

ONE DAY AT A TIME

ALONE, NOT LONELY

I HAVE NEVER FOUND A COMPANION LIKE SOLITUDE. WHILE SOLITUDE CAN CARRY A NEGATIVE CONNOTATION, IT CAN BE A BOON FOR THE MIND AND SPIRIT—AND EVEN THE BODY. TRY THE GAZEBO ON THE LAKE AND SEE. PEOPLE HAVE LONG BEEN DRAWN TO SOLITUDE AS A WAY OF FOCUSING ON LIFE'S ESSENTIALS. OVER 800 YEARS AGO THERE WERE MONKS AND NUNS WHO USED SOLITUDE TO DEEPEN THEIR SPIRITUAL LIVES 2 BETTER SERVE HUMANITY. WHEN PEOPLE GO ON RETREATS, THEY LOOK FOR THE 4 Ss, **SOLITUDE, SILENCE, SIMPLICITY, & STILLNESS.** SOLITUDE'S BENEFITS ARE HARD TO QUANTIFY. SOLITUDE IS OFTEN CONFUSED WITH A SIMILAR CONCEPT—ISOLATION. WHILE SOLITUDE INVOLVES MINDFUL TIME ALONE, ISOLATION IS SEEN IN A NEGATIVE LIGHT, MORE DEPRESSIVE THAN CONTEMPLATIVE. THIS WILL EXPLAIN WHY DOING "NOTHING" IS DIFFICULT 4 MANY PEOPLE. SOLITUDE NEEDN'T INVOLVE A COMPLETE RETREAT FROM SOCIETY—ONCE YOU GET THE HANG OF IT. I THINK SOLITUDE REQUIRES US TO REMOVE OURSELVES FROM ALL DISTRACTIONS AND TO BE INWARDLY STILL. SO MANY OF US ARE ADDICTED TO HURRY; IT TAKES DISCIPLINE TO BE FREE FROM THAT ADDICTION. **WHAT WORKS FOR ME IS THAT I PICTURE MYSELF IN THE SIMPLE PRESENCE OF GOD.** SOLITUDE CAN CLEARLY SERVE AS A PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SPIRITUAL BALM, AND IT CAN ALSO BENEFIT THE BODY. THIS IS THE TRUE BEAUTY OF SOLITUDE—AND CAN BE DIFFERENT FOR EVERY PERSON. USE IT FOR UNTANGLING PERSONAL ISSUES, PONDERING A HIGHER POWER OR JUST GETTING SOME BREATHING SPACE. **SOLITUDE CAN HELP ANYONE IMPLEMENT CHANGE OR JUST APPRECIATE THE ESSENTIAL FACTS OF LIFE AND EXISTENCE.**