

WEEK 38 SOLITUDE

“Until the time is right, disappear, we will. Master Kenobi, wait a moment. In your solitude on Tatooine, training, I have for you.” – Yoda

The Jedi were peculiar. Most Jedi could easily mix in a crowd and feel at ease in social settings. They could stand out without drawing attention to themselves. A Jedi could command attention from those around without needing to raise her voice. They could remain in the shadows and observe or stand in the open and take command. A Jedi did not avoid the company of others, but they understood the value of solitude and silence.

Are you comfortable on your own? Can you sit by yourself and feel at ease in your own company? Do you crave and need the company of others? Do you prefer the peace of the countryside and nature or the noise and hustle of a large city? Can you stand more than a few hours of silence and solitude?

“In Silence there is eloquence.” – Rumi, Sufi Poet

Monks, mystics, philosophers, and warriors have long sought solitude to contemplate and meditate in silence. Some were seeking commune with God. Others sought the answers to the questions at the core of the human experience. The Australian indigenous practice of “Walkabout” required young men to spend months wandering the vast wilderness alone so that they could connect with the land and the spirits of ancestors. Transcendence and awareness of one’s true self is found in solitude and silence.

The Jedi also recognized the benefits of cutting themselves off from others to strengthen their connection with the Force. Solitude also conditioned the Jedi to the rigors of Jedi Service and cultivated the self-discipline needed to practice non-

attachment. Master Jedi Voolvif Monn was a recluse who shunned company and spent much of his life in solitude.

Following the destruction of the Jedi Temple and the purge of the Order by Emperor Palpatine, Obi-wan Kenobi and Yoda both spent years hiding in solitude. In their isolation they kept busy planning for the return of the Jedi. Both achieved enlightenment during their reclusion.

To be Jedi does not mean you must isolate yourself from others. Being Jedi does not mean being anti-social though many Jedi were asocial and preferred spending time alone in deep study and meditation.

In the real world few people are solitary creatures although many people isolate themselves due to anxiety or depression. Jay Gatsby would feel lonely and alone in the lavish parties he threw. A person on social media may have tens of thousands of friends and no meaningful relationships with real friends in reality. Such a person is lonely and probably unhappy.

Solitude is not Isolation. Seeking solitude is seeking a place where you can be by yourself to re-calibrate, re-charge and become centered.

Solitude allows you to discover you, to feel your breath and the wind against your face. The sounds of birds, running water, waves at the beach, wind and rain become real and vital. To be in solitude is to marvel at the wonder of nature and the mystery of creation and feel the spark of the divine within. Life becomes simpler and answers to problems start to surface.

The things that are pursued in society no longer seem to matter, there is no conflict, no disagreement. One cannot gossip, cheat or lie or steal when truly in solitude and apart from fellow humans. Senses become keener and every cell within vibrates with the essence of life. You should never feel selfish for giving yourself time to be alone.

“I love to be alone. I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude.” — Henry David Thoreau, Walden

Most people cannot just drop everything and reside in a cabin near a lake like Thoreau did for a year. You can still seek solitude through time alone with a book, a walk through the park or sit in solitary meditation. Disconnect from social media for a day or a month. Ignore the noise emitting from the constant stream of 24/7 news and information. Switch off the TV and computer. Find a place you can go to be alone and in silence be it the beach, a lake, or a mountain. Rise early and welcome the sunrise alone. Whatever you do, make sure you commit to it every day. Seek out silence, close your eyes and breath even if for only a moment.

Isolating is to distance from people and responsibilities; solitude is to reconnect with the Force and who you truly are. Solitude is to be taken when needed, like medicine, it is a balm to the body, mind, and soul.

Do you choose blissful solitude, or do you choose to isolate?

DAY 260

“Control, control, you must learn control!” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 261

“None of the stories people tell about me can change who I really am.” –Luke Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 262

“Anyone can handle a weapon. Reason is much more difficult to wield” - Luminara Unduli

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 263

“Finding him was the will of the Force. I have no doubt of that”
– Qui-Gon Jinn

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 264

“Remember, concentrate on the moment. Feel, don't think. Use your instincts.” – Qui-Gon Jinn

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 265

“Smaller in number are we, but larger in mind.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 266

“The road lies before you, Anakin Skywalker. Will you walk it alone”– Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:
