Loneliness is Good.

The man had been thinking about the extraordinary life he had lived. For a reason he could never prove, he had learned that he didn't know the fears he had so often seen in others. Fear of the unknown, fear of being alone, and fear in general. That changed once he had two children, but the fear he felt then wasn't for himself; rather, it was for his children's safety. The man quickly learned to manage that fear, so while he still felt fear, he knew how to deal with it rationally. Years went by, then a decade and then three, and he learned many new and exciting aspects of life. These new aspects of life didn't include his children, however. He tried to include them, but for reasons he hadn't known, they weren't interested in being included.

The man refused to be a victim of anything, including his own mistakes, and he used his knowledge and compassion to resolve conflicts within himself. Once he learned he couldn't change his past or keep every relationship with people close to him intact, he decided his friendships must allow others to live without him if that is their choice.

Looking within, he then decided to explore and discover loneliness for himself.

The man thought, "Loneliness is an awkward emotion to want, and an emotion most people go to great lengths to avoid."

How did the man know this? Because he had gone to great lengths to avoid loneliness himself. But now he decided to strip himself of artificial needs until he was emotionally naked. His friends would never know, of course, as the man had great experience at only showing what he wanted others to see. The man believed that while people cared, they forgot quickly. Again, he didn't hold that against them; it was just further proof he was already alone.

As he began to let go of the emotions and the coping mechanisms he had used all of his life to avoid loneliness, he noticed that feeling alone wasn't bad at all, and, in fact, he liked it. He came

to understand that the stigma of loneliness, as defined by society, was inaccurate. Loneliness was usually associated with unhappiness, whether because of living remotely or simply not having friends. Loneliness became the opposite of what one should ever strive for.

However, as the man strove for his loneliness, it seemed as if he was destined to experience it. It began to snow, which cut off his access to others and vice versa. He stopped answering his few telephone calls as he delved deeper into this new experience. The man and his world quickly went silent. He could hear himself wondering how his friends were doing, but he ignored that. As he sat and endured the feelings he was going through- depression, loneliness, fear, and anxiety- he was certain these were not real emotions. The man ignored them all and every impulse that wanted to shield him from loneliness until, unexpectedly, he was engulfed by the feeling of being alone. At that moment, an icy fear settled in his gut that paralyzed him.

He said aloud to himself, "What if, by crossing the line into loneliness, I find I can't come back? What if I am stuck in loneliness?" It was a question he had asked himself about other lines he had been about to cross; some he crossed, but others he didn't. The icy fear soon relented, and he crossed over the line.

To his surprise, he felt fine. He felt as if the emotional bonds that led him to fear loneliness had loosened and fallen away. The man embraced this moment as he had the births of his children and the greatest joys of his life. Loneliness gave him freedom of thought and action, without responsibility for anything other than himself.

The emotional bonds of a lifetime did not vanish right away; rather, he needed to assuage them with kind, rational words until they stopped seeking the pleasures used to avoid his fear of loneliness.

The man thought to himself, “Acquiring loneliness as an attribute means two things: I have uncovered another truth, and another fear has been overcome.” His thoughts continued, and he heard himself say, “I don’t want to stay like this always. But now I can come here, without fear, if I need to. Loneliness as an attribute is a great strength to possess.”

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