



OVERCOMING LONELINESS AND DEPRESSION

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WHAT, IF ANYTHING, WITHIN
THE EXPERIENCE OF
DEPRESSION OR LONELINESS
NEEDS TO BE OVERCOME?

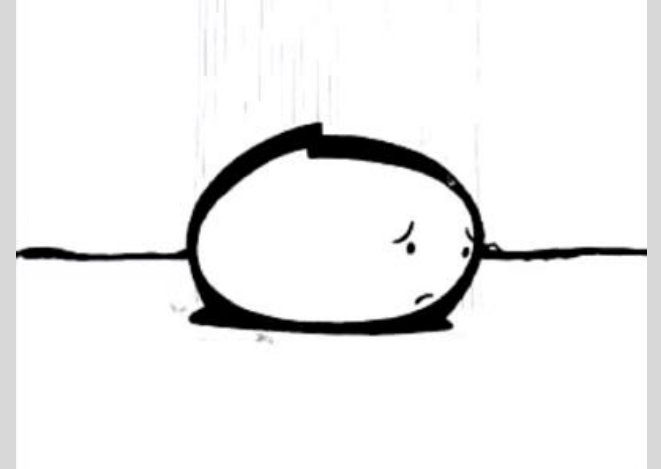
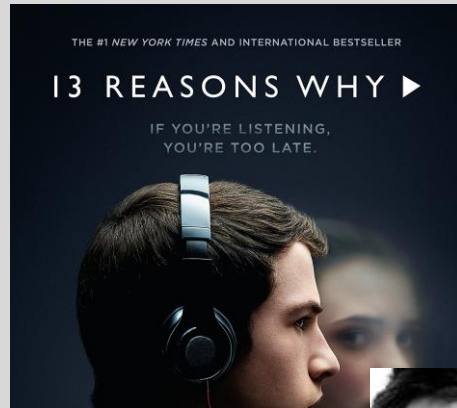
Presentation Outline

- Understanding Depression
- Understanding Loneliness
- What Needs to Be Overcome?
- Overcoming Depression and Loneliness



UNDERSTANDING DEPRESSION

"Depression" in Popular Culture



Psychological Understanding of Depression

- Major Depressive Disorder
- Other Depressive Disorders:
 - MDD with peripartum onset (Post-Partum Depression)
 - MDD with season Pattern (Seasonal Affective Disorder)
 - Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder
 - Persistent Depressive Disorder (Dysthymia)
 - Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder
 - Substance/Medication-Induced Depressive Disorder
 - Depressive Disorder Due to Another Medical Condition



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Psychological Understanding of Depression (cont.)

- Other Psychiatric Disorders:
 - Bipolar I
 - Bipolar II
 - Cyclothymic Disorder (Cyclothymia)
 - Schizoaffective Disorder
- Depression Mimics
 - Alzheimer's Disease (and other Neurocognitive Diseases)
 - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
 - Traumatic Brain Injury
 - Personality Disorders
 - Hypothyroidism
 - Vitamin D Deficiency
 - Diabetes



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Diagnosing Major Depressive Disorder

- Depressed Mood and/or Anhedonia
- Physical and Psychological Symptoms:
 - Changes in weight and/or appetite
 - Changes in sleep
 - Fatigue or loss of energy
 - Restlessness and/or lethargy
 - Difficulty concentrating
 - Feelings of worthlessness or excessive/inappropriate guilt
 - Thoughts of death and/or suicide
- Symptoms cause significant distress or impairment in functioning
- Symptoms last at least 2 weeks



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Depression in the U.S.

- 4.7% of adults report regular feelings of depression (Clarke, Schiller, & Boersma, 2019)
- 9.3% of physician office visits included an indication of depression (Rui, 2016)
- 11.2% of emergency department visits included an indication of depression
- In 2018, over 48,000 people died from suicide (10th leading cause of death), highest rate recorded in 28 years
- In 2019, estimated 12 million adults had serious thoughts of suicide

Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/depression.htm> and <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/suicide.shtml>

Mental Illness in the U.S.

