

# Loneliness is NOT an Option

*You are not alone*

Mary Helen  
Conroy

Life's a Daring Adventure  
and you're not done yet!

[lifesadaringadventure.com](http://lifesadaringadventure.com)

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alone*



# *Mary Helen Conroy*

**HI THERE!**

Mary Helen Conroy is a life coach, speaker, workshop facilitator, and change strategist working with clients and organizations to share that, "Life is a Daring Adventure, and they're not done yet!"



LET'S STAY IN TOUCH

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*Your thoughts*

**How would you describe being lonely?**

**3 times you've been  
lonely before?**



**What did you learn about  
loneliness then?**



# Loneliness is NOT an Option

I'm thrilled that I can share with you some thoughts I've been having on this issue of Loneliness is NOT an Option. We'll look at what loneliness is, we'll have a look at how my bathroom décor might assist you in realizing you have simple ways to believe Loneliness is **not** an option and I'll provide 10 tips for staying connected during this "Safer When You're Home" time.

I wanted to do this because I was realizing that the world was becoming a lonely place for folks.

I was seeing that one out of five of us is lonely and of that 71% are millennials, 50% boomers.

I was seeing the suicide rate for veterans that retired skyrocket to 1 per hour. We have lost more Vets through suicide than Nam.

I know that census data shows that more than one-quarter of U.S. households consist of one person, as marriage rates fall and the number of children per household declines.



# Loneliness is NOT an Option

I heard the terrifying figures that loneliness was the new smoking and that being wrapped in loneliness was like smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Loneliness is bad for the blood pressure; it creates brain fog and sleep and digestive issues.

**And that was before the  
Loneliness Epidemic  
isolated us all.**

Words make all the difference, don't they? One thing I wish we had done was not name this isolation "Social Distancing". It's really "Physical Distancing" for we have a great capacity today to remain connected, to remain social, even within our four walls.

I don't know about you, but I wish I had hugged people a little bit longer and tighter last month. If you're isolating with someone right now, hug them long and hard. If you're alone, give yourself a long long hug for all the people who wished they could.



# Loneliness is NOT an Option

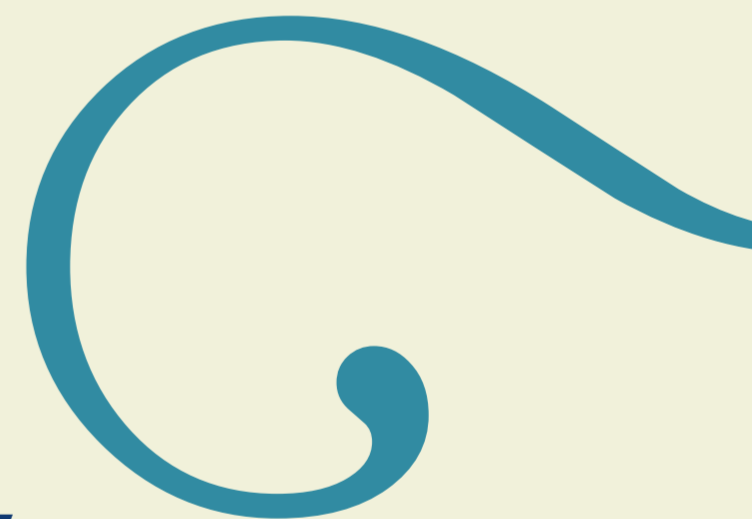
Just being alone, or isolated, doesn't mean we are lonely. Being alone and being lonely aren't the same. Loneliness feels draining, distracting, and upsetting; whereas desired alone time, having solitude can feel peaceful, creative, restorative.

I have a big disclaimer here. Loneliness and its medical partner depression can be serious. Please know I give these ideas for coping with the situational loneliness we're finding ourselves in.

Please if your loneliness is overwhelming, make a phone call to a hot line, make sure your prescription is up to date and handle your loneliness with all the tools and people you have at your disposal. Hopefully some of these ideas might help as well.

