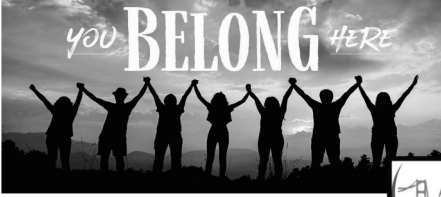


149. Transcending Self (-as-Content):  
True Belonging from the Inside Out



Debbie Sorensen, PhD and Meg McKelvie, PhD



1

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Housekeeping

Disclosures + disclaimers:

The presenters of this workshop have not received and will not receive any commercial support related to this presentation or the work presented in this presentation.

Sign in/out if you are getting CE Credit



2

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Overview

This workshop is experiential:

- You'll need: A pen and paper for writing
- There will be small group work – care for yourself by setting your own limits/ boundaries
- Protect each other's privacy
- Take care of your body

3

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Consent for Experiential Exercises



4

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

The Self-Esteem Trap

5

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Self-Esteem Seeking Culture



6

---

---

---

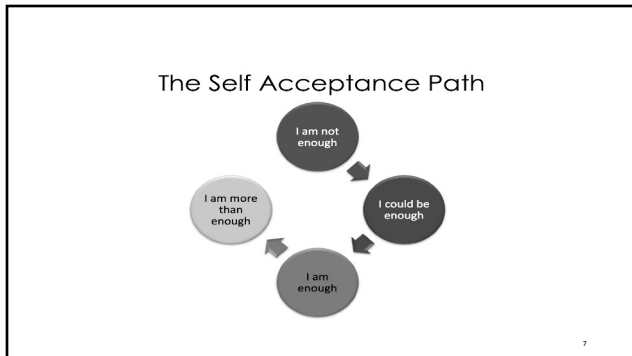
---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

7



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

8



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

9

The Eternal Debate: Am I Good or Am I Bad?



10

---

---

---

---

---

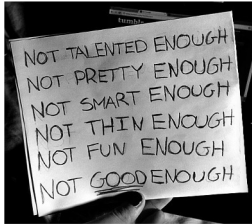
---

---

10

Clinging to Positive and Negative Self-Stories

you are  
kind  
you are  
SMART  
you are  
important



11

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

11

Self-as-Content

Fusion with the  
Conceptualized Self

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

12

Self-as-Context



13

13

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

The Origin of Self-Stories



14

14

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Limiting Perspectives



15

15

---

---

---

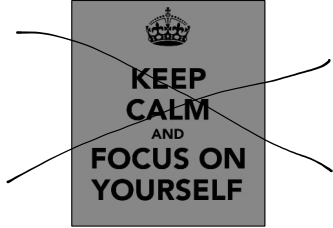
---

---

---

---

We Get Stuck Focusing on Ourselves



16

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

How Do We Find Ourselves Here?



17

---

---

---

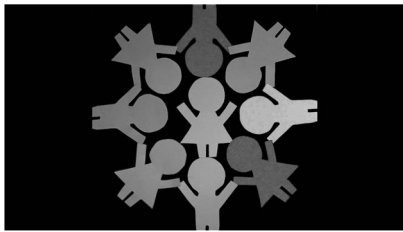
---

---

---

---

Yearning to Belong and Be Special is a Natural Part of Our Evolutionary History



18

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

The Yearning Itself is Healthy and Important



19

19

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

“Human beings yearn to be seen, cared for, and included as members of a group... While this yearning is healthy, many of the ways our minds try to satisfy it cause us psychic pain...”

- Steven Hayes, *A Liberated Mind*

20

20

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Belonging in Context: External Barriers



21

21

---

---

---

---

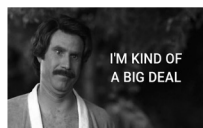
---

---

---

---

The Problem...



22

22

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

High Self Esteem (Does Not Equal) a Vital Life



23

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

The Cost of Building and Protecting Self Esteem



24

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



Burnout, Loneliness, Isolation



25

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

e.g. Therapist Positive Self-Stories



26

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**One Truthful Conversation at a Time**

“Another good way to begin to let go of your self-story is to practice being yourself more fully and openly with another person... The point is to open the door to places that are hard - insecurity, inadequacy, fear of rejection, and so on.... Carving out more space for you to be you, with those feelings, more genuinely connected to others...”

- Steven Hayes, *A Liberated Mind*

27

27

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Brief Meditation: Resting in the Ground of Being



28

28

---

---

---

---

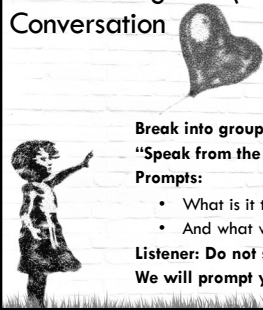
---

---

---

---

Transcending Self (-as-Content): One Truthful Conversation



Break into groups of 2

"Speak from the heart" for 3 mins

Prompts:

- What is it that you really long for?
- And what would that get you?