- More than 50% will be diagnosed with a mental illness in their lifetime
- 20% will experience a mental illness each year
- 20% of children, either currently or will at some point, have a seriously debilitating mental illness
- 4% live with a serious mental illness, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or major depressive disorder



UNDERSTANDING LONELINESS

Loneliness in the U.S.

- 35% of older adults (45+) reported significant loneliness (Wilson & Moulton, 2010)
- Health risks of loneliness (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2020)
 - Increased risk of premature death
 - 50% increased risk of dementia
 - 29% increased risk of heart disease
 - 32% increased risk of stroke
 - Higher rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide
- Higher prevalence of loneliness among:
 - Older adults
 - Immigrants
 - LGBTQ populations
 - Ethnic minorities
 - Victims of elder abuse



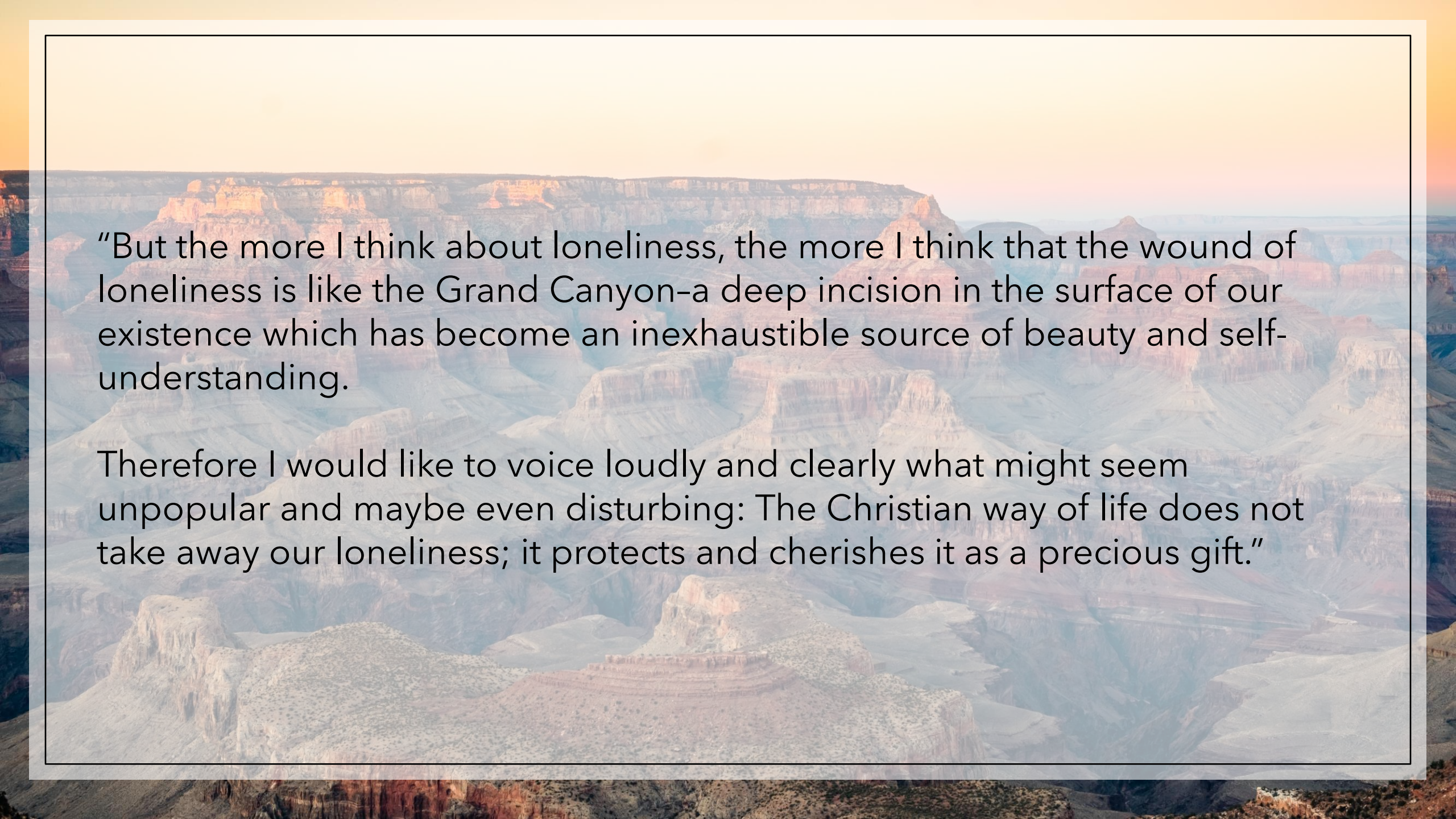
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Understanding Loneliness