**So, back to loneliness,  
what are we talking about today.**

I'm seeing loneliness as a subjective feeling. Let's think about that a moment. A subjective feeling. It's our perception, our thought, our idea that we're out of connection. Marcia is lonely, Bill is lonely, I am lonely. We each define and feel that differently. It's a feeling. An emotional state which we can choose.



# Loneliness is NOT an Option

Close your eyes for a moment. When was the last time you were lonely? Was it just before you found this e-book? Are you missing your work friends, your family is across country, your dog just died?

How is your loneliness soaking into your body? How do you feel? Did your head just lower, did you get tense. We feel loneliness down to our bones.



## **Now, Shake it off!**

Physically shake your hands and your head. Shake off that loneliness you just created in your mind.

Now let's close your eyes again. Think about the last time you were truly happy/or connected in a group.

Was it a birthday party, a vacation, a wine and giggles night with a friend? Surround yourself with that feeling of joy that comes from people who know your name, people who are excited that you entered the room, people that hug and care for you. How does that feel?

Wow, I'm getting all warm and cuddly just thinking about that. For me, I see myself with my two sisters having what we called our "Last Supper".

# Loneliness is NOT an Option

It was March 16th, the last day Bonefish Grill was open and were they ever excited to see us walk in. I can hear Marge and Nor's laughter, I can see their smiles, I feel the joy of our being connected. Did you feel that just a little when you remembered being connected?

Now do you want to shake that feeling off.... not so much.

Hold that feeling, wrap yourself in it. Call it back to you whenever the days ahead pull you down. That's what I mean about a choice for choosing your emotion.

I can choose to be under my lonely hat, or I can peek out from under it and choose to feel connected.

So maybe you remember what I said would be my second point, how my bathroom décor impacts my handling loneliness.

Maybe it was hearing Gayle King say that she lives alone and every morning when she enters her bathroom she looks at the mirror and says, "Good morning beautiful, talented, perfect Gayle".





# Loneliness is NOT an Option

So I looked in my bathroom and discovered that all I knew to help us through our Physical Distancing and our sense of isolation, our feeling of loneliness could be thought about with things in my bathroom.

## A picture of my family.

Yes, I'm blessed. Each day I say "Hello Family, I love you" to the picture. I'm grateful we are one and I feel that they too send back their love to me. Seeing the picture helps me to remember that I'm not alone. I am part of something that is bigger. That I do have folks that think I matter to them.



# Loneliness is NOT an Option

So, what's the picture in your world that can help you feel this way. Perhaps taking just a minute or two each day and looking through your camera photos might be just the thing. Maybe take out that box of pictures you have and start putting them in albums or dividing them up in some way. Take time to remember connections--past and present.

We're so lucky to have video technology to see each other. There's nothing like seeing your friends or coworkers faces to make you smile.

In times of crisis it is important to maintain normalcy wherever we can. If your weekly after-work drinks with your colleagues is no longer possible, get on a facetime call and have the get-together virtually (with or without the drinking).

My partner and I had a Zoom dinner party last weekend. We invited some favorite friends, sat down at our individual tables in front of our computers, exchanged recipes and had a blast.

No cleaning the house either.



# Loneliness is NOT an Option

**Let's be neighborly again.**

Check in on people who live alone. On one of the blocks I lived in we did a survey and discovered that out of the 90 people, 35 were folks living alone.

Go through your address book and make a list of people who live alone or who might need support and use text/email/phone to check in and have a chat with them. Make a care package for a neighbor, ring the door bell and wave at them.

Start some "Isolation conversations" with colored pieces of paper. Pass out 3 color pieces of paper for their window which faces your window/street. Green is for I'm OK, yellow for need help with an errand, and red for emergency. It's called Isolation Communication.



# Loneliness is NOT an Option

**It's time to have meaningful conversations.**

Now that you have a little time on your hands, we can spend more time talking, really talking to those we love.

Rather than, "Ya, I'm good" you might ask, "so what do you see outside your window"? "What are you most worried about"? "What made you laugh today"? Really listen and connect with folks.

