

The Bitter Word, Loneliness

These seven words are said to be the most expressive in the English language:

1. The most beautiful word: love.
2. The most tragic word: death.
3. The most revered word: Mother.
4. The warmest word: friendship.
5. The coldest word: no.
6. The saddest word: forgotten.
7. The bitterest word: loneliness.

Perhaps you agree or not with this unknown author's compilation in this category. But for those of us in Life Care and Century Park, we can share the opinion that loneliness is a problem in our society. We see it in our work.



A study by The American Council of Life Insurance found that college students are the loneliest group, followed by divorcees, welfare recipients, single mothers, rural students, housewives and the elderly.

A Kansas newspaper reportedly ran this ad: "I will listen to you talk for 30 minutes without comment for \$5."

Shortly after the ad appeared, the person who placed it was receiving 10 to 20 calls a day. Lonely people were willing to talk with a stranger for half an hour of companionship.

An important contribution for volunteers in our centers is to fill the need for social interaction of our residents – some of whom have no family members or whose children or grandchildren live in other states and are unable to visit often. In some sad cases, residents are ignored by relatives.

That's not the only role for volunteers to play in our centers, but it is a very important one. Some of our centers have excellent volunteer programs, and others could use some spooling up. Let's be more active in recruiting, training and benefiting from volunteers.

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Loneliness has been an issue from time immemorial. The Book of Psalms – the Bible’s book of personal devotions – addresses the subject.

Psalm 145:18: *The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth.*

The psalmist had experienced loneliness and could testify that the Lord helps those who call out to Him.

What a comfort to praise God because He is near – to know that when we draw near to Him, He draws near to us. Heartfelt praise is God’s prescription for loneliness.

– Beecher Hunter