

A BE HAPPY RETIRED COMPANION

The Loneliness Companion

*For the quiet house — small doors back to company,
opened gently, one at a time.*



From Farook's desk · behappyretired.com

The Loneliness Companion

Let me say the first thing plainly: loneliness in retirement is common — more common than anyone admits at the coffee shop. The career carried company built in; then one day the calendar empties, the house goes quiet, and the silence has a weight. None of this is a failure. It is a season — and seasons can be worked with.

Three small doors

Loneliness shrinks when we open doors — not all at once, just one at a time. Here are the three that open easiest:

Door one — One voice. A single conversation a day counts. Not a gathering, not a party — one voice. A call, a chat with the stall-keeper, a neighbor at the gate. Small contact, repeated daily, is the strongest medicine nobody prescribes.

Door two — One place. Choose a place where people simply *are* — a kopitiam, a park bench, a library corner, a place of worship — and become a regular. You don't have to perform. Familiar faces do quiet work on the heart.

Door three — One practice. A small weekly thing with other people in it: a walk group, a class, volunteering, mahjong, choir, gardening club. Practice means it repeats — repetition is where acquaintances become friends.

A gentle week to begin

- **Day 1:** Call or message one person. Just to say you were thinking of them.
- **Day 2:** Have your morning drink *outside* the house, somewhere with people.

- **Day 3:** Learn the name of someone you see often — the guard, the barista, the neighbor.
- **Day 4:** Say yes to one invitation you'd normally decline — or make one.
- **Day 5:** Spend an hour in your chosen "one place."
- **Day 6:** Do one kind thing for someone without being asked.
- **Day 7:** Notice how the house sounds now. Write down one thing that changed.

The hardest part — starting a conversation

If it has been a while, the first sentence is the heaviest. Borrow one of mine:

"Hello — I've been meaning to call. No reason. How have you been?"

"I see you here often and realized I don't know your name. I'm Farook."

"I'm trying a new habit of one real conversation a day. You've drawn the lucky straw."

And a word of care: if the quiet ever feels too heavy for small doors — if the days stay dark rather than merely quiet — that is not weakness, and it is not yours to carry alone. A chat with your doctor, or a counselor, is a strong person's step. This companion is company for the ordinary loneliness of the season; deeper waters deserve a hand on the railing.

This companion grew from Breaking Free from Loneliness and When the House Goes Quiet — the two letters readers write to me about most. You'll find them, and one gentle letter a week, free, at behappyretired.com. — Farook