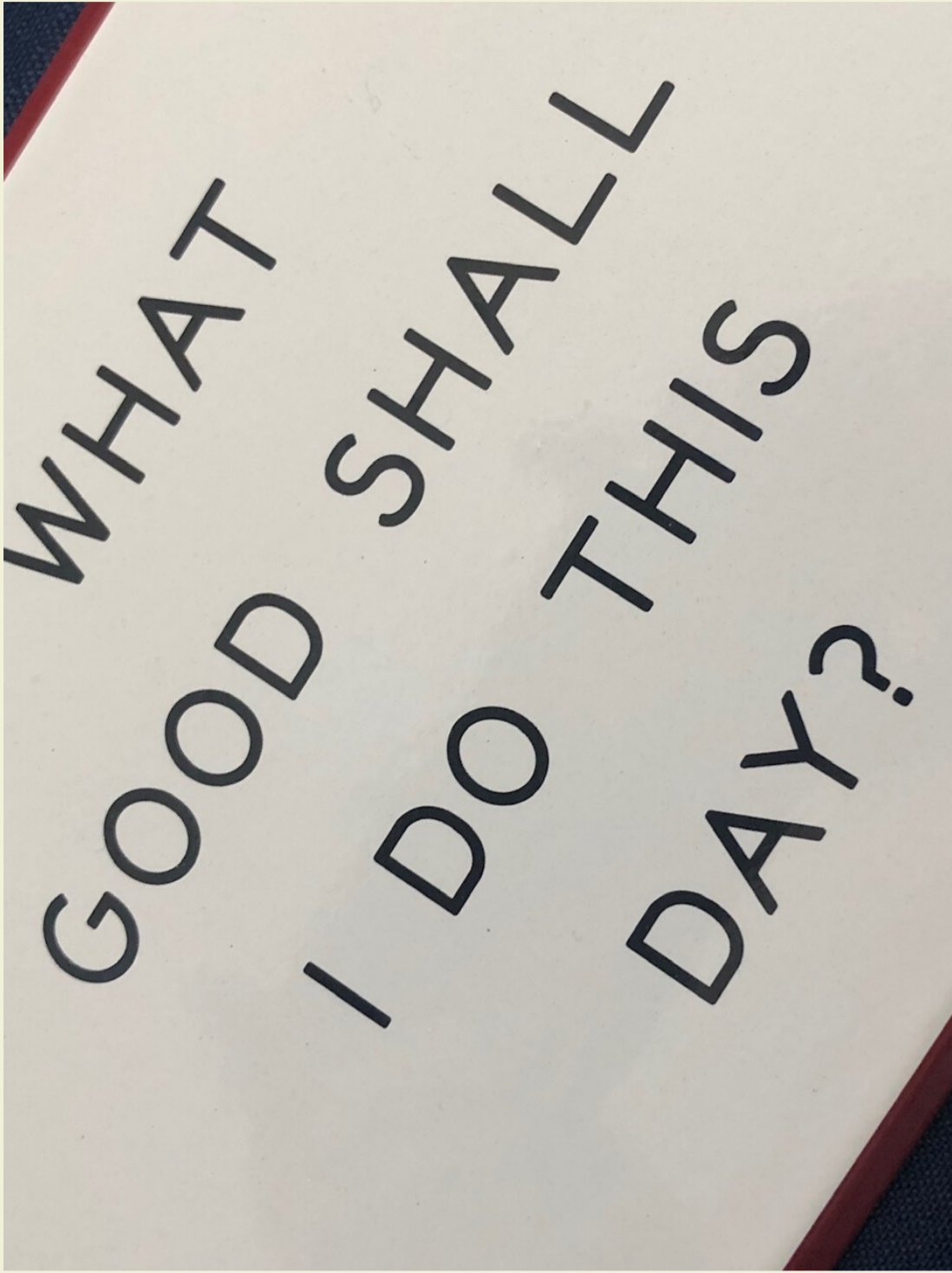
I'll admit to being a note writer, a postcard sender, a letter writer. Yup, there's something about putting a pen to paper that just really let's me feel connected to the person I'm writing.

I've been trying to send out 10 postcards a week to folks I care about. Mine say, YOU MATTER TO ME.... but you get the idea. And since you're writing, write yourself a letter, write a loved one a letter, write in your journal.



