

## Loneliness may have evolved in humans to help us survive

Loneliness...can...make you depressed, shatter your sleep, [or] even kill you. Yet scientists think loneliness evolved because it was good for us. It still is — sometimes.

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[A]ccording to scientists such as John Cacioppo,...loneliness has evolved to protect us. He likens it to hunger: “When you get hungry, it increases your attention to finding food. We think that loneliness is an aversive state that motivates you to attend to social connections.”

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Studies also suggest that how lonely you feel may have a genetic component; such findings imply that loneliness has evolutionary origins and may be heritable. A genetic component would explain why being friendless doesn't cause the same misery for some people as it does for others.

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The way loneliness affects our bodies suggests how it may have been protective in the past but is no longer is. Studies show that sleep of lonely people tends to be fragmented and restless. Thousands of years ago, that behavior may have [been helpful]; today, it just makes you sleepy — and potentially less healthy....

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Loneliness can be depressing, but it may have helped humans survive](#)**