



## On My Own: The Art of Being a Woman Alone

By Florence Falk

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### On My Own: The Art of Being a Woman Alone By Florence Falk

At some point over the course of the average American woman's life, she will find herself alone, whether she is divorced, widowed, single, or in a loveless, isolating relationship. And when that time comes, it is likely that she will be at a loss as to how to handle it. As a society, we have an unspoken but omnipresent belief that a woman alone is an outcast, inherently flawed in some way. In this invigorating, supportive book, psychotherapist Florence Falk aims to take the fear, doubt, confusion, and helplessness out of being a woman alone. Falk invites all women to find their own paths toward an authentic selfhood, to discover the pleasures and riches of solitude, and to reconnect with others through a newfound sense of self-confidence.

Like so many women before her, Florence Falk found herself divorced, alone, and unsure of herself. Soon she realized that by embracing her solitude for what it was—a potentially enriching and life-altering experience—she could turn what once would have felt like “loneliness” into a far more positive and empowered “aloneness.” Falk notes that each of us has two opposing drives: one causes us to yearn to make close connections with others, and the other pulls us back into ourselves, into the need for selfhood and certainty that can only be shaped through solitude. In order to be whole, she says, we must heed both of those impulses. But in our modern culture, the former is stressed while the latter is neglected, even vilified. *On My Own* boldly shifts that paradigm.

With inspiring, intimate stories of women from all backgrounds, Falk illuminates the essential role that being alone plays in women's lives. Whether she is in a stable relationship or on her own, every woman must learn to be by herself; for if she can be fully free, unfettered by society's stigmas about being alone, life and all its possibilities will open up for her. And as Falk demonstrates, once a woman has discovered the richness of solitude, she is not likely to give it up so easily.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

After two divorces and more than two decades as a psychoanalyst, Falk is an expert on the concept of being a woman alone—a term she prefers because "as a distinct category within women's culture, it formally elevates our presence and status, helps us to achieve visibility and expression, and allows us to redress our marginalized state." Hyperbole aside, there's no denying that to embrace being a woman alone isn't easy in a society where "bachelors are always eligible," while "'spinsters,' almost by definition, are ready for the dumpster." But as Falk makes clear in this useful and appealing manual, it's inaccurate, unfair and unhealthy to equate being alone with being unwanted or a failure. Some may cringe at her flowery language, but she offers plenty of evidence for her central thesis that "aloneness is an opportunity, a state brimming with potentiality, with resources for renewed life." Drawing from her own experiences, those of her patients, and examples from such writers as Marion Milner and cultural figures like Kitty Carlisle Hart, Falk offers plenty of material to help even women with partners to understand the distinction between being abandoned and choosing to be alone, and to appreciate the healing and nurturing benefits of solitude. (Mar.)

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### Review

"Florence Falk's *On My Own* is a provocative, smart read for any woman who is alone, wants to be alone, or is figuring out how to be alone. An empowering, emotionally honest book that is long overdue."

—Amy Sohn, author of *Run Catch Kiss* and *My Old Man*

"In *On My Own* Florence Falk bravely and soulfully invites women to reimagine aloneness—to see it as a gift rather than a failure. Her book is a call to wholeness, independence, and empowerment."

—Eve Ensler, author of *The Vagina Monologues*

"Finally, an insightful and powerful book that guides us towards inner freedom that is possible when we befriend aloneness. This is for all women, single or not: The stories and practical guidance offered in this book teach us about living and loving fully."

—Tara Brach, Buddhist teacher and author of

*Radical Acceptance: Embracing Your Life with the Heart of a Buddha*

### About the Author

Florence Falk has been a psychotherapist in private practice for the past twenty years. She has given lectures and workshops throughout the country.

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