# Loneliness is NOT an Option

## Back to the bathroom....#2



My elder son gave me this plaque to me a couple of Christmases ago.

### **What good shall I do this day?**

This message spurs me each day. I try to take it to heart. What good can I do today?

Sometimes it's bringing a container of soup to a neighbor. Sometimes it's smiling at a dog walker down the street. Sometimes it's sending \$10 to a cause I believe in.

You know what I can still do all those things. I can choose to do good today. What good can you do today?

*Change the question of your day from*

*what do I need to do to*

*how can I be of service?*

# Loneliness is NOT an Option

## Back to the bathroom....#3

My little tugboat. Don't you just love this little tugboat. All squeezey and red. It reminds me to laugh. Can't you just see all the bubbles in the tub and me putting my little red tugboat to sea. I giggle.

Where can you find laughter today? YouTube is great for all those cat videos. Since I'm in the bathroom spirit, I even just look in the mirror and laugh at myself.



One thing I often share when I'm speaking is Laughing Yoga. It's a daily dose of fun. That F word we can do even being physically distanced.

## Ready to have your yoga for today.

Ok.... put your hands in the air and laugh.... touch your toes.... give yourself a hug. This is especially good while doing the dishes or folding laundry. Laughter.



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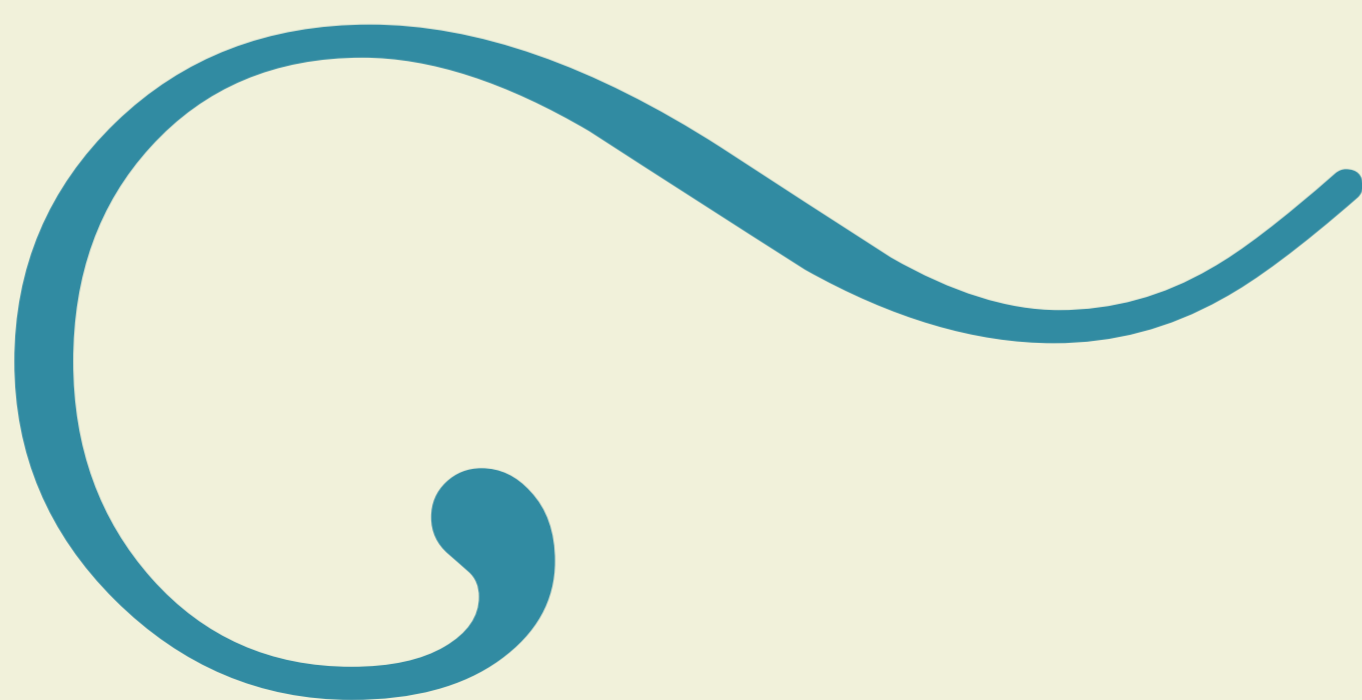
I asked one friend who lives alone about this topic of loneliness right now. She explained how for her the everyday routine gets oppressive. She gets up, showers, gets a cup of tea, gets dressed. It's same old, same old.



