

Summer Edition | July 2021

What makes people confident when alone in social situations?

I am out to lunch. Alone. Sitting in my favourite restaurant enjoying the food and atmosphere and observing people!

Great conversation with a waitress about being comfortable to "eat alone". It has got me wondering just what is it that helps individuals feel so completely comfortable to go into crowded places and enjoy the whole experience alone? I am also wondering why more people don't do it.

One of the reasons is that society dictates that we should be in pairs or groups often of even numbers. Everything is evenly numbered for example fairground rides, restaurant tables, seats on public transport and so on. 2 4 6 8 nothing odd numbered. In the restaurant where I was dining, I was greeted with the offer of getting a drink whilst I waited for my friends. Why is that? I am here! I booked my table; I booked the table for one and I requested a specific table and yet it was set for two. Is society so unwilling to embrace individuals? We enter this world alone and we leave it alone. Our time should be accepted, embraced, and encouraged whether we are alone or in company.

As we come out of lockdown there will be some people who want to do things and yet are lacking confidence when alone in social situations. The 5 tips below are designed to help you feel at ease on your own in any social situation

1. Know who you are and what you want
Knowing you can choose the right places for you, what do you want to get out of your experience of eating alone, holidaying alone, going to a concert alone and any other social situation? By knowing what brings you enjoyment and happiness you can choose your environment with much more clarity.
2. Be comfortable and happy in your own company
That takes practise and a desire to be comfortable when out socially on your own. No more FOMO (fear of missing out). Get happy with your own company then your confidence will grow. Desire is the driver. Desire to stand in your own power. What then follows is being completely relaxed in your own company. If *you* are relaxed in your own company then others will be relaxed in your company.
3. Choose the atmosphere you want to be in when you want to be in it
Atmosphere is everything to me. I thrive in a buzzing environment, and it recharges my batteries. Going out alone socially in an upbeat environment is what I want. The chatter and buzz feed my soul. The louder the better! What atmosphere do you want?

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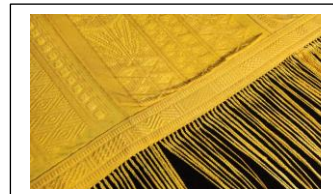
Unusual animals who naturally help humans

We all know about guide dogs and police dogs but few of us consider a snake as a friend. However, the King Snake is just that. Not only can it be a sociable pet, it is also a natural predator of rats and other rodents and of course, poisonous snakes. It is not venomous itself however, it is immune to many other snake's venoms and thus makes a handy pet to have around the house or farmers' fields, depending on where you live. This snake gives a new meaning to the saying "a Snake in the Grass".

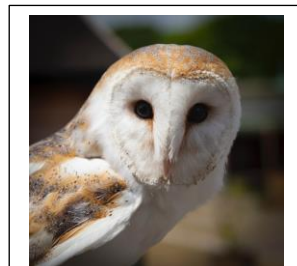


Few people think of the monkey as a friend. Most farmers consider them to be a nuisance at best and a pest at worst. However, in Southeast Asia, domesticated Macaques are trained to collect coconuts and are 10 times more productive than humans doing the same job.

The humble spider is, wrongly, hated by many but consider the world without them. We would be inundated with flies and life would be almost impossible. Apart from the nuisance of flies, disease would be rife. Next time you catch and put out a spider be kind to it. Spiders also spin silk. Spider silk makes excellent clothes although very costly compared to clothes from silkworms. It takes 50,000 spiders to spin enough silk for a shirt. Thus, in antiquity, only the emperor has spider silk clothes.



Animals who kill pests are vital to us. We have already mentioned the spider and the king snake, we must also give a mention to bats, birds, and dragonflies all whom consume copious quantities of mosquitoes. Owls, particularly Barn Owls, often live in domestic buildings and in return, kill rodents.



What is financial security?

In the world of finance a lot of importance is placed on "security". What is security?

In a nutshell it is the thing that lets you sleep at night. It is more akin to a hot water bottle that never gets cold. Let me explain.



