

CORE BELONGING PRACTICES

For Thriving in
Various Life Spaces

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WELCOME TRAVELERS

Hello,

If you have this workbook in your hands, I consider you a fellow traveler on this journey of life. You may have put many years in or you may feel like your life is just beginning, whichever way, I want you to have what it takes to enter into the life spaces you are in with a full sense of confidence and belonging. The sense that we can face whatever life brings and do that knowing that no matter who we are, what we are or where we are.

The practices in this book will give you tools for thinking, seeing and reflecting that core sense of belonging that we all want to have in our different life spaces. You will also learn how to take that sense of belonging out into the world and to others around you.

Read on and I'll see you at the end.

Otito F. Wuchukwu

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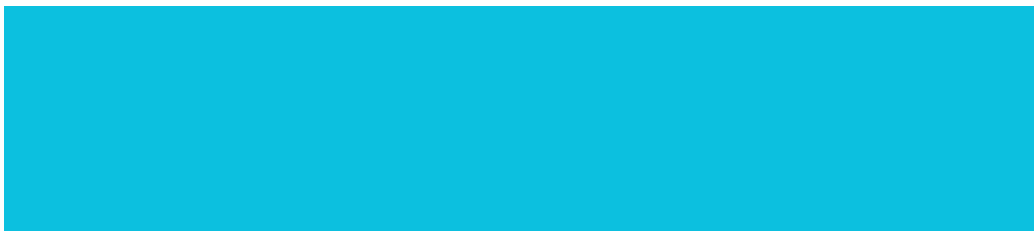
ONWARD AND OUTWARD

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK



“As humans, we are always in the process of becoming. When we get discouraged because of life interactions that impinge on our sense of belonging, we must remember that we can grow out of those states of discouragement. And as we grow, we should offer the same beacons of encouragement to others in our social worlds.”

This workbook was designed to help you practice belonging to yourself and in turn be able to offer belonging to others in the various life spaces you may find yourself.



01 - PRACTICE AGENCY

Do not feel lonely, the entire universe is inside you.

~ Rumi



ACT ON YOUR AGENCY

A psychologically whole and fully functioning person is one who:

- takes responsibility for their actions (and consequences) based on a recognition of their freedom and power to choose from the many options life makes available.
- can creatively adjust to changing conditions as they arise. ~ Carl Rogers

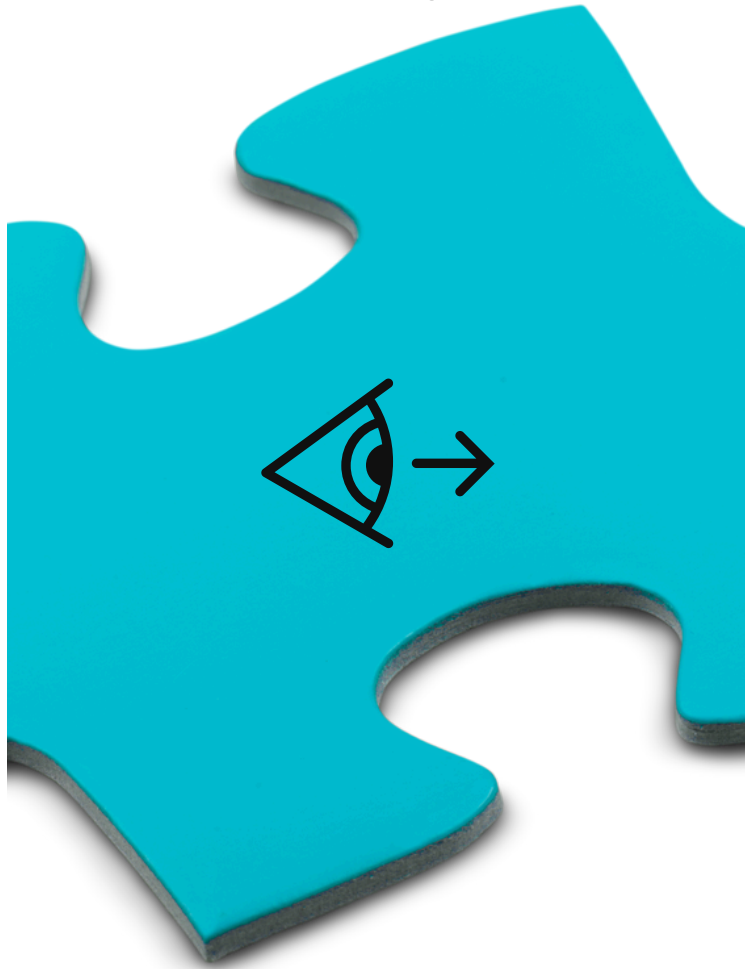
As full grown humans, we are capable of acting and choosing, outside of the influence of others around us. This ability to act and choose is what psychologists call agency. An ingrained knowledge of our agency enables us to act to create spaces of belonging for ourselves and by design, for others. A sense of agency also enables self-acceptance. Accepting ourselves as we are, deep within, helps us make both light and sense of others' behaviors and their perceived acceptance or non-acceptance of us.

