


# THERAPY PAGE

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**Bob Rice L.Ac.**

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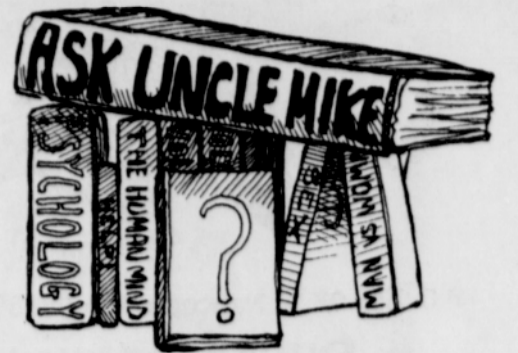
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Dear Uncle Mike,  
How do I endure loneliness? How do I deal with that restless feeling in my gut that makes me face the reality that I'm not enjoying my life? I scare myself contemplating the solutions to this problem.

I've always thought that with friends, you can get through pretty much anything. There is one person who really cares about me, and I grew up with him. He's away at college. I love him more than anything. I'm happy when I'm with him.

So my question is this: How am I to overcome this painful isolation? Believe me, I've tried. Is life even worth it without friends? I'm definitely looking forward to college.  
Lynn in Seaside

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Dear Lynn,

Is life worth living without friends? Probably not. Fortunately you have one. That you're separated from him makes you, for the moment, alone. Alone is a neutral state. Being lonely is your decision, and it's a nasty one.

People will tell you loneliness is part of life. They'll be nitwits or liars. Loneliness is not the inevitable, or even the natural, result of being alone. It's an inappropriate response. The hollowness you feel comes from deciding not to accept what is.

No, Uncle Mike is not denying that the state of Siamese twinship love triggers in all of us: that joining at the heart and the gut which, when severed, makes two complete human beings feel half of who they were. He has, Lord knows, been there. But missing someone is one thing, obsessing on the void they left is another. Loneliness is the mistaking of want for need, the illusion of the half empty cup, the idiot notion that the tides of the universe have gone out and will never return.

Being all but human, Uncle Mike is no stranger to this sort of gloomy nitwittiness and does not for a moment underestimate its ability to paralyze will power, good cheer, and the ability to reason. Yes, he has wallowed a time or two. Here's what he finally realized. Lovers have a delightful knack for living inside each other. No matter where you are, there they are. People have been known to write poems about this. So should you.

How to overcome the pain of isolation? The only thing that alters inertia, a polite term for the dead weight your life seems to have become, is change in motion. Get out of the house, woman, and into whoever you are. Whatever you enjoy doing, do it, often and completely. Uncle Mike doubts you have only one friend. Seek out the company of others. Silly as it sounds, you should have a little fun. Tried all this, have we? Good, try it again.

Uncle Mike is glad you're looking forward to college. Aside from brutal experience, education is the shortest path to understanding.

Dear Uncle Mike,

I have a large aquarium and am thinking of adding an octopus. Am I being foolish?

Art S., Portland

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4. REENTER THE STEAM ROOM FOR ANOTHER 10 MINUTES REPEATING THE PROCESS USE ENOUGH STEAM FOR YOUR OWN LIKING.

5. AFTER REPEATING THE CYCLE 2 OR 3 TIMES END WITH A SOAP AND WATER SHOWER AND RINSE WITH COOL WATER TO CLOSE PORES. DRY OFF INTO COLD OR WET WEATHER UNTIL YOU ARE DRY AND HAVE FINISHED PERSPIRING, OR YOU MAY GET CHILLED.

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DESIGNED BY 5TH STREET STUDIOS  
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Dear Art,

No, you're being a lunatic. Listen very carefully, Art. Regardless how large your aquarium is, it isn't large enough. Octopi may be underwater mollusks, but they're not stupid. Squished under its rock, its disgusting tentacles curled coyly under its impossibly ugly face, your octopus will only seem to be whiling away the hours. It will, in fact, be brooding, dreaming murderous dreams, and waiting for the moment you forget to wrap your aquarium with concertina wire. As your slimy nightmare of a pet drags you, shrieking and thrashing, into its lair, you'll wish you'd stuck to goldfish.

Dear Uncle Mike,

I live in a small town. Last week, a friend told me she'd been hearing rumors. Without getting into them, they're totally unfounded and completely out of character for me. I haven't lived here long enough for everyone to know better. Should I confront the situation or ignore it?  
Innocent in Astoria


Dear Innocent,

Uncle Mike would suggest both. Unless those spreading the rumor are much larger than you or are known to carry weapons, wait for a public opportunity to set them straight. Within earshot of at least two other people, tell them their mouth seems much bigger than their brain, and that, aside from having the ethics of weasel, they're full of crap and you'd appreciate it if they'd dummy up. Uncle Mike assumes the people who count in your life know what's what with you. The opinions of others deserve to be roundly ignored. The banishing ritual for rumor is to live the truth.

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