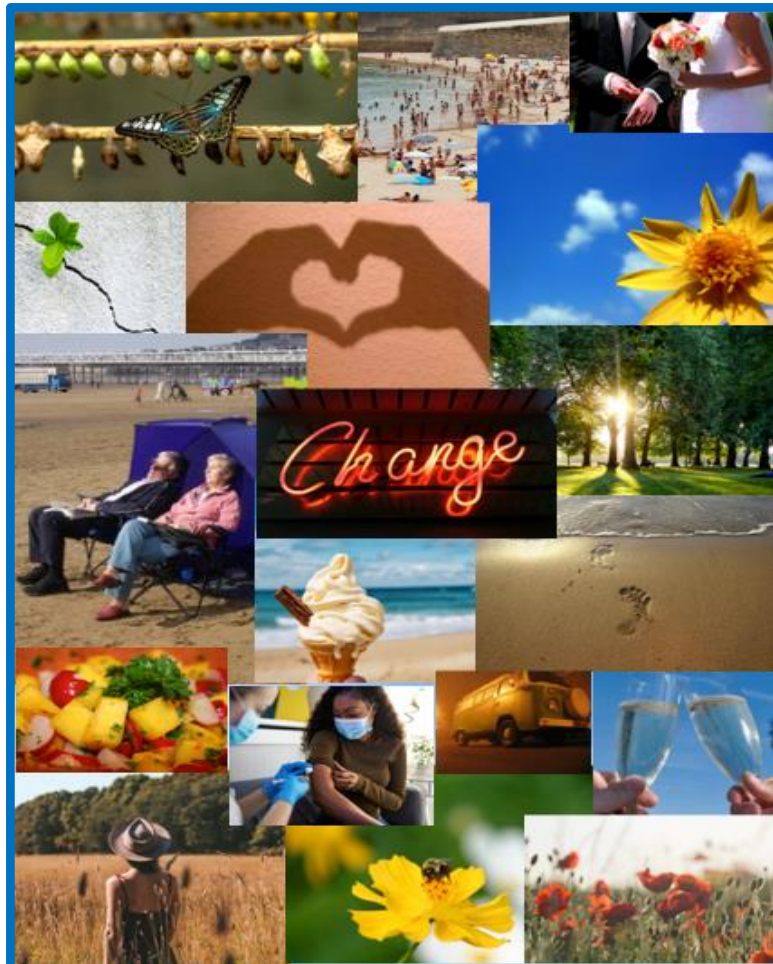
Every investment opportunity comes with the caveat *your capital is at risk and your investment may go up as well as down*. Another caveat we are familiar with is *past performance is no guarantee of future performance*.

Security is what diminishes all these fears. When you deposit money in a savings account you get a small return for greater security because the bank guarantees £85,000. What if you want a greater return **and** a greater security? Most investments that offer a greater return have a greater risk for example stocks and shares.

For any investment look at the security. This can be anything that is not part of the investment itself. For example property, gold, diamonds, watches, antiques. I like to think of the pawn shop argument. I will lend you £x if the object you deposit is worth at least double that amount at its lowest selling price.



The same works with security on your investments. Make sure the security offered is at least twice the amount you are willing to invest.



4. Be happy in the company of couples and groups

We can learn a lot from couples, both positive and negative. Sometimes the best conversations are those we have with complete strangers. That is my experience - and I do many things alone including going to the theatre and concert trips, travelling extensively internationally, dining out from Michelin restaurants to gastro pubs, staying in hotels across the world and other varied activities. Couples are far more likely to interact with you as an individual person. When recently holidaying alone in the UK I was enjoying the company and conversation of one such couple when it seemed, quite out of the blue, I was asked ..." do you always holiday alone?" I had to stop and think about the question because until then, I had been unaware that I was on my own.

5. Be open and willing to put yourself in new social situations

If you choose a new situation remain in the present moment. Burying your head in a book or being glued to your phone means you are missing out on the experience. Soak up the buzz, smile at people, remain approachable as well as approaching others.

During the pandemic both in and out of lockdown almost on a weekly basis I had some amazing, long, interesting, and deep conversations with complete strangers. Even if you have lots of people around you regularly its healthy to do things alone. It brings a different perspective and experience to your relationship, to family dynamics and to friendships. It keeps your mind open and encourages you to think about things differently.

That is a healthy mindset and attitude from which everyone can benefit. Enjoy the opening from the Pandemic and dare to do something alone.

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