

# How To Be Alone Summary

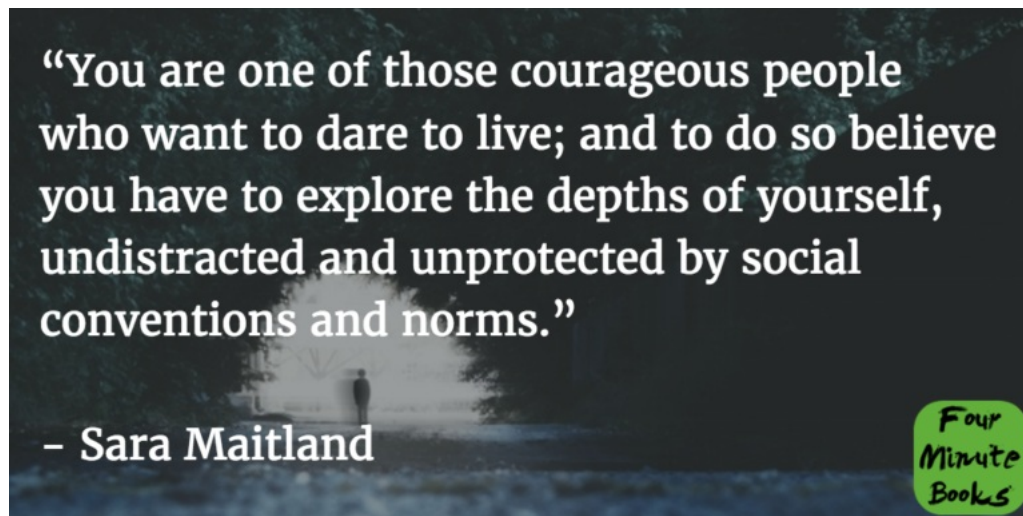
---

 [fourminutebooks.com/how-to-be-alone-summary](https://fourminutebooks.com/how-to-be-alone-summary)

**1-Sentence-Summary:** *How To Be Alone* shows you that solitude not only has its benefits, but is a vital component of happiness and that you should embrace it and slowly discover what dosage you need, and why it's okay to let society think you're a bit weird sometimes.

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



*How To Be Alone* is part of a series by educational organization The School of Life. Sara Maitland is a feminist writer, having written a fair share of novels, short stories and non-fiction.

In this book she explains, that even though we live in a society that promotes individualism above all else, one where we all show our uniqueness with tattoos, piercings, self-designed t-shirts and personal blogs, we still shun and condemn those who prefer to spend their time alone, as opposed to constantly hanging out with others.

Of course relationships are part of a happy life, but no one said you have to be social all the time – even though that's what we assume to be the norm.

Here are 3 lessons from her book about the benefits of solitude:

1. Gradually expand your alone time until you're ready for the ultimate solo adventure.
2. Being alone can unlock a state that made you really happy as a child.
3. Forget psychology and just figure out what works for you.

Starving for some solitude? Even if not, it might still be time to take a walk alone – we'll figure out why right now!

## Lesson 1: Expand your alone time step by step until you're ready for more.

---

The simplest way to get more alone time and figure out if you can see its benefits is to slowly expand the alone time you're *already* getting. For example, you might be running or biking on a regular basis, which are already solo activities, so you could just do more or longer sessions of those.

In case you're one of the lucky few, who can walk to work, that's another chance to extend your time of solitude. However, a walk in nature is even better (for example, I always walk a set route in the woods when I'm at my parents house in the countryside).

Also, note that listening to music, reading a book or watching a movie aren't really times when you're alone, because even if no one is with you, you're still focusing on someone else's work and are therefore connecting with them.

Once you feel ready, try this: **Go on a solo adventure.** Take a week of vacation and spend it abroad, all by yourself. Go hiking for a weekend, make a solo fishing trip, or rent an AirBnB in a city a few hours away.

Very few things build more self-awareness than an extended period of time spent in pure solitude.

## Lesson 2: Solitude leads to active imagination – something that made you very happy as a child.

---

What's one thing kids do all the time, which we tend to stop as adults?

Nope, not laughing (although we do that about 50 times less than kids per day). **Daydreaming.**

Do you remember standing in your backyard as a kid and just seeing a world full of potential? You could instantly get lost in a train of thought and imagine pirates on your swing set, a dragon flying above your head and a treasure buried beneath the big oak tree.

Psychologists call this state *reverie*, and it can help us re-connect with some of our best childhood memories, which came from safe time spent alone. Carl Jung explored this state and took notes, finding out that most of his happiest memories came from using his imagination, while being alone as a child.

Taking back this kind of alone time to actively imagine things and connect with yourself can bring back the joy and happiness from your childhood, so don't disregard this without giving it a try.

## Lesson 3: Forget psychology and just figure out what works for you.

---

Did the name Carl Jung ring a bell when I just mentioned it? If it did, but you couldn't place him anywhere, it's likely because you've seen his name pop up in a different context: the so-called Jung Typology Test. This is one of, if not *the* most popular and well-known personality tests in the world.

It gives you a type consisting of four letters, ranging from ESTJ to INFP, based on whether you lean more towards

- extroverted or introverted,
- sensing or intuitive,
- thinking or feeling,
- judging or perceiving.

The battle of introverts vs extroverts is as old as humanity itself, but Sara Maitland it's a useless distinction to try to make. **We're all introverts and extroverts, depending on the context.**

Whether you like to party twice a week or once a year always depends on how you define what a party is. Is it you and your three best friends at home, or a crowd of 200 people at a club? Plus, different cultures value different types. In the US, extroverts are winners, but in Eastern cultures like Japan, introversion is seen as a sign of discipline and craftsmanship.

That's why, when it comes to determining how much alone time you need, **forget about psychology, science and research, and just figure out what works for you.**

Experiment, don't let anyone else tell you what to do and, most importantly, respect other peoples' desire for alone time too.

## How To Be Alone Review

---

*How To Be Alone* was a surprise hit for me. It stood out thanks to its title and provided a very interesting background on how we promote individualism, but not really, because loners are considered weirdos. This might be an even more important read for you, if you're *not* an introvert, because it'll help you understand them better and see that alone time is good for everyone.

[Read full summary on Blinkist >>](#)

[Free Preview >>](#)

[Learn more about the author >>](#)

## What else can you learn from the blinks?

---

- How some of the world's most famous authors turned to solitude to produce their best work

- Why solitude and nature go together well, and how both are used as growing up rituals in many cultures
- What makes people think you're crazy if you like spending time alone
- Which fears can keep you from being alone, and how to overcome them
- Why alone time is the biggest gift you can give to your children

## **Who would I recommend the How To Be Alone summary to?**

---

The 15 year old, who wonders if he's different than the other kids, because he likes being alone, the 29 year old young parent, who thinks she must arrange play dates for her child whenever she hasn't got time for her son, and anyone who hasn't taken a walk in the woods for over half a year.