Book notes

*Technology, even when explicitly a communication tool, has the ability to buffer and broker our interactions.

*A great way to start in a new city is to get lost.

*Loneliness is comparable to being hungry while everyone else is eating. Its shame has a way of radiating outward, and its effect on the body have a slow but steady accumulation of health consequences.

*The revelation of loneliness is often tied to a feeling of failure of deficiency; the current situation is surely not due to just bad circumstances, but also evidence of personal failure. Part of this may be related to an accumulation of moments when being alone isn't seen as socially acceptable, or is simply unusual.

*The most searing moment in loneliness comes when a sense of separation is combined with an inescapable feeling of exposure.

*Loneliness isn't so much a challenge to get out more or interact with others, but to find new ways toward intimacy and connection. For those who found their way to loneliness along a path marked by loss, rejection, or prejudice, there is an added obstacle of overcoming reasons for fear or mistrust of others.

*Loneliness adds up, making a person more alert to criticism and less capable of tolerating unwanted exposure. In a way, there is increased vigilance to social threats and more weight given in the memory to rudeness or abrasion.

*People become less interested in speaking as loneliness increases, sometimes due to a negative recollection of being misunderstood. It's like remembering that speaking is one way to have proof that you should be lonely because your words cannot bridge the gap to another person.

*Objectification breeds loneliness, creating a gap between people that can only grow over time.

*It's not hard to imagine that the burdens of bereavement, illness, or shyness can force someone to hunker down in the closed world of a home or apartment.

*Researchers have found isolation as a key factor for reduced social sophistication, which in turn leads to more rejection.

*Children have shown that a need for attachment is greater than self-protection.

*Human groups tend to cast away individuals that struggle to fit into the group. And in a way, an isolated or outcast individual endures the same struggle from the society as a whole where there is almost a systematic effort to maintain the separation.

*There's an odd concern about someone 'hoarding' from a small apartment or room - is the issue something about how we can overstep the lines of our expected class or behavior? When a behavior is described as weird, the underlying accusation might be some violation of a class norm.

*At its worst a society uses stigma as a tool for rejection, whether it means by changing employment prospects or through denying the rights afforded others.

*Stigma also tracks closely to afflictions that change physical appearance or affect us in areas that are supposed to remain perfect.

*Disease support that focuses on survival to the point of ignoring the real possibility of death often leaves those who reach a terminal stage in a very acute place of isolation.

*The internet and its accompanying digital world offer the promises and possibilities of connection without the risk of revelation or exposure - it retains anonymity and control. But these are not ripe conditions for developing deep intimacy.

*Loneliness and longing are advantageous in that they remind us we are alive.

*The idea that our emotions are results of chemical imbalances, though perhaps sound to a certain degree, suggest our emotions are problems to be fixed rather than responses to the world around us.

*A cure for loneliness? Start by befriending yourself, and remain aware that the forces of stigma and exclusion demand constant resistance.