The routine is excruciating at times. She said, she has to remember to find joy in the little moments, a clean counter, a floor swept but mostly a call made or a thought of someone she's known. Make sure your routine includes connection a touch of joy.

Loneliness is Not an Option, choose something to shake you into being creatively alone, not lonely.

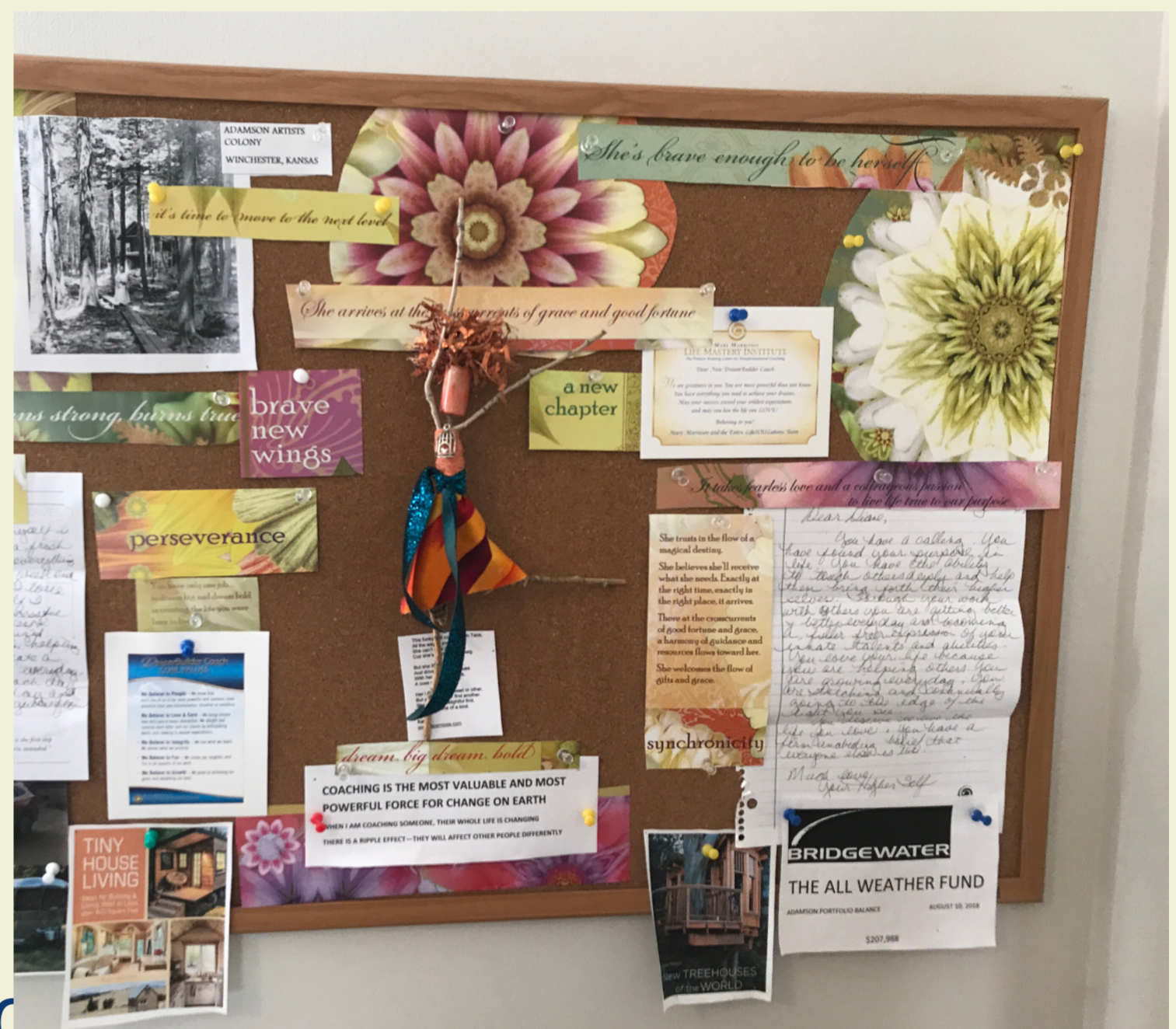
So I promised 10 tips for choosing engagement and not loneliness. I hope you'll write me and add your tips for coping with physical distancing.



