



# **Aloneness and Emptiness**

## **The Cause of Inner Emptiness**

By Dr. Margaret Paul

**Inner Emptiness is never going to be filled by people, things, or activities. Discover the cause of inner emptiness and learn how to fill yourself from within.**

Our society is filled with addictive ways to externally fill up inner emptiness. TV commercials are constantly playing to the millions of people who are forever trying to fill the empty place within. Sugared and processed foods, clothing, cars, new homes, gadgets, plastic surgery, cosmetics, drugs, vacations or the right relationship - all these commercials show people looking happy and fulfilled as a result of buying the advertised product.

Yet it is not the lack of any of these things that cause inner emptiness.

Inner emptiness is caused by only two things: a lack of connection with your own feelings and inner experience, and a lack of connection with a spiritual Source of love and guidance. Both must be present for fullness of being.

Some people on a spiritual path feel deeply connected with their Source, yet remain disconnected from their own feelings - their own Inner Child. Connecting with Spirit is not enough to feel a wonderful fullness of being - connection with your feelings is vital.

When your intent is to avoid pain, you can even use your spiritual connection as a means of avoiding pain. This is called a spiritual bypass, because you are attempting to avoid your shadow side and go right to the light. This would be like going into a room and meditating while your actual child is crying in pain. There is no way that this would be a loving action.

When you are unwilling to feel the deep existential feelings of loneliness, heartbreak, and helplessness over others, you may do many things to not feel them - stay in your head, numb out, use substance and process addictions, as well as shaming and blaming. All of these addictive behaviors are ways of abandoning your Inner Child - your feeling self. Of course you will feel empty when you refuse to feel your inner experience.

When you are willing to feel your core-self feelings - of sorrow, loneliness, heartbreak, grief and helplessness over others - and learn

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to name them, be with them with compassion, learn from them, and finally release them to Spirit, rather than avoid them, you will then also feel the core self feelings of love, peace, joy, passion, and aliveness. It is experiencing these wonderful core feelings that gives us the feeling of fullness within, but we will not feel the wonderful feelings without also being willing to feel the painful ones.

In addition, you need to be willing to feel the wounded-self feelings of fear, anger, anxiety, depression, guilt, shame, aloneness, emptiness, jealousy, envy, etc., and open to learning about what you may be doing or telling yourself that is creating them, in order to discover the core feelings that you may be avoiding. The wounded feelings are always being created by the protective, controlling, addictive behaviors we engage in to avoid the painful, existential core feelings.

While our society wants us to believe that looking right and having the right things, so that we can get approval or get the right relationship, will finally fulfill us, it is obvious that this is not the case. We all know of famous people who look right, have all the right things and tons of approval and are still anxious and empty. There is no way around doing your inner work and learning to connect with Self and Guidance, if you want to feel full within.

If you spend a lot of time feeling empty, why not start today with practicing Step One of Inner Bonding - staying tuned in to your feelings? It is only by consistently practicing Step One that you will be able to move through the other Steps and discover the fullness of being that is your birthright.

### **What Fills Inner Emptiness?**

By Dr. Margaret Paul

**You can be a giving and caring person, even a spiritually connected person, yet still be feeling inwardly empty.**

Samantha is a very giving person. She gives to her family and friends. She volunteers at a local hospital and helps build homes for low-income families. She is a spiritual person who prays daily. Yet Samantha has a big empty space inside her, a black hole of sadness that nothing seems to fill. How can this be? She is doing everything

right - doing service, praying and trying in many ways to be a good person - so what's wrong?

The problem is that Samantha does not take care of herself. She works too hard, forgets to eat and eats junk food, doesn't play enough, and says yes when she really means no. She continually abandons herself while she is so busy caring for others.

Samantha has never learned that she must bring love, not just to the level of her heart and then out to others, but to the level of her own feelings - her inner child. She thinks that by giving love to others, she will get love in return, and wonders why she still feels so empty inside.

The only one who can begin to fill that emptiness within her is Samantha, and that occurs only when Samantha cares about herself - her own feelings and needs - at least as much as she cares about others. However, Samantha was taught that it's selfish to take care of herself - that she's loving only if she takes care of others. She was taught that she will feel fulfilled within when she gives to others- that others will give back to her and fill up the emptiness within.

It doesn't work that way.

When we are not filling ourselves by attending to our own feelings, needs and wellbeing, we will feel empty and alone inside. When we are not asking a higher source of guidance throughout the day what is loving to ourselves - what is in our highest good - and taking loving action in our own behalf, we will be empty within, no matter how much we do for others and no matter how much others do for us. We are the only ones, in connection with a spiritual source of love, who can fill up the inner emptiness.

Samantha is confused about the difference between selfishness and self-responsibility. She is actually being selfish by not taking care of herself, because others are constantly worrying about her.

