

Autophobia. The fear of being alone. Although this symptom is diagnosed for people who feel anxious or unsafe when they're not around people, I think the thought of being alone is quite scary for most people. This is because we all have a voice. We as humans use our voice to communicate with each other. And our voices constantly have thoughts, feelings and ideas that want to be heard. And we want to be heard from an audience. This audience doesn't have to be anything big. The audience can be a big group of 50 people you spend time with often, or it can be a few good friends who care about what you say. Both instances have someone who listens. They might not be listening every hour of the day, but they do when we need it the most. The audience listens with care when the person is in a struggle and needs someone to talk to. But have you ever wondered what a voice does when no one is there to listen? When they have so many thoughts filled in their head but nowhere to put them? The voice screams. It begs and pleads for an audience for someone, anyone, to listen to their thoughts and emotions. The voice screams and screams and screams, until suddenly, it stops. And the cold silence sets in, where nothing remains.

I have been hearing a lot about depression and suicide rates increasing. And I think a key part to decreasing this number drastically is through communication. I believe that no one deserves to be alone. Everyone should always have a place to tell their struggles in life to a person that cares about them. A sad part of depression cases is that this is almost always true. People who are struggling with depression have loving family members and friends who are listening constantly. And there are also suicide hotlines, so no one is truly alone. But suicide rates are increasing. Why is that? Well, I think the reason why people feel isolated when they aren't is because we're starting to forget how important the audience is. Every time anyone speaks about a thought the spotlight goes to them. And everyone there listens to what they are saying. But for once, I would like to shine the light to the audience. The people who care about what the speaker says. Without them, the speaker's words will fade into nothing in mere seconds. But it's because the audience is there why words that are said can last for years. Not as a sound from a voice but as a memory in the listener's head. And the audience needs to realize that just being there to listen means so much to the person talking. By listening, they carry the torch. The torch of thoughts of the person speaking.

So, what can we do? How can we stop depression from affecting the people around us? As I've said, I believe that no one deserves to be alone. So, if you see a friend feeling down. Talk to them. Listen to what they have to say, and how they feel. Reassure them that you're there. And tell them that you're listening.

And I thank you, truly, from the bottom of my heart, for listening to what I have to say.

畑 晴都

茨木市立天王中学校

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