Essay 1: Solitude and alienation

The world is a full of stress that can affect a person’s health mentally and socially. When by ourselves there may be confusion of what solitude and alienation in the world. That being in solitude is for self-discovery and being there for themselves. Those who are in alienation can be lonely and try to seek comfort in others because they were cast out from family or a social group. Solitude and alienation are two feeling that are dealt with either by themselves or with the help of other.

Those who are lonely by choice or forced to because of society and family. The choice of being alone could be for them to find themselves and find figure thoughts out. Those who are forced to can be alienated for their beliefs, being gay and ideas. Thoreau wrote Solitude about him going out to the wood and being in a cabin and being alone. Thoreau Stated, “I have never felt lonesome or in the least oppressed by the sense of solitude, but once that was a few weeks after I came to the woods, when, for an hour, I doubted if the near neighborhood of man was not essential to a serene and healthy life” (2). Thoreau didn’t feel alone in the woods for he was in solitude and enjoying nature. In his solitude he didn’t mind that the nearest neighbors are more than a mile way.

Those who are forced to be alone are more likely to have their family not accept them or society. When alienated from society and family it can have a huge affect to the family member in trying to find a way to get acceptance from others whether good or bad. This could have large conflicts happen push them farther away. When such thing happened that pushed family member could have committed suicide or try get acceptance from others. Willa Carter states in the Sculptors funeral “Why did Ruben Sayer, he brightest young lawyer you ever turned out, after he had come home from the university as straight as a die, take to drinking and forge a check and shoot himself” (482)? Sayer wrote this because un this town a man named Harvey Merrick has died and his family and town his attending his funeral. While attending this funeral they speak about Harvey in the deals they made him that were dirty and cheap. That they hated Harvey for the way they couldn’t get money out of him and an oddity.

That solitude doesn’t mean you are lonely or depressed that the person in solitude could be doing it for themselves. This could mean that it is being done to understand themselves better and the situation they are in currently. It could be a calming and relaxing time for the participating member. That it is a tome for reflection and time to enjoy the small thing and slow down. This time alone can be nice and give the time needed to reflect on what is important. In modern world where it is rush to appointments and stress of work.

When getting away should have an effect of less stress and better the quality of life. Thoreau states in solitude “I was in suddenly sensible of such sweet and beneficent society in nature, in the very pattering of the drops, in every sound sight around my house, an infinite and unaccountable friendliness all at once like an atmosphere sustaining me, as made the fancied advantaged of human neighborhood insignificant” (2). He states this for being out in the woods is an experience that the need to be near civilization isn’t needed. When in the woods you hear sounds that were not most often heard.

When being in solitude and hearing the surroundings to have time to not worry about little things, such as stress from a job or family. This however doesn’t mean that family is entirely abandoned or forgotten. It is just a break, but it can be long or short. It’s the same for those who participate in mediation and get benefits for that. Thoreau says in solitude “Whence in all our experience we have found that to issue, as the willow stands near the water and sends out its roots in that direction. This will vary with different natures, but this is the place, but this is the place where a wise man will dig his cellar” (3). He wrote this for solitude comes in different ways with staying in the woods, meditating or yoga.

The forced kind of solitude is something that most people experience this from felling of hatred. When forced to alienate by family members it can have bad impression on their confidence and self-esteem. Them member alienated most likely try to change what he or she did wrong to get back into the family. The member in the family wouldn’t do what was expected of them and get kicked out. The sculptor’s funeral Harvey in the town where he lived didn’t seem to care for what well-being he was going to come out of other than the outcome they wanted. The town wanted Harvey to come out a scammer and in their view discriminatory. This same town turning great men into bad guys that later kill themselves or continue doing wrong deeds.

Harvey and the lawyer wanted the town to be proud of them, but they wanted him to be shrewd lawyer instead. When these two gentlemen tried hard to get the town they lived in proud to have honest men in their town only to have it be soiled. Cather writes “You pretend to have some sort of respect for me; and yet you’ll stand up and throw mud at Harvey Merrick, whose soul you couldn’t dirty and whose hands you couldn’t tie” (483). Harvey was different in his town and despite them trying to do everything to dirty him Harvey was still better off then them. That even at his own funeral they talked about him and how he couldn’t do certain thing; such as, hold stock.