- Alone does not necessarily equal loneliness
- Potential underlying causes:
 - Isolation
 - Feeling misunderstood
 - Feeling overlooked
 - Carrying a burden alone
 - Lack of intimacy in relationships

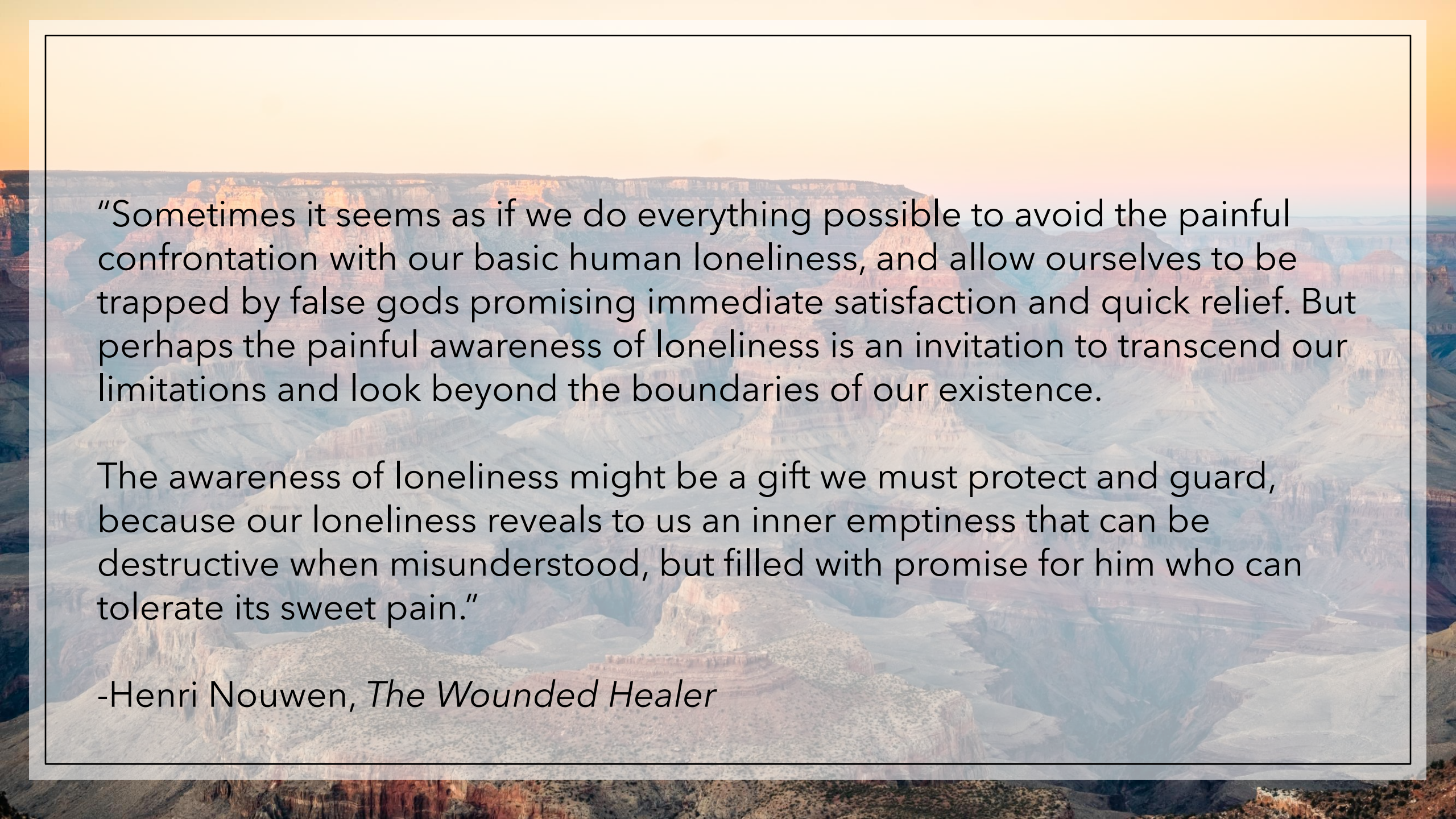


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"But the more I think about loneliness, the more I think that the wound of loneliness is like the Grand Canyon—a deep incision in the surface of our existence which has become an inexhaustible source of beauty and self-understanding.

Therefore I would like to voice loudly and clearly what might seem unpopular and maybe even disturbing: The Christian way of life does not take away our loneliness; it protects and cherishes it as a precious gift."



"Sometimes it seems as if we do everything possible to avoid the painful confrontation with our basic human loneliness, and allow ourselves to be trapped by false gods promising immediate satisfaction and quick relief. But perhaps the painful awareness of loneliness is an invitation to transcend our limitations and look beyond the boundaries of our existence.

The awareness of loneliness might be a gift we must protect and guard, because our loneliness reveals to us an inner emptiness that can be destructive when misunderstood, but filled with promise for him who can tolerate its sweet pain."

-Henri Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer*

What May Not Need to Be Overcome

- Sacredness of the Individual Experience
