

Alone vs Lonely.

As the man sat, reflecting on his self-imposed exile from communicating with the people he knew, even though it was temporary, he was content. Content because he had, again, taken control of his life.

Over the past year, he had been through several medical procedures, and, while they had all turned out well, they were worrisome because his body seemed to be wearing out. He acknowledged routinely pushing his body to its physical limits over the course of his life, but he hadn't anticipated, nor had it occurred to him, that his body might wear down and even malfunction. He had managed to get his sight restored to near-perfect, and the pain in various parts of his body was also under control, so he went forward with renewed optimism.

He sat, accepting the calm gulf between those he knew and who knew him, which created the island he alone now occupied.

He wanted a friend like himself, and he smiled because he already had that. Removing himself from everyone and everything he had ever known literally only left him with himself. It's what he wanted and what he now had.

When he got what he wanted, the man was stunned to learn how much he loved the quiet and being alone. At first, he felt guilty because all his life, he had learned about love from family, church, and society. He learned about socializing, and that human contact was the reason we were here. But that entire rationale for life had never been his experience. Instead, he learned, after loving several people, that he had given them the means to break him, and they took full advantage of their opportunities. There were other times when he experienced love and care, for sure, and he had loved and been loved without negativity. Sometimes the man used all his willpower, concentration, and dedication to gain acceptance into what society defined as

mainstream, but his attempts were useless. His experiences were that he either didn't know or wouldn't accept the rules, which made him an interloper.

From birth to now, the person who loved, cared for, and never left him was him. He knew he would even die to protect himself.

Now, sitting alone on his self-made island, he was able to live his life as only he knew how. How did he know? He knew because of how he had felt when he was treated badly and from the times he was treated well. He also knew from having treated others badly and well. Yes, there were times when he, the man, had been unkind to himself and others. He remembered those times and added the knowledge he gained from them, plus his other mistakes, to the recipe for his behavior. He added intelligence honed by experience, dollops of manners, empathy, sympathy, and double dollops of creativity. He also added pinches of his natural enthusiasm and optimism as spice for his character. He decided he no longer wanted to even try to belong to anything outside himself; he only wanted to be the best version of himself. The man smiled broadly because he was, finally, content.

Now he would continue having his friends, not because he needed them, but because he wanted them in his life.

Written by Peter Skeels © 5-18-2026