Those who do go into alienation with family can get resentful of family. When family is the one to push away and get harsh. Its best to find a way to deal with this; for instance, going to a counselor, writing in a journal. Brash thinking makes mistakes regrettable such as hurting family to get back at them or committing suicide. It is important to know that there is someone to go to seek help. Thoreau writes “I have heard a man lost in the woods and dying of famine and exhaustion at the foot of a tree, whose loneliness was relieved by the grotesque visions with which, owing to bodily weakness, his diseased imagination surrounded him, and which he believed to be real. So also, owing to body and mental health and strength, we may be continually cheered by a like buy more normal and natural society, and come to know that we are never alone” (5). The quote means for the times that are terrible there is someone there. The person may not be there physically use faith.

The loneliness can feel like a burden to society with trying to get better but eventually get involved. This may start with starving themselves to try and prove a point that the society doesn’t control them. The same would go for family when they try to communicate and make matters worse. When these family members do talk they are bitter and have nothing good to say. Cather say in sculptor’s funeral “Where the old man made his mistake was in sending the boy East to school,” said Phelps, stroking his goatee and speaking in a deliberate, judicial tone. There was where he got his head full of trapesing to Paris and all such folly. What Harvey needed, of all people, was a course in some first-class Kansas City business college” (480). The people at the funeral talk about Harvey and the choices his father made with sending Harvey away to go to school in the East. Phelps is criticizing him for it would have been better to send Harvey to a business school in Kansas.

The social loneliness doesn’t have to forced and can be a way to escape think over the problem. It isn’t necessary to have to be in a group and find one that does support the decision. When it doesn’t work there is alternative to being alone and being able to love oneself. The alternative could be going out into the woods and finding themselves. Thoreau states “The indescribable innocence and beneficence of Nature—of the sun and wind and rain, of summer and winter –such health, such cheer, they afford forever! and sympathy have they ever with our race, that all Nature would be affected, and the sun’s brightness fade, and the winds would sigh humanely, and the clouds rain tears, and the woods shred their leaves and put in morning in midsummer….” (5). Thoreau wrote this because he experiences nature and stayed in the woods without much human interaction. When Nature is involved it could be a peaceful and that sunlight be taken away firstly and filled with darkness.

Nature is a place where it is nice and quiet to find and fix what has gone on in their lives. In nature has an effect that can have people reflect on thing without disruptions from neighbors. Thoreau says “With thinking we may be beside ourselves in the same sense. By a conscious effort of the mind we can stand aloof from actions and their consequences; and all things, good and bad, go by us like a torrent. We are not wholly involved with Nature” (5). He says this for people are human and that each action has its consequences for those action. The same goes for nature that if something happens then there is a following action and so on.

The social and family reason for being alone differ and can be from problems with family to force ourselves to leave or be forced out. The same goes for religion and if a family member decides to leave a religion and go towards another religion or even have no religion. This could have a strain on family with them wanting nothing to do with what you want or disowning the person from the family. Once out of the family it could be hard and find a place to think is better than doing a brash action. Thoreau wrote “Society is too commonly too cheap. Wee meet at very short intervals, not having had time to acquire any new value for each other. We meet at meals three times a day, and give each other a new taste of that old musky cheese that we are” (5). He wrote this that even when we meet the same people every day nothing changes and still do the same thing over whether it being bad or good. That meeting socially doesn’t give a new value to anything because nothing changes and it’s all the same.

Solitude and being forced to leave are two things that influence the mind. The first is solitude where it is for a person gain and benefit them. while being forced to leave can be terrible and leave a scar on them mentally. That with each are present in the daily and having to deal with them gets hard or easy. That with times being hard it is beneficial to find a place to go to think. It is important to find a place to think things over. Thoreau wrote “A man thinking, or working is always alone, let him be where he will. Solitude is not measured by the miles of space that intervene between a man and his fellows” (4). He says this for solitude isn’t something that can be measure but something that is experienced.

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Essay 2: My Mother’s Failure

The events in our lives change us for the worst or for better. These experiences can be through our parents those close to us, such as friends and significant others. When going through rough and challenging predicaments. Gandhi states in a famous quote, “such a struggle leaves one stronger for it.” (203) When struggles happen, I learn from them and prepared to overcome them. These instances have changed me by enlightening me how I can be different and better person overall.

The one person that has changed me would be my mother and in a good way. It all started when I was seven years old. I only wanted my mother to treat me the same as she would my sister. She treated me differently for years and struggled with what I had done wrong. She would yell at me for not being active in sports and being overweight. This occurred, until I was in the eighth grade. Through those years she would constantly bring me down with saying, “when I was your age I was fit and played sports. You should get into sports and become fit.”

