

# Isolation in the industry

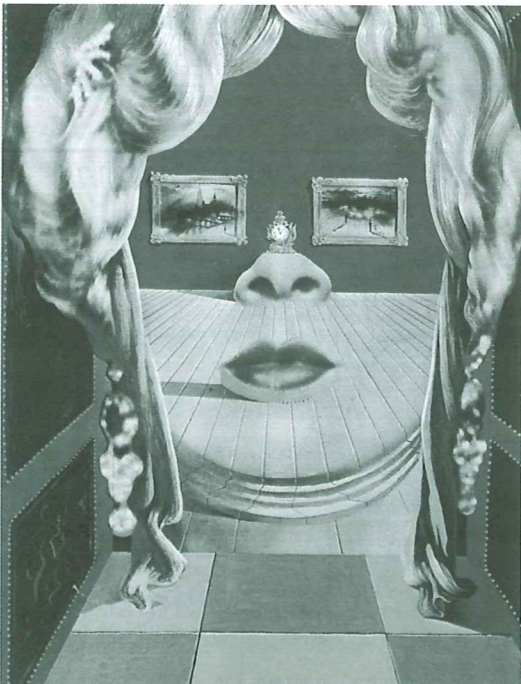
## Sometimes working in this industry involves:

- keeping to oneself vs making friends in industry
- difficulties not telling partners/family/friends

We are all social beings that need each other. Without regular and positive contact we can feel lonely. Everyone feels lonely at times in their life. It really just depends how long this period goes on for and how it affects you. Sometimes it can happen when you feel you are not important or valuable to anyone. If this goes on for some time it can make you think everything is useless and you can become isolated. You can think that you are separate or different from other people.

When we feel separate from other people our thinking can become unclear and this can make us feel even more isolated than before. If you feel you have little to share with others you don't bother to talk about yourself.

If you are facing changes in your life and you feel there is not one with whom you can share your feelings and experiences, then you become discouraged, and lose your sense of desire and motivation to get involved in new situations. You isolate yourselves from people and activities.



Pic: Salvador Dalí (Hamlum Publishing 1993)

Loneliness is neither a permanent state nor "bad" in itself. It is important to recognise that loneliness is something that can be changed. Your loneliness may result from a variety of needs. It may involve the need to develop a circle of friends or a special friend. It may involve learning to do things for yourself, without friends. Or it may involve learning to feel better or more content about yourself in general.

Remind yourself that your loneliness will not last forever. Look for ways to get involved with people, eg put yourself in new situations where you will meet people. Become involved in activities in which you have genuine interest. Work at developing your social skills by practicing getting to know others and letting them know you. Don't judge new people on the basis of past relationships. Instead try to see each person you meet from a new perspective. Remember that intimate friendships take time to develop so avoid rushing by sharing too quickly or expecting that others will. Let the process happen naturally. Value all of your friendships and their special characteristics rather than believing that only a romantic relationship will relieve your loneliness.

When you focus attention and energy on needs you can currently meet you will learn to develop new ways to meet your other needs.

In summary, be conscious of how the industry can isolate you from others. Be aware that isolation and loneliness will lessen when you focus your attention and energies to meeting new people and learning new skills.

Gabby Skelsey

The sex worker reference group may be a good place to start. It is made up of industry people, it meets in a different place and in a different context. Sometimes venturing into the outside world and doing it with people who understand where you come from, can be a way of finding out from others what works and what doesn't and exploring some new ideas for yourself. Telephone Gabby at RhED, freecall 1800 458 752 to find out when and where the group meets.