

10. Belonging

Etymology: Mid-14th c., ‘to go along with, properly relate to’, from *be-* intensive prefix, + *longen* ‘to go’, from Old English *langian* ‘pertain to, to go along with’, which is of uncertain origin but perhaps related to the root of *long* (adj.). The senses of ‘be the property of’ and ‘be a member of’ are attested from the late-14th c.¹

Suggestions for value-specific questions in VISION dialogues

- What are the main ingredients to belonging?
- Does belonging have any siblings?
- What does it mean to belong to yourself?
- Where is belonging headed?
- Is there room for difference when belonging is present?
- Can belonging to someone/something also resemble being in a straitjacket?
- How is belonging related to self-determination?
- What happens between belonging and freedom?
- What does it mean to belong to the planet?

Suggestions for exercises and creative activities to inspire a VISION reflection

Letters of acknowledgement

Duration: 10–15 minutes

Description: Participants each have a piece of paper taped to their back. They take turns writing on each other’s backs what they appreciate in the person. Afterwards, read the paper and talk about what this exercise does in relation to belonging.

Activating the senses related to belonging

Duration: 5–10 minutes

Description: This exercise is highly adaptable and can be facilitated in various settings, but it is particularly effective when conducted outdoors, weather permitting. Facilitating the activity outside fosters a deeper connection to nature and the environment, enhancing participants’ engagement and embodiment.

Open your senses and intuition to what you are doing right now.

Look around you and note everything you see: colours, brightness, shades, things, people, natural elements, and man-made objects. What are they made of, and what are their qualities? Close your eyes and see them. What do you notice now?

Feel how your body touches other elements: the ground, the chair, and the air around you. Feel the temperature against your skin, the texture of the fabric of your clothes, the rhythm of your

¹ Extract compiled from <https://www.etymonline.com/word/belong>, last accessed 1 May 2026.

pulse, how your heart beats in your chest, how your stomach and your chest move in and out as you breathe. Sense the ambiance in the room. What does your sixth sense tell you?

Listen to the sounds around you—the loud and quiet ones, the sounds outside the space you occupy, those closer to you, and the sounds coming from your own body. Listen beyond what you hear with your ears; listen to the room and the things you previously noticed, their silent voices and their tales of where they come from, how they found their way to that space, how they are doing, and ask if they are carrying a message for you. Note the contact you make with the ground below and stretch your awareness even further down, imagining that you can extend roots down into the soil beneath the ground, thinking about how you are connected to the planet.

Notice the smells around you and those coming from yourself. Notice the little whiskers in your nose, feeling them vibrate as the air flows in and out. Note how the temperature is different as it flows in and out. Note how, as you breathe in through your nose, further nuances appear.

Shift your focus to your tastebuds. What is the taste in your mouth in this moment when you are neither eating nor drinking anything? What does your mouth itself taste like? Think about the enormous power of your tastebuds to differentiate between so many tastes and thank them for their abilities.

Take a moment to feel your entire body at the same time and rest here for a bit. Note again your pulse, heartbeat, and your breath moving in and out. Take a last deep breath, and slowly open your eyes. Sit quietly for a few moments, tuning in to your surroundings.

Acknowledgements: This exercise is inspired by the 5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique, often credited to psychotherapist Betty Alice Erickson (Martinez, n.d.) and described by A. Lytzen and C. R. Kineweskew (2025), and was customised for the VISION framework by Sanne Vinther Nielsen.