

YOU ARE ALONE (JUST LIKE EVERYONE ELSE)
THE ELLE WORD
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I think that, perhaps, self-reflection comes in many forms: writing, music, poetry, etc.

Generally, when I start to ponder life and the direction that it is going, I start to—for lack of a better word—freak out, which is probably not nearly as constructive as writing, singing or watching a movie.

At times, I am plagued with a world of what-ifs.

What if I fail my writing class?

What if I don't get into grad school?

What if I can't pay off my student loans?

What if I don't have a summer job?

What if I'm not successful and unhappy the rest of my life?

What if I'm alone forever?

And, obviously, the list goes on.

There have even been several books written, my friend informed me, about conquering one's quarter-life crisis, a time (defined by the glorious Wikipedia) in one's 20s when one begins to feel anxiety about one's career or life in general. About a month ago, the term was foreign to me. Everyone has most likely heard of the crazy mid-life crisis that drives people to cheat on their spouses or buy new sports cars, but I had no idea that anything having to do with a quarter-life crisis even existed.

With the new and increasing pressures put on today's young people, we are being forced into premature existential crises.

But the fact of the matter is, I believe that everyone has certain insecurities.

My friend had recently had a quarter-life crisis of her own, and recommended that I check out Existentialcrisis.com (a site no longer in, well, existence).

As I sat at my desk, with all of my lights off, I stared at the computer screen. The site was completely black, and the starkly white words resounded in my head: "You are alone," was all it said.

I didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

But then I got to thinking about it. And really, all we have in life are ourselves. We alone control our destinies, and we alone can be responsible for pursuing our own happiness.

On the other hand, though, so many of us take our independence to new extremes. In the age of technology, when so many products are created to save us time and connect the world, we lock ourselves in the bedroom and spend hours on the Internet or Xbox, walk down the street on cell phones or with headphones in our ears or constantly have the television on just to drone out the silence of our studio apartments.

We isolate ourselves, so is it any wonder that we worry about being alone?

And maybe in the end, all we have is ourselves, but we can seek out the company of others—our friends and our families—to alleviate the inevitable existential stress.

So I suppose what I'm trying to say is that we should value our personal relationships with others, rather than encouraging our isolation by simply being consumed by the what-ifs.