

# Study Done on Loneliness & Self-Centeredness (an article) & VS23

Post by “Kalosyni” of September 19, 2023 at 8:49 PM

Vatican Saying 23: "Every friendship is an excellence in itself, even though it begins in mutual advantage."

The following article brings up the idea that to reduce loneliness you need to work on reducing self-centeredness.

## Quote

Research conducted over more than a decade indicates that loneliness increases self-centeredness and, to a lesser extent, self-centeredness also increases loneliness.

The findings by researchers at the University of Chicago show such effects create a positive feedback loop between the two traits: As increased loneliness heightens self-centeredness, the latter then contributes further to enhanced loneliness.

“If you get more self-centered, you run the risk of staying locked in to feeling socially isolated,” said [John Cacioppo](#), the Tiffany and Margaret Blake Distinguished Service Professor in Psychology and director of the [Center for Cognitive and Social Neuroscience](#).

## Quote

In this view, evolution has shaped the brain to incline humans toward certain emotions, thoughts and behavior. “A variety of biological mechanisms have evolved that capitalize on aversive signals to motivate us to act in ways that are essential for our reproduction or survival,” the UChicago co-authors wrote. From that perspective, **loneliness serves as the psychological counterpart of physical pain.**

“Physical pain is an aversive signal that alerts us of potential tissue damage and motivates us to take care of our physical body,” the UChicago researchers wrote. **Loneliness, meanwhile, is part of a warning system that motivates people to repair or replace their deficient social relationships.**

## Quote

## Evolution of loneliness

The finding that loneliness tends to increase self-centeredness fits the evolutionary interpretation of loneliness. From an evolutionary-biological viewpoint, people have to be concerned with their own interests. The pressures of modern society, however, are significantly different from those that prevailed when loneliness evolved in the human species, researchers found.

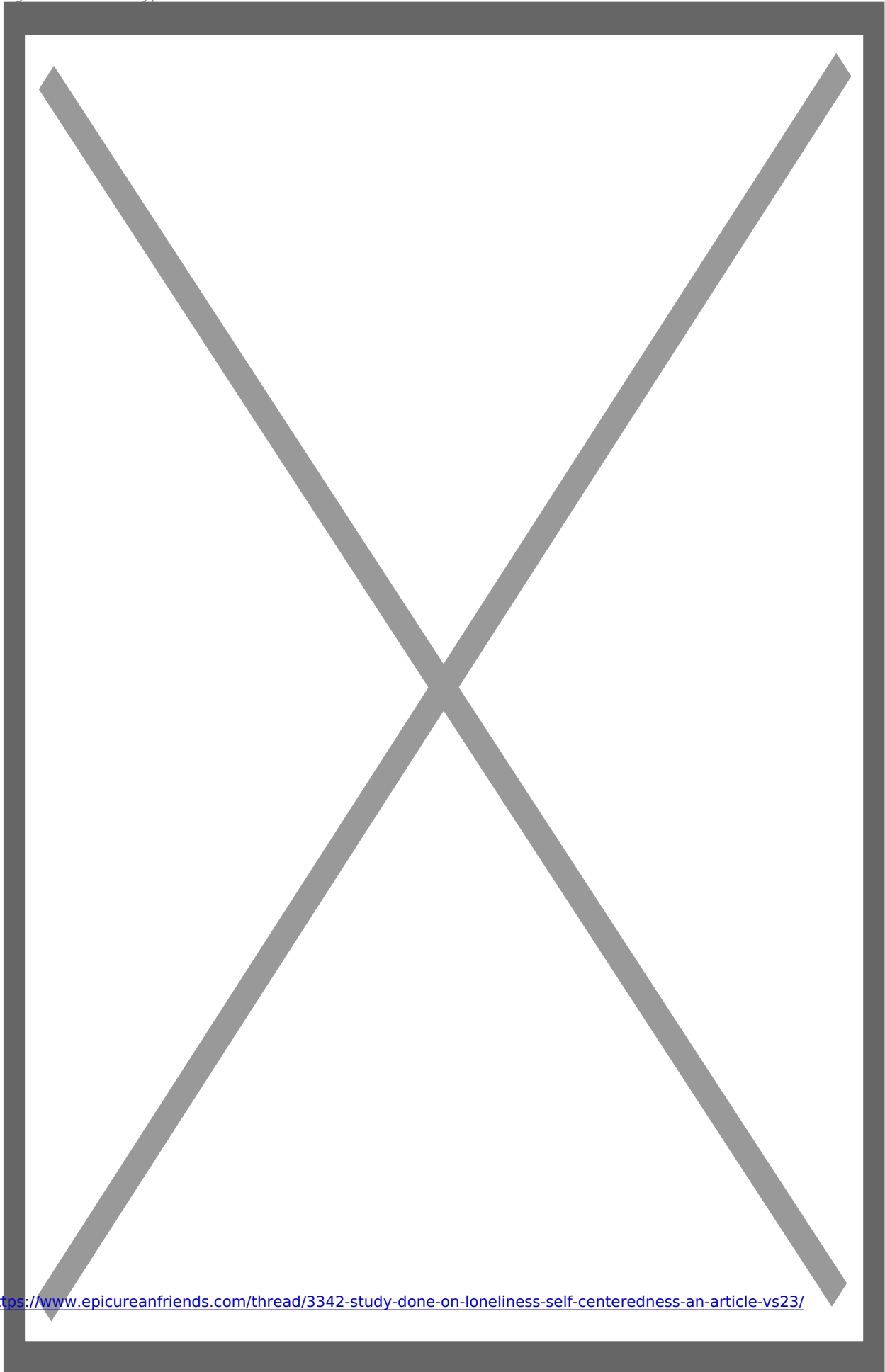
“Humans evolved to become such a powerful species, in large part due to mutual aid and protection and the changes in the brain that proved adaptive in social interactions,” John Cacioppo said. “When we don’t have mutual aid and protection, we are more likely to become focused on our own interests and welfare. That is, we become more self-centered.”

In modern society, becoming more self-centered protects lonely people in the short term but not the long term. That’s because the harmful effects of loneliness accrue over time to reduce a person’s health and well-being.

“This evolutionarily adaptive response may have helped people survive in ancient times, but in contemporary society may well make it harder for people to get out of feelings of loneliness,” John Cacioppo said.

**When humans are at their best, they provide mutual aid and protection,** Stephanie Cacioppo added. “It isn’t that one individual is sacrificial to the other. It’s that together they do more than the sum of the parts. Loneliness undercuts that focus and really makes you focus on only your interests at the expense of others.”

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[Loneliness contributes to self-centeredness for sake of self-preservation](#)

Study finds positive feedback loop between behaviors

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### **Post by “Kalosyni” of September 20, 2023 at 9:00 AM**

Some further thoughts reflecting on the above article on "self-centeredness". I think a better description of "self-centeredness" is a habit of focusing only on oneself. Everyone naturally has this trait because it is a self-preservation instinct. But some people have more of this than others. Also, in our current modern times, with the internet, digital books, and digital music we can easily entertain ourselves (by ourselves) without the "hassle" of negotiating with whom and what to do. So we can keep feelings of loneliness at bay, but at the expense of interacting with other people. And imagine how many people use their spare time in this way, so that very few people are available or looking to make new friends.

I bring this up because perhaps some of us need to remind ourselves to take a break away from self-centered activities and reach out to others - and as [PD27](#) says:

"Of all the things which wisdom acquires to produce the blessedness of the complete life, far the greatest is the possession of friendship."