



# Loneliness: Human Nature and the Need for Social Connection

By John T. Cacioppo, William Patrick



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**“One of the most important books about the human condition to appear in a decade.”**?Daniel Gilbert, author of *Stumbling on Happiness*

University of Chicago social neuroscientist John T. Cacioppo unveils his pioneering research on the startling effects of loneliness: a sense of isolation or social rejection disrupts not only our thinking abilities and will power but also our immune systems, and can be as damaging as obesity or smoking. A blend of biological and social science, this book demonstrates that, as individuals and as a society, we have everything to gain, and everything to lose, in how well or how poorly we manage our need for social bonds.12 illustrations

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Eleanor Rigby might have been in worse shape than the Beatles imagined: not only lonely but angry, depressed and in ill health. University of Chicago research psychologist Cacioppo shows in studies that loneliness can be harmful to our overall well-being. Loneliness, he says, impairs the ability to feel trust and affection, and people who lack emotional intimacy are less able to exercise good judgment in socially ambiguous situations; this makes them more vulnerable to bullying as children and exploitation by unscrupulous salespeople in old age. But Cacioppo and Patrick (editor of the *Journal of Life Sciences*) want primarily to apply evolutionary psychology to explain how our brains have become hard-wired to have regular contact with others to aid survival. So intense is the need to connect, say the authors, that isolated individuals sometimes form parasocial relations with pets or TV characters. The authors' advice for dealing with loneliness—psychotherapy, positive thinking, random acts of kindness—are overly general, but this isn't a self-help book. It does present a solid scientific look at the physical and emotional impact of loneliness. 12 illus. (Aug. 25)

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Review

“Superb.” (Library Journal)

“A magnificent exposé.” (Frans de Waal)

“Wise, beautifully written, and often funny . . . a tour-de-force.” (Shelley E. Taylor, professor of psychology, University of California, Los Angeles)

### About the Author

John T. Cacioppo is the Tiffany and Margaret Blake Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago and president of the Association for Psychological Science. He lives in Chicago, Illinois.

William Patrick, former editor for science and medicine at Harvard University Press, is editor in chief of the *Journal of Life Sciences*. He lives in Ipswich, Massachusetts.

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**William Meadows:**

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**Sandra Byrom:**

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