

The Power of Being Alone

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Abstract

The role of imaging in assessment of patients presenting with acutely painful hernias is unclear to date. Traditionally, patients presenting acutely to the Emergency Department (ED) with painful incarcerated hernias are operated on after the initial clinical assessment and imaging is rarely warranted in the work-up. We present three cases of hernias presenting with clinical features of incarceration. Two underwent cross-sectional imaging which showed diverticulitis of the sigmoid colon within the sac without vascular compromise or obstruction, and were managed conservatively during the initial hospital visit then operated on electively for hernia repair with good outcomes. The third patient proceeded to surgery after imaging and was found to have an inflamed sigmoid colon which was inadvertently entered during surgery, resulting in a laparotomy and Hartmann's procedure. These cases suggest that perhaps there is a role for imaging in the assessment of acutely painful hernias suspected to be incarcerated, and patients with suspected incarcerated hernia may benefit from cross-sectional imaging to avoid potentially difficult operations in the acute stage or minimize complications.

Keywords: diverticulitis; hernia; incarcerated hernia; cross-sectional imaging

To be alone does not mean to be lonely. Usually, loneliness and solitude are two words that are often interchanged even though their meaning and their emotional impact is completely different and diametrically opposed.

Loneliness is a passive condition and implies suffering. It is common to associate loneliness with remote places, but this is incorrect, the sense of feeling lonely, alone, is even more often in overcrowded cities than in tiny towns. As cities grow and get crowded, we are dealing with more loneliness. Loneliness carries to anxiety and depression.

Solitude on the other hand implies the act of being with oneself, it is a sign of emotional health. Solitude is an active decision; it is a choice we make. We should all try to cultivate solicitude; we would really benefit if we were able to be available for ourselves. Neuroscientists have proven that it improves creativity and therefor allows us to make better decisions.

Humans are social animals. We need and enjoy being around others, we develop in a group. We have learned that we face and survive difficulties better in communities, we need to mix solitude with social interaction. Time for ourselves, and time with others. To get this balance is essential for our wellbeing.

Personally, I am constantly balancing from being a solitary introvert and a sociable person. I love being alone and sometimes I really love being surrounded with significant people. The line between the two, for me, is extremely fine. It depends on my sense of humor and on my circumstances.

Sometimes being by myself seems enriching and sometimes makes me feel isolated. According to these definitions I have just made, when I enjoy being alone, the state would be called solitude, when I dislike it, when I do not choose it, that is loneliness.

Being social in social media

The occidental culture values extroversion. Encourages us to develop that side of ourselves to the extremes that make us feel inappropriate if we do not have a million friends. This culture rejects the ability to be alone and does not embrace solitude as much as the Asian culture does.

We all feel lonely at times. Our digital lifestyles promote isolation. We are replacing in person connections with online ones. Sometimes while we are scrolling on social platforms, we get the sense of belonging, others, the same platform makes us feel more inadequate. Why? Well, maybe because our life might not be as fun or nice as others on social media... We forget that social media is just personal marketing and not always completely true.

The power of being alone

To be deliberately alone does not mean to be lonely and in fact if we are able to find solitude in the being alone, we can benefit enormously. In solitude we can discover our own feelings, fears, desires, aspirations. To spend time alone allows us to recharge energies. Try it and you will enjoy the benefits.



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