 - "I know how you feel"
- Natural Discomfort
 - "It's not that bad. Other people have it worse."
- The "Speed of Life"
 - "Why aren't you over it yet?"
- Grief
 - "Think of all the positive things."
- Answering Life's Difficult Questions
 - "There is a reason why this happened."



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WHAT CAN BE
OVERCOME

Depression: What Can Be Overcome

- Self-Condernation
 - Self-kindness
- Distress
 - Psychotherapy
 - Community
 - Medication
 - Mindfulness meditation
- Functioning
 - Behavioral activation
 - Exercise
 - Diet
 - Sleep hygiene

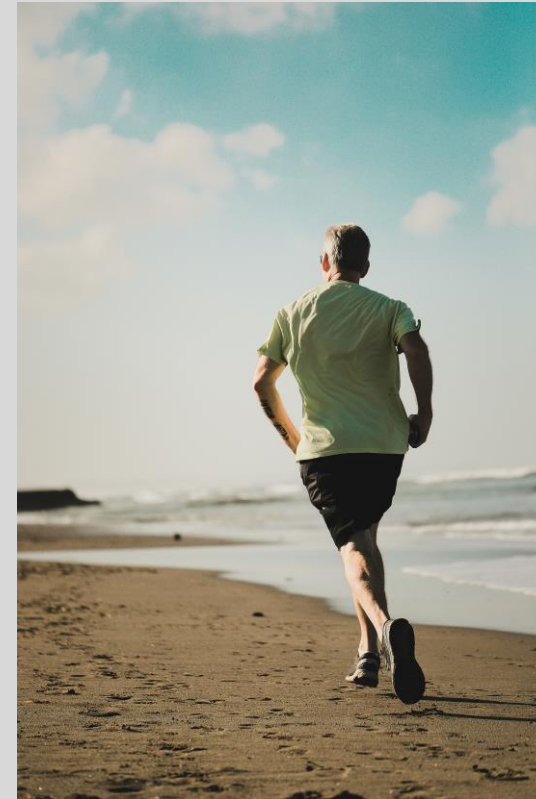


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Loneliness: What Can Be Overcome

- Isolation
 - Schedule it
- Feeling Misunderstood
 - Don't let misunderstandings stand
- Feeling Overlooked
 - Assert your needs
- Carrying Your Burden Alone
 - Reach out
- Lack of Intimacy
 - Sharing vulnerably

**VULNERABILITY is not
winning or losing. It's having the
courage to show up when you
can't control the outcome.**

Brené Brown

Hello Lovely Studio

References

Clarke, T., Schiller, J., & Boersma, P. (2020). *Early Release of Selected Estimates Based on Data from the 2019 National Health Interview Survey*. Washington, DC: Division of Health Interview Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics.

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QUESTIONS?

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