

drifted away from. The good doctor recommends a set of strategies targeted to the specific cause of your loneliness. If you're convinced that no one could ever [love](#) or care about you, try to fight that [pessimism](#) with some logical counter-arguments. That pessimism might include believing that others are always thinking negatively about you. Here again, try some logic to counter your skepticism by questioning your own negative assumptions. A variant of this skepticism is the tendency to engage in self-defeating behaviors that serve, ironically, to confirm your worst suspicions. Exercising your [empathy](#) can also strengthen your relationship muscles, making it more likely that those you care about will want to be close to you. One relatively easy strategy, though it requires some commitment, is to adopt a pet on whom you can practice getting and giving emotional rewards.

3. Broken bones of loss and trauma. Distress is a natural emotion that results when someone close to you dies or you suffer a [traumatic](#) experience involving your own safety. Some people seem to have a natural [resilience](#), however, or at least an ability to recover that they develop over the course of their lives. As Winch states, "Loss and trauma can shatter the pieces of our lives, ravage our relationships, and subvert our very identities" (p. 35). The experience of loss also shatters your assumptions about the world, making you realize that it's not as safe a place as you once thought. Winch wisely recommends that particularly in the immediate aftermath, you find a way to ease the pain that is consistent with your ordinary coping style. It may be too early for you to examine the meaning of the loss for your life and your future; instead, you may be better able to recover by giving yourself more time to heal.

4. The poisonous effect of guilt. Rejection, loneliness, and loss are painful experiences caused, in part, by our need for strong connections with others. In [guilt](#), you essentially are the source of your own unhappiness. [Guilt](#) can be adaptive when it shows you where you've strayed from your own [moral](#) compass. However, just as often as not, it's unhealthy. Winch describes the three types of unhealthy guilt as unresolved, survivor, and separation (or disloyalty). Unresolved guilt refers to the feelings left behind when you believe you may not have completely apologized for a wrong you committed against another person even though, in reality, you did. Survivor guilt occurs when you literally outlive someone in a case where you easily could have died yourself. In separation guilt, you feel that you don't have the right to pursue your own independent life and success because to do so makes others seem flawed in comparison. To overcome guilt, you need either to apologize (for the unresolved variety) or apologize to and then [forgive](#) yourself (for survivor or separation guilt). After you've forgiven