Anytime I spoke up with my opinion, she would say, “if I said that to my father he would have beaten me. You are so lucky that I am not him.” When she spoke to my sister it was nicer and seemed friendly, but to me it seemed as though I was hated and had the misfortune of being with her. When I did something wrong she would yell at me by using those word repeated with threats such as, “you’re lucky I love you, because I’m holding myself back from hitting you against the cabinet and wall.”

Due to her words, I felt as though I could not tell her my feelings. They seemed to not matter to her. They were overshadowed with worries and care for my sister. These events led to feelings of unimportance. I felt I wasn’t enough for her and seemed to bother her. She stopped calling me and stopped going to any of my sporting events. She missed championship swimming events junior year and championship marching band competitions. It hurt a lot and eventually I stopped telling her about my competitions because she wouldn’t show up.

I was trying my best to have a relationship with her, but everything that I did for her meant nothing. The harder I tried the more she would ignore me and get into disagreements about everything from school to my opinion. In the sophomore year of high school, I was so stressed out that I failed three classes, and the relationship with my mother got worst. She found out about my grades and she was very angry and expected better from me. She yelled at me saying I was stupid and just as useless as she thought. When she belittles me, it seems easy for her. She doesn’t offer any leniency or reassurance that everything is going to be okay if I just try better next time. Twain states it similar in a famous quote, “Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great.” (Twain) What Twain means is that those who belittle you want to see you fail and not be greater than themselves. When these people are around they only want you to be below them and won’t support you. This is similar to events with my mother.

It became difficult to ignore what she said to me. I would cry in school. I kept to myself and thought I didn’t matter to my family. I didn’t want to be a bother to my family and tried to be compliant, but my mother would still belittle me and threaten me. When I tried my best, she was never satisfactory. Despite all the efforts I put into trying to make her happy. That I started to not care about myself and believed that I wasn’t important enough for my family. I hated being a bother and asking them if it was okay to have essential items, but when they ask if I really need it I’ll put it away to not be a bother. I fell into those thought repeatedly and had no way out. I thought that even if I left the world no one would care or even notice I was gone and the world would continue. Poe states in his story Black Cat “Beneath the pressure of torments such as these, the feeble remnant of the good within me succumbed. Evil thoughts became my sole intimates – the darkest and evil thoughts.” (Poe 6) Poe is saying that the pressure of the situation was getting to him, and believing those thoughts going through his head. I felt tired most of the time. I worked and went to school to get my mind off the stress and tried to ignore my issues.

I stopped speaking about my problems to my dad and just ignored them. When I was alone in my room I would think of everything I did wrong, and thought I was the useless and unimportant. I sat on my bed thinking of how it would be better with me gone. My sister is still here and that there would be no reason to miss me. That she made everyone happy, and that I was a failure. I believed I didn’t deserve anything from them. For instance, Maureen Dowd stated in a famous quote “The minute you settle for less than you deserve, you get even less than you settle for.” When things are settled for things less than what you deserve you hold yourself back from your goals, or what you should settle for. I settled for what was less because I believed it was something that I deserved.

It was hard to get out of this thinking and saying that I do matter to my dad and the rest of my family. That the approval of my mother didn’t matter, but it did to me. The thing that got me to get the help I needed was when I got into a disagreement with my dad’s wife. It was this summer at Tahoe in our hotel. We went to Safeway to get some food for lunch, and I went to get something for my sister. When my dad’s wife asked if that is what she wanted, I went to put it back and got yelled at about the lack of communication about the items. When we returned from the store she talked to me outside. I told her how I wanted to make myself disappear and that it wouldn’t have mattered if I wasn’t around. If I was gone there would still be my sister here and that they wouldn’t have to deal with me anymore. I told her I wasn’t as important as my sister and that the world would go on. My dad’s wife suggested I talk to a therapist because it would help with what I was feeling at the time. When we got back from that trip I started seeing a therapist about my feeling and mental stability. I talked to her and understand that for now I can live without having a relationship with my mother for the time being.

The result of these events in my life is that I have changed to better myself. That even when times get bad it will get better in time. I found that I was important to my family with the help of talking to a therapist that the approval of my mother was insignificant. When faced with that fact, it can be hard to cope with. However, these struggles make a person a stronger individual. That dark times can be hard to face, but there is someone to talk to. I still sometimes feel that I don’t matter, but I must remember I do to my dad and his wife. They are what keep me from disappearing in the world, for if I didn’t have them I wouldn’t know what to do. They are the ones that I can go to with my problems, and won’t make me feel awful for speaking to them.

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