

Audio Track 16: Belonging

[00:00:00]

Try this: Belonging.

Call to mind a friend or someone you admire. And as you do, take a moment to focus on what you admire about that person. Their particular strengths. Let yourself open to their good qualities. Like all people, your friend also has struggles and areas they're trying or need to grow. Take a moment to notice those too. Notice that even though your friend struggles at times, they're in your heart and you're connected. In your mind's eye, picture them in a place of honor. Maybe you've invited them into your living room, or maybe it's in a meadow or a clearing in the forest. Whatever feels right to you.

And one by one, calling to mind others whom you admire and want to invite into your heart. And as you do, opening to their good qualities, and also their struggles and growth edges. Accept them as they are and then place them in that place of honor along with the first person. With each person, become aware of how much they matter to you and how they also belong in the world. How their presence matters even if they're marginalized in some way. See their worthiness.

As you picture this group of people that matter to you, you might imagine them in a circle. And then imagining them turning toward you. They also see and understand you right now. Even the parts you don't show other people or can't see yourself. They see your good qualities. Your love of nature or quirky sense of humor, for example. Take a moment to listen for what they admire

about you. This group also sees your struggles in life and accepts you just as you are. Take a moment to listen as they acknowledge what you struggle with. And as the group invites you into their circle, they remind you that you matter too. You don't need to wait to become some better version of yourself. You already belong. You belong because you're fully human with strengths and struggles. You belong to this group, the Circle. And you belong to humanity. Just as you are. Humanity needs what you have to offer, no matter how small you think that is.

Picture yourself joining them in the circle now. You are wanted and welcome. You matter. You belong. And taking a moment now to recognize that you're not separate. You can be both fully yourself, your unique expression in the world, and also belong. Take a moment to consider, or you can even write about, what you experienced. And what you'd like to remember when you're feeling all alone and have forgotten that you matter, too.

Please don't worry. If it was difficult to open fully to the experience of being seen and belonging, it can take some time. I trust that as you continue to practice, you too will come to be able to see yourself and accept yourself. No need to rush. Trust yourself.

And please remember to thank yourself, for showing up, for practicing, for taking good care of you.

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