

## UNADULTERATED SOLITUDE

*by:*  
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A giddy feeling you get from a text, a like on one of your tweets, a call from a loved one, all of these give us fleeting emotions thanks to a technology so advanced – but until when can those fleeting emotions last? This TED Talk moved me, and it was something that resonated to me since I am someone who never fails to use technology on a daily basis. Hypothetically, technology has us wrapped around its fingers to the point where we now view it as a necessity, akin to shelter and food. The speaker, Sherry Turkle, was right; that the more we expect from online engagement, the less we stay engaged in the real world – our real lives. That each passing moment we stay connected online, it is directly proportional that we become disconnected from real life. Little do we know, the tech we surround ourselves with are psychologically powerful that it changes what we do, how we act, and who we are. We choose to use our phones and laptops over any given moment, regardless of place and time, no matter who it is that is physically with our presence. We are so caught up in the moment, trying to portray a bettered version of ourselves online, because who wouldn't want to make their profiles impressive? Yet, have we ever stopped to ponder if that would matter in real life? No. Forgotten are real relationships with people, where we get to express ourselves for what are genuine selves are really like. People are afraid to be judged, yes. But isn't being flawed, what makes us humans so perfectly imperfect?

Watching this talk felt more of a reminder, rather than a lecture. It reminded me that there should be times where I exert effort in real-life relationships, instead of trying to keep up with everybody online at all times. Because as Turkle said, we always want to gain control over where we put our attention. People are now short-changed out of real

conversation, that you'd notice how they would dispense real people over what they have online.

Technology cannot empathize like humans. It can only feel like that as it appeals to us when we are most vulnerable – when we need someone. And that is how technology takes advantage of our loneliness. Unaware that the more we use it to ease our loneliness, the more we let ourselves be lonely. We turn into an anxious fit when we cannot use our devices; thinking as though they are the solution to the problem rather than being the core of it. It is true that technology fills a void flesh-and- blood people can't, we use it as spare parts as foundations so our fragile selves do not falter. But if we're not able to be alone, we are only bound to feel lonelier. If we don't teach ourselves to be alone, we'll only learn how to be lonely, and we wouldn't be able to put an end to this unwanted solitude.

So, in solving this, what we have to do is to try and reconnect ourselves to the real world. Prioritize in bettering our genuine selves, so the person that we are to project when it comes to engaging with real people, will make us proud. We have to start listening to each other, in spite of the boring parts. We can be vulnerable again and be able to empathize with one another, when trust is built, and communications are formed. What matters most isn't our virtual presence, it's with physically being with people who make us better people. A difficult transition, yes, however nobody is rushing anyone – baby steps are enough. So, as I try to prioritize myself again after a while, everybody else should too. We can stay connected without feeling alone anymore, making a life we can love and be proud of.

#### *References:*

Reaction paper about the ted talk on being “connected but alone”

[https://www.ted.com/talks/sherry\\_turkle\\_alone\\_together](https://www.ted.com/talks/sherry_turkle_alone_together)