



Ten ways to Live Happily and Alone

Living without a marriage partner and children has its own set of challenges, but it is also an opportunity for growth and blessing. The following thoughts are written from the perspective of a committed Catholic single. Add your own reflections and share them with a friend.

1. Be positive and proactive

Believe in yourself! Focus not on 'hoping' for a partner but on finding fulfilment as a blessed, gifted, baptized Christian with a mission to fulfill. Trade in the 'poor me' mantra for 'wow...me!'

2. Seek out lifegiving people

Immerse yourself in lifegiving relationships... family, friends. Develop strong networks of people who affirm you, support your values and can share in your life in meaningful ways. It needn't be a huge network. Even one trusted friend is an enormous support.

3. Learn to love, really love

Avoid 'ghettos;' don't just hang out with singles. E.g., include some great married couples in your network. Why? Because they are a sacrament (a sign, gift, resource) for the whole Church. They have something to teach us all about loving and living as one body of Christ. Learn from the couples in your midst and apply these lessons, appropriately, to your single life.

4. Immerse yourself in the Church

For all its frailties, the Church is an extraordinary stronghold of faith with two thousand years of resources to offer: the scriptures, the writings of the saints, the witness of the martyrs, opportunities

for prayer, worship, healing, reconciliation... so much inspiration and nourishment for the journey.

5. Pray

Cultivate a strong prayer life, an intimacy with the Lord. Being able to go to that place in your heart where you know you are never alone is a true life-source. Take time and make an effort to pray every day. As with any important relationship, a relationship with God requires time and attention.

6. Be open to healing

The loneliness often attributed to single life may not be due to absence of a marriage partner but other, perhaps hurtful experiences which can, with patient and prayerful attention, be healed. Make the most of healing opportunities: retreats, renewal programs, counselling, prayer, the sacraments.

7. Take risks...wisely

Being single means taking risks as you explore a new relationship, ask someone out on a date, meet his/her family for the first time... It takes courage to go through these dynamics repeatedly. Take risks wisely. Remember: being single and at peace is better than being in a 'relationship' that does not nurture your self-worth and essential values.

8. Make your presence felt

If you are arriving at a social function on your own, make your presence felt! Take extra care with your make-up, your dress, your appearance. Bring a plate, a bottle of wine or a bunch of flowers. Reach out to people. You needn't be an extrovert; just don't psychologically become a wall flower!

9. Be generous. Be a giver.

Be generous with your time and talents. Without the same family and financial obligations as their married peers, single people have a particular freedom to turn their time and resources to worthy causes.

10. Enjoy!

Enjoy every advantage and blessing of being single and childless: time to keep fit, make spontaneous plans, enjoy a sleep-in. It's okay for your married-with-children friends to sometimes be jealous of your freedom! By your zest and thirst for life, remind others that living passionately as a single person is a real joy.

Helpful Hint

With more people marrying later and living longer, an appreciation of the single life is likely to deepen, find its niche and eventually have its 'day' in society. (Dare we dream of a Year of the Single Person?) In bringing about that 'day' the single people of our times have a particular mission to offer their insights, forge and model lifegiving paths. May our Church recognize and call upon their contribution! So, if you are 'still' single, don't forget to add 'change-maker' and 'prophet' to your many roles in life.

TeresaPirola.net

Text: Teresa Pirola

Design: Sarann Ryan

© The Story Source, 1998, 2010