# Loneliness is NOT an Option

1. Tell Alexa, Pandora or your radio to play happy songs, or your favorite artist. Tell her Alexa louder, louder Alexa and and sing. One thing I learned from raising my sons is that you can't cry and sing at the same time. Physically impossible. You change the vibrations in your body by music.

2. Make a vision board for what your life is going to be after your distancing. Tear out pictures and words from magazines that inspire you right now. Glue them on a piece of paper. Hang it up so you'll remember what you have to look forward to later.



3. Set yourself a learning project. What would you like to know more about in the next month? Have you wanted to perfect the best banana bread? Do you want to know more about starting your own business?

Did you want to travel to Italy...have an Italian month, play operas, make alfredo sauce, find travelogues, watch movies. Enjoy being Italian, Ciao!





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4. Get a good night sleep. Try a nap.

5. Play like a kid. Coloring books, legos, play dough. Maybe you have your own red tugboat for your bath. You know you love toys, play. Visit my friends website **Escape Adulthood** if you need more ideas.



6. Listen to podcasts, listen to TedTalks and expand your world.

7. Take yourself on a date. Use the white table cloth and linen napkins. Find the china you packed away, the silver out of the chest. Treat yourself well.

8. Meditate feel connection. Breathe in love.  
Meditate connection. Breathe in love.

9. Read. A whole book under the covers in your pjs. Then find an online book club or a friend and "chat" about it.

## 10. RE-TREAT YOURSELF



# Hold your hand

Will you hold your hand?

There's no right way, hold your hand.

Taking your **thumb**, gently massage your thumb and massage the sadness and grief out, allow in joy

Take your **index finger** and massage the fear, allow courage into your life.

Your **middle finger**, massage the anger away, feel peace.

Your **ring finger**, massage the worry and anxiety away, feel calm.

Your **pinkie...the little finger**, massage your lack of self-esteem, don't be little any more, feel confidence.

Hold your hand in love, Re-treat yourself. Retreat for a moment. You may want to retreat your partner's as well. Just hold your hand.

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## **And one don't do!**

Don't watch the news for 3 days.

We're still here!

Life is a daring adventure and we're not done yet! We're connected in searching for our dreams, we're connecting in believing that we're creating something new within the world.

Loneliness is NOT an option for us. We choose dreams and connection.

Please

stay connected, I've got some more ideas below. Choose joy and creation during this time of physical isolation.

Be safe.

I'm sending you the biggest virtual hug ever.

A huge thank you to our first responders and medical teams at this time. Thank you!

## 10 Little Life Adventures

1. Walk barefoot regardless of season
2. Set the timer for 5 minutes and hop on one foot singing
3. Have you lost your marbles? Find some.
4. Send a Valentine today!
5. What would you do if you were invisible?
6. Write a poem.
7. Change the station on your radio.
8. Take a cell phone pic out your window for a week.
9. Just say YES all day.
10. Count the stars tonight.