Listener: Do not speak. Simply listen, with all your heart

We will prompt you to switch after 3 minutes

29

29

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Trying To Earn Our Way Into Love and Belonging

30

---

---

---

---

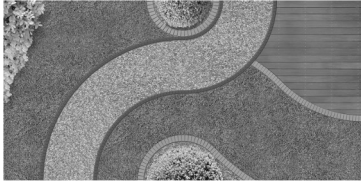
---

---

---

---

The Self-Improvement Path



31

31

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

We work harder at it



32

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Misdirected Yearning to Belong: We Become the Problem to be Solved



33

33

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Perpetual Seeking



34

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Constant Striving



35

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Driven by Need to be Special



36

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Misdirected Yearning for Belonging in Relationships

37

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

We believe that to belong we need something  
(acceptance, love) from other people



38

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

People Pleasing



39

---

---

---

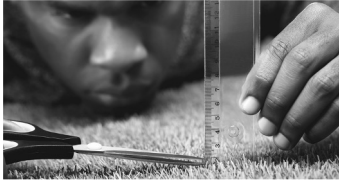
---

---

---

---

Interpersonal Perfectionism



40

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Competition



41

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Belong-Related Self-Stories: Examples


“I’m special.” “I’m in need of great care.”

“I’m fragile.” “I’m uniquely messed up.”

“I’m the only one” “I can’t handle that because I’m \_\_\_\_\_.”

“I’m a victim” “I have to be the best.”

*nobody understands me*



42

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Consequences of Misdirected Yearning to Belong: Psychic Pain



43

43

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Disconnection from Ourselves and Others



44

44

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Clinical Signs of Misdirected Yearning to Belong



45

45

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

True-Self-Esteem:  
Getting Out of the  
Conceptualized Self

46

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

What can be learned from our longing for high self-esteem and belonging?

How can we channel it in a way that is life-enhancing, not limiting?

47

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Social Skills Alone Can Fall Short



48

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



Because Some of the Work is Internal



49

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Zoom Out



50

---

---

---

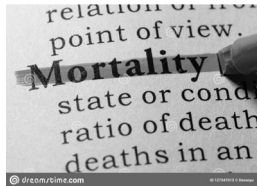
---

---

---

---

Accept Your Mortality



51

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Pure Awareness



52

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Tapping into Belonging as a Birthright



53

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

A New Way to Nurture Us All



54

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Being Fully Seen by Others



55

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Contact, Accept, and Air Out Your Dark Side

When you finally learn to accept your shadow self



56

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

Transcending Self (-as-Content): Writing Exercise



**Please Call Me by My True Names**  
 First, break into same groups of 2. Listen and then write.

Writing Prompts:

- I am
- AND I am

(Be specific)

57

---

---

---

---

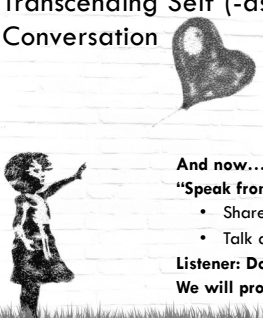
---

---

---

---

**Transcending Self (-as-Content): One Truthful Conversation**



**And now... in our groups of 2**  
**"Speak from the heart" for 3 mins:**

- Share your writing (if you feel comfortable)
- Talk about your experience writing.

**Listener: Do not speak. Simply listen, with all your heart**  
**We will prompt you to switch after 3 minutes**

58

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

**Parting Questions:**

- What have you learned about your longing for high self-esteem and belonging?
- How can you channel it in a way that is life-enhancing, not limiting?
- How does positive (and negative) self story get in your way?
- What does misdirected belonging cost you?
- What is more important to you?
- How might you use this framework with clients?



We want to hear from you! Please send thoughts, ponderings and questions to: [debbiesorensen@gmail.com](mailto:debbiesorensen@gmail.com) and [drmegmckelvie@gmail.com](mailto:drmegmckelvie@gmail.com)

59

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**THANK YOU!**

<p><b>Debbie Sorensen, PhD</b>  <small>drdebbiesorensen.com  debbie@impactpsycholorado.com</small></p>	<p><b>Meg McKelvie, PhD</b>  <small>drmegmckelvie.com  meg@impactpsycholorado.com</small></p>
--	---

[www.impactpsycholorado.com](http://www.impactpsycholorado.com)

60

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---