When we don't take on the responsibility of our own wellbeing, we will automatically pull on others energetically, to fill the hole within us. An empty place within is like a vacuum, sucking energy from others when we are not bringing love to ourselves. Others may try to give to us, but it's a bottomless pit when we are not filling ourselves by taking loving care of our own feelings and needs.

I spent some time with Samantha when we worked together on a volunteer project. I could feel her sadness and inner aloneness the whole time I was with her and my heart broke for her. Here she is, a wonderful, giving woman who has spent her life in service, only to end up with a bottomless pit of sadness within. It was like watching child abuse, only the child who is being abused is her own inner child.

I hope that Samantha will someday open herself to practicing Inner Bonding, discovering the beauty of who she is, and deciding to care for herself in the same way she has always cared for others. I hope she learns to bring the spiritual love that she is connected with, down to the level of her own feelings first, before giving it out to others. Actually, Samantha needs to learn to do this to save her own life, because it is evident to me that she is getting more and more depleted by giving to others, while not receiving from Spirit and others the energy and love she needs. Until she is giving to herself, she does not even know when she is being given to by others. Until she loves herself, she will not feel the love of others. Others' love is fulfilling only when we are also loving ourselves.

## **The Heart of Healing**

By Dr. Margaret Paul

**There is ONE vital choice you can make that leads to healing rather than to suffering.**

I have spent many years trying to discover the ONE thing - the one vital choice - that leads to healing and joy, or to suffering, emptiness and aloneness.

Over 35 years ago, I discovered an essential piece of the puzzle: that we each have only one of two intents at any given moment - to protect against pain and against taking responsibility for it, or to open to learning from our pain and taking responsibility for it. In other words - to learn from our pain, or to run from it.

I discovered the next vital piece almost 26 years ago, after working as a traditional psychotherapist for 17 years, and not being happy with the results. I discovered that there is no true healing without connection with a personal source of spiritual guidance. The mind cannot heal itself.

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Many people in our world are spiritually off-course, having become convinced that they cannot access Spirit directly - that they have to go through a priest or a minister to get to God. But we can only really manage the pain of life - loss of loved ones, rejection, abuse, violations, loss of limb, illness - with a direct experience of Spirit, with the compassion, wisdom and strength that comes only from Spirit. When we do not know how to have this direct connection, then our only choice is to run from pain.

And run we do - with all of our addictions - to substances, processes and activities, and to anger, blaming, withdrawal, resistance, self-judgment and judgment of others. We learn to disconnect from our feelings and stay in our head, completely out of touch with the vital messages that our feelings - our inner guidance system - are giving to us. And all of our ways of avoiding pain create our aloneness and emptiness.

### **Pain is a Fact of Life - Suffering is a Choice**

When you close your heart to protect yourself from feeling the pain of life, you create suffering. When you judge yourself, you create suffering. When you turn to addictions, you create suffering. When you shut down, you create suffering.

The question is: What IS the pain we work so hard to avoid?

Loneliness. Heartache. Heartbreak. Grief. Helplessness over others and events. These are some of the core painful feelings - the existential feelings of life - that we work so hard to avoid feeling.

As small children, we could not handle these feelings, so we learned to protect against them. However, all our protections and addictions actually inflict a different kind of pain on ourselves and cause pain in others - creating a cycle of suffering.

The centuries of disconnection from Spirit created the fear of core painful feelings - as we had no way to handle them. We learned to protect against them, thus perpetrating suffering on our children, who then also learned to protect against the loneliness and heartbreak of childhood.

The final piece of the puzzle of healing, the heart of healing, the ONE vital choice that leads to healing and joy - is our willingness to learn to

manage our core painful feelings in a loving way, so that we don't need to avoid them with our addictions.

## **The Heart of Healing**

Someone yells at you. Someone judges you. Someone rejects you. Someone tries to use you. Someone violates you, betrays you, invades you, blames you, shuts you out.

What do you do?

If you are like most people, you get reactive - judging, blaming, complying, resisting, withdrawing.

You experience loss - loss of a loved one, loss of money, loss of limb, loss of health, loss of respect, loss of a job.

What do you do?

If you are like most people, you turn to food, alcohol, drugs, TV, video games, gambling, spending, sex, anger, blame, judgment, withdrawal.

What else can you do?

You can open to the core painful feelings - feeling shattered, crushed, broken hearted, deeply lonely. You can acknowledge these authentic feelings, open to your spiritual Guidance and bring in deep caring, compassion, tenderness and gentleness to yourself. With the help of Spirit, you CAN manage these feelings. And by opening to them, you allow them to move through you, rather than getting stuck in your body. By opening to them, you do feel the pain, but you do not cause additional suffering by avoiding the pain with your addictions. By opening to your feelings, you also open to learning about what information they are giving you, and what loving actions to take in your own behalf. Learning to do this will change everything in your life.

This is the heart of healing.