I’ve really been battling with loneliness lately. I’ve begun going to some group therapy sessions once a week, and doing so has allowed me to come up with some ways to distract myself or relax myself when I’m feeling distressed (aka when I want to smoke or binge eat for seemingly no reason). I’m starting to realize some of those reasons, and while I’ve probably only tipped the surface, I do think that it has been good for me to begin to work through them.

So far the best relaxation strategy is to take a shower and put on warm fuzzy clothes and try to sit down in a clean environment, maybe with a candle or incense or tea if I need it. I think creating a clean and decluttered and warm and comfortable environment really helps me not want to smoke or binge. The best distraction technique has surprisingly been to play music at night. The last two nights, I’ve started playing the ukulele and guitar and making up songs about what I’m going through and I’ve surprised myself. Not only because I actually am pretty good at coming up with lyrics and music on the spot (I incorporate my ability to freestyle into a melodic song - it’s pretty cool!) but also because when I sing that fast and without thinking, I’m able to actually sometimes realize stuff and say stuff out loud that I didn’t even really realize or ever think about before! It’s also just such a great outlet for me to let out my emotions of sadness or hopelessness or confusion, because I can really truly feel the emotion in the music. I’m still binging often and occasionally smoking though, so I am really looking forward to continuing group therapy and hopefully finding a more regular therapist.

It’s definitely been hard. I cried myself to sleep last night, I’ve done that multiple times now. I know that it’s good to feel these emotions, but boy is it hard. Here’s something I sent to Yeng yesterday that helps describe what I’ve been thinking about my loneliness:

1) For the last 3 weeks, I’ve pretty much spent 80% of every single day alone. I think that time alone and time to reflect and be in solitude is very good, but I think that for me personally and for my emotional well being, that is not enough connection for me. Especially since I am battling an eating disorder and an addiction at the same time right now. Every day it’s like I’m going to war with myself, and being alone means that 80% of my day is filled with a non-stop battle.

2) The connections that I do have, aren’t fulfilling me the way that I think I need. I’m finding that in order for me to feel fulfilled in a relationship or a friendship, I need to feel appreciated and loved and mostly, I need to feel heard. This has been especially hard for me now that I don’t have a phone, because I’m realizing that it’s rare that someone would give me their full uninterrupted and unplugged attention for an extended period of time. It makes me feel bad because I feel like I could never expect that from anyone or force anyone to do that, but that also makes me sad because I feel like as a human I deserve to find that connection somewhere and I don’t have it anywhere.

I guess I’ve just been more reflective and inquisitive and … lonely than ever before in my life and I’ve been trying to dig down deep to see what it stems from.

I have also been trying to reach out to Claudia to get her to be in my life a little bit more as well, but I don’t know if she fully realizes that she’s been giving more of herself and her time to Andrew than she has been to me. I think that it’s okay if that is what she wants to do, but it has made me sad that she doesn’t even realize that she’s doing it, and it is doubly hard for me to stomach it when I know that I’m going through such a hard time right now and I can’t even get her to watch a ted talk about addiction for me or to check in on me every day (or every other day). I’ve been having similar struggles with Yeng, but I think he is quite a bit better at making time for me to be there for me and to **connect** with me. Which is something that I need so badly right now.

**The opposite of addiction is connection.**

I’ve been trying to do whatever I can in my life to create more connection to help me get through this time. The most recent ted talk I watched said that to battle loneliness we also need connection. It seems like everything stems from human need for connection. I learned that one of the best ways to establish connection with people already in your life is to create a tradition with them. One that will allow you and them to be there for each other and to feel heard yourselves as often as you can. I thought about Claudia and Yeng. I never feel like I get their full attention. Honestly, I never get anyone’s full attention. Whenever I open up to anyone about anything or I just want to talk and hang out or get food, there’s always some part of them that I know just wants to check their phone or be connected and answering messages or not being present with me. And that’s not anything to bash them, it’s just the reality of my generation. It made me so sad last night to think that I may never find somone that I truly connect with who has the same ideals as me (frienship or relatinoship) who wants to also be completely 100% disconnected without a phone. Being off of social media right now has also made it so hard because I am basically isolating myself from society. It makes me so sad that I need social media in order to feel a sense of community. Why can’t I find community and connection among the real people in my life every day?

Here’s what I sent to claudia to try and help us get a tradition started:

Hey Clauds, I know that both of us are crazy busy - but is there any chance that we could like make it a tradition to maybe either go out to eat for one meal together a week or like make a meal together if we don’t wanna spend too much money, or just to like do at least something together every week (Even if it’s super short) that isn’t just homework? I’ve been doing a lot of research on like loneliness and trying to connect with the people in your life to help battle that, and I’m realizing that I really miss spending time with you (that isn’t just being in proximity but looking at our computers). Being able to catch up and listen to each other and connect and feel heard is super important not only for battling loneliness, but also just for friendships and relationships in general, and I kind of feel like we haven’t really been putting any time into that at all this quarter. I think it’s more obvious in romantic relationships when you realize you aren’t spending enough time with each other, and it’s always something that’s like immediately addressed - but it’s less common to focus on that part of a friendship. It’s definitely been harder because we are so busy, but I know we always say that ‘there’s always time for things that you make a priority in your life’... anyways, I was just thinking it could be kinda nice for us if we had like a ‘tradition’ of doing something together once a week if you’re open to it or down for it. Would love to hear your thoughts.

Luckily, she is very down for this. Though part of me thinks it will be me enforcing this and not her. Which is okay, it’s always hard to get a tradition started.

Really this is just an incredibly hard time in my life. I’m making so much progress, but I still have so far to go. I’m pushing through though. I know that every day is a new day, and I need to look forward and not back.

Also,

**I am worthy of living in abundance!!!!!!**