# Describe Loneliness for you?

*Journal Prompts*

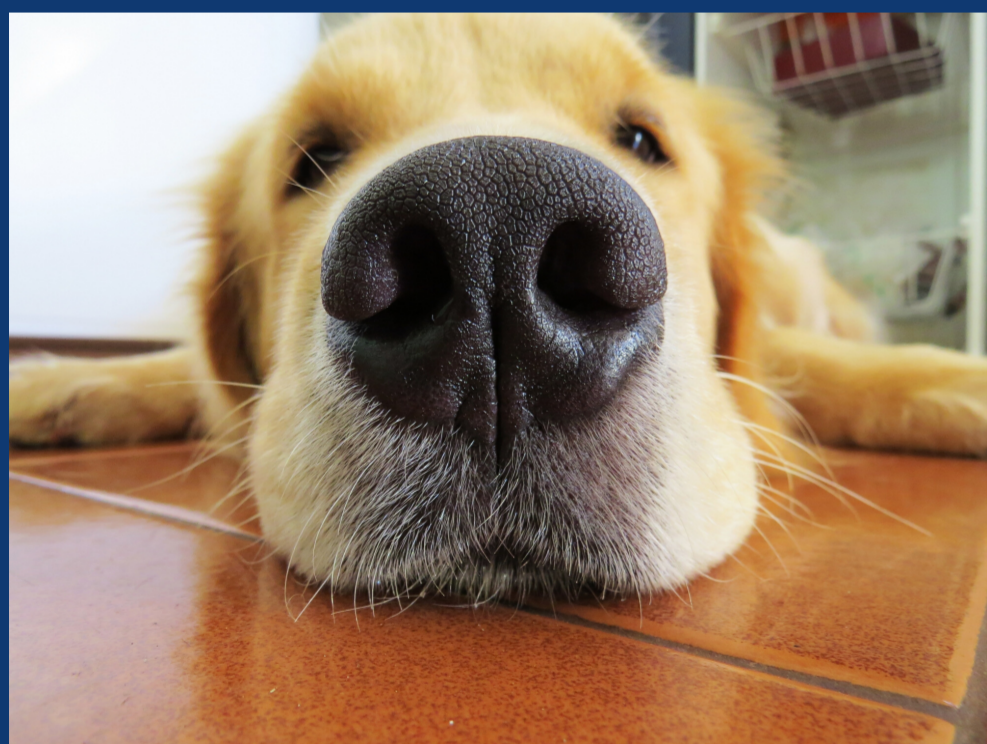
Looks like.....



Sounds like.....



Smells like.....



Feels like.....



# *Your thoughts*

**What are you thinking about loneliness now?**

**What are 3 takeaways for you?**

**What could you dare to do today?**



# How may I be of service to you

## Life Coach

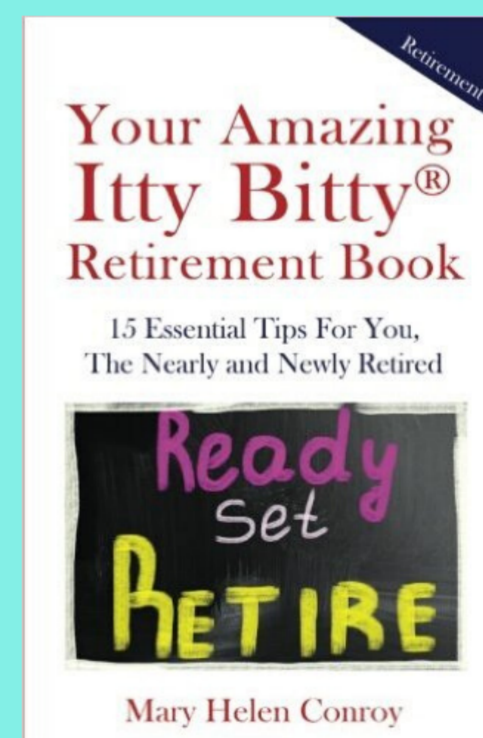
*I stumbled upon her post, "Why do I need a life coach?" I admit I had always been curious, and a little apprehensive, of life coaching. I wondered what one would have to offer me. I thought it was silly and that I was in control of my life, so I really didn't need a coach, yet I was still drawn to reach out to her. It was the best decision of my life...--  
Tiffany S.*

## Workshop and Motivational Speaker

*Mary Helen Conroy is a warm, engaging and thought-provoking speaker. You most certainly want to be there to experience the delightful way she engages her audiences with humor, wit, and admonishment to dream big!  
D. Biddle*

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