





# The Alphabet of Belonging

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*"Why do we make ourselves so open to such easy damage? Is it all loneliness? Is it all fear? Or is it just to experience those narcotic moments of belonging with someone else?"<sup>75</sup>*

*(David Levithan; Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist; 2014)*

No one wants to relive that feeling we have in a crowd where gazes are passing by without noticing. Without noticing us. No one wants to feel lonely among the crowd of people we interact with every day - at work or in a private setting.

No one wants to feel stressed from just thinking about stepping through the door of the school or office – the places where we ought to belong.

No one wants to feel left behind.

No one wants to feel powerless.

No one wants to feel lonely or unseen.

In the previous chapters, I have shown the variety of conditions that affects our individual feeling of belongingness and the lack of thereof. These are: personalized definitions, examples of how they are challenged by our life circumstances, together with the indication of which of them are universal – based on human biology – and which are driven by our own interpretations.

Loneliness is the state that is highly subjective – we ourselves interpret whether we get enough social interactions, as comparing to our needs. We all sense a common truth that one can be lonely in a crowd, in the same way as one can be lonely in a relationship.

If this is the common wisdom, perhaps the reverse be true: that one can belong to oneself? Even the condition as common as stepping into the unknown, can be mitigated by a sense of confidence around belonging to self. Either we have a trust that the new circumstances can be beneficial to us, or we are threatened by them.

Can we have any control over how others perceive us? No, but we can influence it.

Belonging to ourselves means we can influence our surroundings so that our interactions are meaningful, that we live non-lonely and fulfilling lives and we experience growth. We can craft our life responses so that we don't feel stressed and the others don't feel threatened by us.

We can build connections that matter. We can become the door-openers to successful integration.

We can be accepted for who we are. It is our choice how we see the situation and environment we step into. Our experiencing self drives what we take away

from it. Do we take away a lesson for life, or do we take away a confirmation of our negative preconditioning?

If the glass is half-empty, can it ever be filled?

If the glass is half-full, what does it take to fill it up?

In this part of the book I recap the earlier identified areas of focus and self-awareness—this time in alphabetical order, making it easy to select, skip or reread —aiming to consolidate the diverse language around the state of belonging, whether that is in a relationship, family, workplace, or a social, or spiritual environment. This will allow readers to put the feeling of belonging into perspective and allow for various cognitive interpretations of our own life events.

In small bites, following the basic alphabet, I simplify the complexity of behavioral and social psychology. I translate those concepts into actionable nibbles. Some of them are supported by exercises, others are given extra spaces – both aim to trigger your own self-reflection. In other words, I hope to help you find some solutions to your feeling of lack of belonging – in case it ever reoccurs to you.

Do you dare to reach out for the prize of belongingness?

I strongly encourage you to do so.

The alphabet of belonging had been addressed to my younger self. I wish I had learned it in school.

Nevertheless, I trust it will be a valuable gift for those who want to feel belongingness at all times.

A

Awareness  
and Knowing  
Self

B

Bringing Your Whole Self

C

Connection  
and Bonding

D

be  
Different

E

Emotions

F

Feel Your  
Feelings

G

Grounding

H

Happiness and the Value of  
Social Interactions

I

Inner  
Critic

J

Judgements  
and Critical  
Thinking

K

Kindred Spirit

L

Loving Self  
and Longevity

M

Mentoring

N

Neuroplasticity

O

Openness  
and Boundaries

P

Purpose

Q

Qualities of Contribution  
and Abundance

R

Roots  
and Rituals

S

Serendipity  
and Curiosity

T

Trusted  
Tribes

U

Uncertainty

V

Values and  
Compromises

W

Wounds  
and Traumas

XYZ

Generations  
X, Y, Z

Z

Zen