. If your skills lie more in helping and communicating with other people, there are jobs for you as well. People who communicate and interact with others well can easily get careers as social workers or in marketing and similar business positions.

Ask someone if you don't know. Sometimes it's hard for us to see the areas in life where we excel. If you don't think you're good at anything, ask your parents, other family members, friends, or teachers what they think you'd be good at. Their ideas might surprise you! Your friends and family can also help you network and get you in touch with people in your chosen field. You can also join a Meet Up to meet others that are involved with the others. Figuring out what you should do with your life may sometimes require you to get to know yourself better. If you want a career that will really make you happy, you have to have a very good understanding of what you want and what you enjoy. For some people, this means taking some time off to decide what's important to them. There is nothing wrong with this, so don't feel bad. It's more important that you figure your life out as early as possible, rather than getting knee deep in a career which makes you hate your life. Consider your financial situation. Your ability to pursue or change careers may hinge on your financial situation. Some career paths require special schooling and this is sometimes expensive. However, you should not feel that being poor restricts you from getting the education you want. There are lots of government programs to help you pay for schools, as well as scholarships, grants, and apprenticeship programmes. Think about the education you will have as you enter a career: It is important to consider what education you already have or will have as you begin pursuing a career. If finances may prevent you from pursuing more schooling, you may need to consider what you already have. It may also be necessary to stick with your existing high school or college degree if there are time limitations or other restrictions. If you find that you are limited to jobs relating to the degree you already have, consult with a career counselor to find out what options are available to you. Determine if you want to go to school. If restrictions do not bar you from pursuing more schooling, you may want to consider this option. Not everybody excels in school or needs a traditional college education, but most career paths have associated training which you can do and will help you advance more quickly. Do more research. If you're still confused, consider doing more research on this topic. You can find more helpful information here or consult with your adviser or college of choice. Examine your future financial security. One of the most important things to consider is if the career path you're choosing will provide you with an acceptable level of financial security. In other words, will you be able to make enough money to support yourself and your family? Do the math to figure out what your take-home salary needs to be. Take into account your health insurance and retirement options as well. You may want to see a financial advisor before making any decisions. Remember, this doesn't have to be a lot of money or enough money by somebody else's standards. All that matters is that it's enough for you and what you want for your life. Scrutinize your future job stability. Job markets fluctuate as society needs different things at different times. Certain jobs are also always in demand or frequently unstable. You will need to consider if the career you choose is stable enough for you and your desires for the future. Look at the Occupational Outlook Handbook. One way for you to gauge if a career option is a good idea is to look it up in the Occupational Outlook Handbook. This is a guide, compiled by the Bureau of Labour Statistics, which looks at what kind of education is required for different jobs, how much people in those careers make on average, and how much the demand for that job is likely to increase or decrease.

YOUR COLUMN

Reality of racial profiling

Dear Editor, Through your esteemed daily, I would like to share an incident which horrified me and presented a stark reality that even in 21st century there is racial discrimination. I was horrified to witness the reality of Racial Profiling at Frankfurt Airport. The sheer contempt that people of different coloured skin are subjected to under pretext of 'security' was something I had never experienced or witnessed until a few days ago. It's a wake-up call that this abuse of power and outright discrimination against race still exists, which should be ended. People deserve to be treated with respect, regardless of the colour of their skin or their background. A true transformation in mindsets of people is the need of the hour. I travelled from India to Slovenia with Mohanji, a world-respected humanitarian who has charitable activities across five continents, and the purpose of our trip was to visit his family in Slovenia besides attending his daughter's 10th birthday. When we arrived at Frankfurt airport in transit to Ljubljana (Slovenia), after passing through immigration, Mohanji proceeded to the security check via business class line, and I went via the economy line. I passed through security without any issue, and when I looked to see where Mohanji was, I witnessed that several security guards and police officers with weapons had circled him to stop his movement. As I got closer, I saw Mohanji in utter bewilderment as a security guard was completely ransacking his bag. The police officers had