

Week 33 Practice

Belonging can feel *so* elusive.

We think it's something we must search for, like a buried treasure. But the truth is, you don't just find belonging, you also have to cultivate it—you have to water it and grow it and prune it and only then do you get to harvest it. In other words, sometimes belonging is elusive not because the seed of it doesn't exist, but because we haven't fertilized it.

Revelation is fertilizer for the cultivation of belonging.

The quality of your belonging will be inversely correlated with the size of your secrets. The more secrets you harbor about who you are, what you've done, why you've done it, how you're wounded, and so on, the more difficult it will be to cultivate authentic connection and love. So, this week, my challenge to you is this:

Begin the emptying.

Key word here: *begin*. Do not expect to empty yourself all at once. That kind of vulnerability isn't healthy or productive; usually, it's just an attempt to put the pain and discomfort of vulnerability behind us. Secrets must seep out slowly.

So, choose the person you trust most, and start with your smallest secret. The *really* small ones. For instance, "I don't stop all the way at stop signs—even in school zones." Or, "I watch reruns of *Full House* all the time." "I keep a bag of potato chips in my nightstand."

Then, as you begin to feel the relief and healing that comes along with this, begin to share bigger stuff. Never be more vulnerable than you can handle, but always try to be just a little more vulnerable than you *think* you can handle.

If all of this seems a little too risky, at least begin by not creating any *new* secrets. When you do something you would normally hide from someone you love, let them know. Explain that you want to cultivate the kind of belonging that heals, one spoken secret at a time. Practice this for one week.

And then continue practicing it for a lifetime.