

Solitude: A Return to the Self

By Anthony Storr

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Originally published in 1988, Anthony Storr's bestselling meditation on the creative individual's need for solitude has become a classic.

A pre-eminent work in self-help and popular psychology literature, *Solitude* was seminal in challenging the psychological paradigm that “interpersonal relationships of an intimate kind are the chief, if not the only, source of human happiness.” Indeed, most self-help literature still places relationships at the center of human existence. Lucid and lyrical, Storr's book argues that solitude ranks alongside relationships in its impact on an individual’s well-being and productivity, as well as on society's progress and health. Citing numerous examples of brilliant scholars and artists—from Beethoven and Kant to Anne Sexton and Beatrix Potter—he argues that solitary activity is essential not only for geniuses, but often for the average person as well. For nearly three decades, readers have found inspiration and renewal in Storr's erudite, compassionate vision of the human experience—and the benefits and joy of solitude.

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Solitude: A Return to the Self By Anthony Storr Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #5494044 in Books
- Published on: 2001
- Number of items: 1
- Binding: Paperback
- 216 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
Storr's celebration of creative solitude is a counterbalance to the chorus of self-help books extollng interpersonal relationships. This British psychotherapist links the capacity to be alone with self-discovery and becoming aware of one's deepest needs and feelings. Taking Goya, Kafka, Trollope, Kant and others as examples, he shows that solitude, far from being a flight from interpersonal contact, is an inveterate need, at least in some people. He analyzes extroverts who become depressives by losing themselves in the outer world and argues that fantasy is not inherently escapist, as Freud contended. The Jungian process of "individuation," he demonstrates, sheds light on the mature artistic forays of Beethoven, Brahms and Henry James. People need a sense of participating in a larger community than either family or friends can provide, and Storr's message is that the solitary's search for wholeness is a valid avenue to relatedness.
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From Library Journal
British psychotherapist Storr takes issue with the predominate view in the West that intimate relationships are the exclusive source and measure of mental health and personal satisfaction. In this far-reaching work, he considers the impact of voluntary as well as enforced solitude, particularly on creative persons such as composers, writers, and philosophers. Their efforts take place chiefly in solitude, and Storr argues that solitude has restorative value for the ordinary individual as well. His intriguing analyses of figures such as Kafka, Kipling, Beatrix Potter, Beethoven, Newton, and Wittgenstein offer compelling evidence that individuals may achieve happiness and stability through their work, even when their interpersonal relationships are inferior. A book of substance; highly recommended. Cynthia Widmer, Williamstown, Mass.
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From the Inside Flap
A provocative and highly articulate meditation on solitude, Anthony Storr explores the connection between solitude and the creative personality. From the great to the obscure, Storr examines the uses that all kinds of people make of solitude in times of bereavement and depression, in escaping from the pressures of daily life, in communing with a higher power through prayer, and in finding and expressing their deepest selves.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Lewis Labelle:

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Gregory Goolsby:

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