

known, or just familiar?

most of the people in your life recognise you. far fewer could describe what you are afraid of. that gap is where adult loneliness actually lives. here is how to find it and start closing it, on one page.

this is a page to be honest on, not just read. have your actual life in your head as you go, the group chats, the work people, the friend you have been meaning to text for four months. write the true answer, not the generous one. nobody sees this but you.

01 sort them into two columns

write down every person you would call part of your life. now split them: familiar people recognise you, your face, your job, your general vibe. known people could describe what you are actually afraid of. most people find the familiar column is long and the known column has one or two names, or none.

FROM ME *a short known column is not a verdict on you. it is the normal result of leaving school. everyone i know has this list and thinks they are the only one.*

→ write both columns out properly. do not round up, and notice which name you hesitated over.

02

find the last real question

when did someone last ask you something that was not logistics? not how are you, not how was your weekend, but a real question they waited for the answer to. and when did you last ask one? a group chat can be active every day for a year without a single one going either way.

FROM ME *surface talk is not a sign people do not care. it is a sign nobody has gone first yet.*

- write the last real question you were asked, and roughly when. if you cannot date it, write that instead.

03

name the condition you are missing

the sociologist rebecca adams found friendship needs three things: proximity, repeated unplanned interaction, and a setting that quietly rewards being vulnerable. school handed you all three for free. adulthood hands you none. your loneliness is usually one specific missing condition, not a character flaw.

FROM ME *this is the reframe that took the shame off it for me. you did not lose the knack. you left the machine.*

- which of the three is most missing from your life right now? write the one, and where it went.

04 rebuild that one thing on purpose

the machine can be built by hand, it is just unglamorous. proximity and unplanned interaction come from the same place at the same time, repeatedly: a weekly class, a run club, the same cafe on the same morning, the same volunteer shift. not one event. the same thing, on repeat, until you stop being a stranger there.

FROM ME *the repetition is the whole mechanism. one perfect meetup does nothing. the fourth boring tuesday is where it starts.*

- pick one recurring thing you could show up to weekly. write it down with a day and a time, or it is not real.

05 go first, and be a bit awkward about it

someone has to say the slightly embarrassing thing: i like talking to you, do you want to get coffee properly. it will feel like too much. it will land more often than it does not, because almost everyone your age is feeling exactly this and waiting for someone else to move first. wanting a friend out loud is allowed.

FROM ME *we are not in middle school. nobody is going to gossip about you for wanting a friend.*

- name one person from your familiar column you want in the known one. write the exact message you would send them.

THE FASTEST VERSION

pick anyone in your life and ask: could they describe what i am afraid of? if yes, you are known. if they only know your name, your job and your face, you are familiar. the gap between those two, not an empty calendar, is what loneliness actually is.



SO WHO ARE YOU MOVING FROM FAMILIAR TO KNOWN, AND WHAT ARE YOU ACTUALLY GOING TO SAY TO THEM?

the whole idea, and the diagnostic for one specific person, live at riadms.com/name-it

one letter a week, the words as i find them · riadms.com/free · youtube @ria-dms