

Solemate

Also by Lauren Mackler

Speaking of Success:
World Class Experts Share Their Secrets,
featuring Jack Canfield, Stephen Covey,
Lauren Mackler, and Ken Blanchard;
edited by Insight Publishing

Solemate

Master the Art of Aloneness &
Transform Your Life

Lauren Mackler



HAY HOUSE

Australia • Canada • Hong Kong • India
South Africa • United Kingdom • United States

Published and distributed in the United Kingdom by:

Hay House UK Ltd, 292B Kensal Rd, London W10 5BE.
Tel.: (44) 20 8962 1230; Fax: (44) 20 8962 1239. www.hayhouse.co.uk

Published and distributed in the United States of America by:

Hay House, Inc., PO Box 5100, Carlsbad, CA 92018-5100. Tel.: (1) 760 431 7695 or (800) 654 5126; Fax: (1) 760 431 6948 or (800) 650 5115.
www.hayhouse.com

Published and distributed in Australia by:

Hay House Australia Ltd, 18/36 Ralph St, Alexandria NSW 2015. Tel.: (61) 2 9669 4299; Fax: (61) 2 9669 4144. www.hayhouse.com.au

Published and distributed in the Republic of South Africa by:

Hay House SA (Pty), Ltd, PO Box 990, Witkoppen 2068.
Tel./Fax: (27) 11 467 8904. www.hayhouse.co.za

Published and distributed in India by:

Hay House Publishers India, Muskaan Complex, Plot No.3, B-2, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi – 110 070. Tel.: (91) 11 4176 1620;
Fax: (91) 11 4176 1630. www.hayhouse.co.in

Distributed in Canada by:

Raincoast, 9050 Shaughnessy St, Vancouver, BC V6P 6E5.
Tel.: (1) 604 323 7100; Fax: (1) 604 323 2600

© Lauren Mackler, 2009

The moral rights of the author have been asserted.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced by any mechanical, photographic or electronic process, or in the form of a phonographic recording; nor may it be stored in a retrieval system, transmitted or otherwise be copied for public or private use, other than for 'fair use' as brief quotations embodied in articles and reviews, without prior written permission of the publisher.

The author of this book does not dispense medical advice or prescribe the use of any technique as a form of treatment for physical or medical problems without the advice of a physician, either directly or indirectly. The intent of the author is only to offer information of a general nature to help you in your quest for emotional and spiritual wellbeing. In the event you use any of the information in this book for yourself, which is your constitutional right, the author and the publisher assume no responsibility for your actions.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-84850-110-2

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
TJ International, Padstow, Cornwall.



Mixed Sources

Product group from well-managed
forests and other controlled sources
www.fsc.org Cert no. SGS-COC-2482
©1996 Forest Stewardship Council



I DEDICATE THIS BOOK TO MY HERO
AND FATHER, EDWARD D. MACKLER, M.D.

CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i>	ix
---------------------------	----

PART I: UNCOVERING YOUR AUTHENTIC SELF

Chapter 1: Beginning the Journey	3
Chapter 2: Embracing Your Aloneness	19
Chapter 3: Uncovering Your Conditioned Self	41
Chapter 4: Managing Fear So It Doesn't Manage You	75
Chapter 5: Living Deliberately Versus by Default	107

PART II: LIBERATING YOUR AUTHENTIC SELF

Chapter 6: Reclaiming Your Innate Wholeness ..	143
Chapter 7: Becoming the Partner You Seek	189
Chapter 8: Creating Your Life Vision	221
Chapter 9: Building an Inner and Outer Support System	241
Chapter 10: Bringing Your Vision to Life	275
Chapter 11: Sustaining Your Commitment	295

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	305
<i>Appendix: Sample Action Plans</i>	307
<i>Notes</i>	313
<i>Glossary</i>	319
<i>Inner and Outer Support Resources</i>	325
<i>About the Author</i>	355
<i>Note to the Reader</i>	357
<i>Index</i>	359

INTRODUCTION

This book is about *you*. Mastering the art of aloneness is about having a good relationship with yourself. It's about becoming the person you were meant to be, treating yourself well, and shedding the old beliefs and behaviors that limit your ability to live a healthy, happy, satisfying life—with or without a partner.

When we are born, we are whole, integrated human beings filled with tremendous potential. We feel good about ourselves and are able to experience and express the full range of human emotions. As we grow up, we adapt to the peculiarities—and even pathologies—of our own families by adopting patterns of thought and behavior, some of which erode our innate wholeness. We carry these patterns into adulthood, and they shape our lives, our feelings about ourselves, and our relationships with others.

Mastering the art of aloneness is about reclaiming your innate wholeness, rather than seeking an ideal partner—an outer soul mate—to give you a sense of completeness and well-being. It's a gradual, step-by-step process that involves understanding where your self-defeating patterns come from and how to move beyond them. That means uncovering and retrieving your authentic self—the person you really are beneath the layers of your life conditioning—and living in a conscious and deliberate way so you can achieve the results that you want from life and feel complete and happy on your own.

