

Chapter 1

Understanding Solitude

■ **Redefining Solitude: Not Just Loneliness**

When you hear the word “solitude,” do you imagine a lone figure walking down a misty beach, or perhaps a hermit on top of a mountain? Well, let’s toss those clichés aside. Solitude isn’t about being stranded in the wilderness, nor is it the same as feeling lonely while scrolling through social media at 2:00 a.m.

Solitude is something far richer and more purposeful than that. It’s not a punishment, and it’s certainly not an absence of people. Solitude is a choice — an act of self-care, if you will. It’s that intentional moment where you decide to hang out with yourself, like the best date you’ve ever been on,