ONCE YOU ARE ABLE TO ACCEPT YOURSELF
THEN YOU ARE ABLE TO ACCEPT OTHERS



02 - PERCEIVE BELONGING

To exist is to be perceived
~ Bishop George Blakely



PERCEIVE PROPERLY

Perceiving belonging involves recognizing your individuality in four basic dimensions: physical, social, psychological and spiritual.

Your orientation toward the world defines your reality because “we see the world as we are”

On the social dimension, we interact and respond to the world surrounding us, whether it's in response to the culture we were brought up in, the culture we live in. Your attitudes and responses can vary based on these interactions, much the same as your belongingness. To keep your orientation focused on belonging, recognize the duality in being human. A duality of acceptance and rejection. To be accepted or rejected in any one sphere does not translate to reality. For true belonging for ourselves and others you must arrive at full acceptance of all your desires regarding belonging. This acceptance paves the way for others.

You are fully capable of openness and kindness despite what other people do to the contrary.

SEE YOURSELF DIFFERENTLY!



03 - REFLECT BELONGING

We must be our own before we can be another's

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson



REFLECT & REORGANIZE

As humans we are constantly developing and have evolved to **explore**, **adapt**, and **self-reflect**. Self-reflection is the only process unique to humans. In working through, we continuously make and remake our self-concepts, whether in relationship to ourselves or to others in our social environments, including family, friends, work, community and national life.

While we cannot separate our life from our experiences, we can organize our life experiences in creative and effective ways so that they do not hinder our sense of self.

With reorganization of our experiences, we can refuse to take in the message of non-belonging that people try to project unto us. Through reorganization, we can deconstruct fixed identities of ourselves as persons who do or do not belong, recognizing that these previously fixed descriptions are temporary configurations based on our experiences. And because these configurations are temporary, we can, with sufficient support, learn to dissolve them and create new ways of being and belonging for ourselves and others.

REORGANIZE YOUR THOUGHTS AND STORIES.



04 - FORTIFY YOUR CORE

Values are a mirror we hold up to see ourselves.

~Otito Iwuchukwu



CORE STRENGTHENING

The values we hold are a key driver of our thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Our core values serve as a foundation for all other values related to working and living. They help us build up our sense of belonging and purpose. When we are finely attuned to our core values, we are able to shift our beliefs to bring about a more positive and engaged approach to life.

Values Clarification helps us know when our belonging is being impacted. We can practice sorting and clarifying values using available values clarification tools and assessment surveys (see the [VIA character strengths](#) survey as an example)

Clarifying your core values helps in multiple ways. Once you are clear on your values, you will not spend time trying to convince others about things they do not value. Remember, subjective values are called subjective for a reason.

GET YOUR CORE VALUES IN PLACE



05 - SEND SIGNALS OUTWARD

*They may be my enemies—that I cannot help—but I will
not be theirs.*

~ Alfred Adler



SIGNALING BELONGING

As occupants of social spaces, we are always trying to belong and fit into the fabric of the society. And we do this best when our initial experiences in families positively shape our world views. For those who may not have been raised in such a family, you can still:

- focus on social interests and increase your levels of cooperation and participation in the common good.
- practice radical empathy and compassion for fellow others. In the process of doing this, we will be sending out signals of belonging to others that marks us as people seeking to enhance the task of relational wholeness.
- enter the interpathetic experiencing of others' world views even if you do not share those views. You can do this because you are aware of your core values and your integrated sense of self.
- practice being present for others through the fine art of encouragement; to inspire with hope, to give help and to spur others on in their journey of living and becoming.

SEND SIGNALS OF BELONGING TO OTHERS



ONWARD AND OUTWARD

Thank you for reading to the end.

Part of practicing belonging is learning to include others in our worldviews and world and sharing what you have learned in this book is one way to do that.

I hope that as you start on your journey back to belonging to yourself and others in your world, that your world gets larger and larger and that as you learn to belong to yourself, you find like Maya Angelou says that you belong nowhere and everywhere. You will pay the price but it will be worthwhile.

Now that you have 5 practices in place, use the following pages to state your action plan for how you will implement these practices.





STATE YOUR CORE PRACTICE PLAN

How will you apply the belonging practices?
Use this section to make a note on how you intend to
practice for each day of the week.

Today I Will

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THANK YOU FOR READING THROUGH THE PRACTICES

CONGRATULATIONS

You've learned ways to practice fostering belonging for yourself and others. Now go out into community and practice the things you have learned. Do not be in a hurry. You have every minute of every day to begin to put these practices into motion.

Remember: Do not journey alone!
Invite others into the Belonging Paradox Community.

Connect with me on my website: [**www.otitowuchukwu.com**](http://www.otitowuchukwu.com)



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