I first developed the Mastering the Art of Aloneness workshop in 1998—initially as a 12-week series, to allow people ample time to go through the process while receiving ongoing support. When I discovered that a lot of people found it difficult to take time out of their busy schedules to commit to a 12-week program, I began holding intensive weekend workshops. Those early 12-week sessions were particularly gratifying, because not only was I able to give people the tools they needed to begin to make changes in their lives, but as they each went off and used these tools, I could actually witness the dramatic transformations they were experiencing in their own lives from week to week. It’s exciting to watch, and just as exciting to experience. This book gives you the same tools I use in my private coaching practice and in my workshops, all of which are designed to help you transform your life.

Throughout *Solemate*, I share my own personal stories as well as those of some of the clients with whom I’ve worked. I’ve concealed the identity of my clients, in some cases changing details of their lives to protect their identities while staying true to their underlying experiences. I’ve made a conscious effort to avoid sexist language, as well as the tedium of referring to all these imaginary people as “he or she” throughout the text. So I’ve randomly used the word “he” or the word “she” when I provide examples, trying to alternate between them when I’m not referring to particular clients. Other than that, please don’t infer anything from where or how I’ve used these particular pronouns.

My interest in the field of personal development began in the early ’80s in California when I attended a series of Insight Seminars. Those personal-development

workshops, combined with a growing interest in holistic healing, laid the foundation for my later education in the field. In the years that followed, I underwent training as a workshop facilitator and collaborated with my then-husband, a German physician, on a series of holistic healing workshops in Europe. Inspired in part by a seminar I attended led by Dr. Bernie Siegel, author of *Love, Medicine & Miracles* and a pioneer in integrating emotional and spiritual approaches into the healing of life-threatening illnesses, I created a workshop for cancer patients called *Cancer as a Chance to Live*. I studied breath therapy in India, completed a psychotherapeutic counseling program in Germany, and trained in mind-body modalities such as bioenergetics, voice dialogue, emotional release, and craniosacral therapy. But it wasn't until I returned to the United States in 1995, began a new course of personal-development work, and completed my American degree in psychology that the underpinnings of my approach first began to take shape.

The catalyst was my own struggle with loneliness and depression in the wake of a devastating divorce. That, in turn, led me to begin the personal-development work that helped me transform my life. I had to dig deep into my past to understand my family of origin and the roots of my own dysfunction. Through that process, I came to understand the crucial connection between our life conditioning, the self-defeating patterns that diminish the quality of our lives, and the steps we can take to change those limiting patterns. I've developed what I believe is a unique method for helping others uncover their authentic selves and reclaim their innate wholeness so they can live a fuller, richer life on their own—or with someone else. My hope, in writing this book, is to give you the

road map to achieving that life—a road map that I, like most people, never had.

Now, a few notes before you begin. Mastering the art of aloneness is a process. As its name suggests, this is not something that happens overnight. You can't just snap your fingers and make it happen. Here are the three fundamental keys, the must-haves for mastering this art: focus, strategy, and commitment.

First, you need a *focus*. Mastering the art of aloneness is about *living in alignment with your life's purpose and your authentic self*—what you were meant to do and who you were meant to be. That's your *focus*. Finding your focus is central to this entire process. Throughout this book, I'll be giving you the tools you need to define and clarify the life you want and to identify and understand what areas of your life you need and want to focus on. Ultimately, you'll be aligning everything you do—your thoughts, your behaviors, and your actions—in a conscious and deliberate manner to create that life.

Second, you need a *strategy*. This book is your road map. It's designed to enable you to develop a specific strategy *of your own* to get where you want to go, a step-by-step action plan that meets your individual needs. It includes a series of exercises that will help you understand who you are—under all those layers of conditioning—and where you want to go. You'll be exploring your own family of origin to identify the specific thought and behavior patterns that are holding you back from achieving your full potential and the specific steps you need to take to change those deeply ingrained patterns. In addition, I'll provide you with guidance on developing a set of skills that are essential for achieving mastery

over your own life and improving your relationship with yourself—and with others.

Finally, this process requires a *commitment*. It involves creating an ideal relationship with yourself. To be fully committed to this process, you have to feel deserving of it and you have to love yourself. After all, you're not going to feel compelled to invest your time and energy in somebody you don't like very much. That's a central theme of this book: providing the guidance you need to build a healthy, constructive, and loving relationship with yourself.

As you take the first steps toward mastering aloneness, recognize that you'll slip up. Imagine how a typical smoker quits smoking. He throws away that first pack of cigarettes. Then he might weaken and buy another pack, then just smoke a few cigarettes, then give it up for another few days or weeks, then start up again. And then, one day, he's just done with it. He's tried to quit, and finally he just stops. That back-and-forth is part of the process. Like quitting smoking, mastering aloneness is about *changing your habitual patterns of behavior*. As you begin the process, it's important to be supportive and gentle with yourself. When you slip up, think of it as simply getting more information about what doesn't work for you.

Making a commitment to mastering the art of aloneness means accepting the fact that you will slip up; treating yourself with love and compassion when you do, and then moving forward. That's the commitment I hope you will make to yourself before you turn the next page.