



Belongingness—Finding Refuge Handout and Reflection

How can we take refuge and find a sense of complete and never-failing security and comfort? For most people with trauma and attachment issues they've never had this sense of "never-failing security and comfort."

Part of the task of the Becoming Safely Embodied skills are to develop this felt sense of inner safety that allows us safe haven over the course of your life, through the ups and downs, giving us a way to put all things in perspective.

To do this, though, we need to know our motivations for embarking on this journey and we need to know where we belong.

In Buddhism we talk about "finding refuge in the Three Jewels:" in the Buddha (the teacher who reached states of enlightenment), in the Dharma (teachings), and in the Sangha (community). The Buddhist teacher, Dzigar Kongtrul Rinpoche tells us that *"having the three jewels constantly with us in our mind means the mind is always at peace."* For our exploration in the BSE Course I will be using this as a template.

Exemplars

Who is a model of being that you trust? It could be a spiritual person, it could be a family member, it could be someone who holds the qualities of being in which you can feel safe. We call people like this "Exemplars." They embody qualities and ways of being that pull forth those qualities out of you.

- ✦ What spiritual people have you heard of or known that pull forth a greater sense of who you are?
- ✦ Are there any historical figures that exemplify qualities that you would like to emulate?
- ✦ Were there members of your family that knew instinctively how to live true to themselves?

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- ✦ Perhaps there were ethical or moral conflicts you have found yourself in. Were there any people who modeled a way to life that you have learned from?

Teachings

What teachings, philosophies of being do you subscribe to and believe deeply in? Perhaps they are a series like the “Ten Commandments” that help you stay close to your inner truth. These are teachings that inspire you, motivate you, and urge you to be all that you can be, allowing fear to reduce so your peace of mind can flourish.

- ✦ What beliefs do you have that you can fall back on when times are hard?
- ✦ What higher, spiritual beliefs help you during times of crisis or distress?
- ✦ What feels unquestionably true to you even if you don’t believe it when you are feeling down in the dumps, or feeling trapped?
- ✦ What kinds of teachings make a difference to you?
- ✦ What helped you through difficult times in your past?

Communities

Taking refuge in community, in connection provides buffering from those times when life is stormy and unpredictable. Many people feel lost and alone inside even if they are doing fine on the outside. Perhaps there are ways you flee connections. If so, what environments, what qualities do you need or want in order to feel safe? Take a moment and imagine what those qualities are like. How do they feel in your body as you imagine them? Do this softly and gently so as not to scare any part of you.

- ✦ What kinds of communities do you belong to, both large and small?
- ✦ Perhaps you find connection with others online? If so, how does that support you?
- ✦ What are the qualities of people that you love to connect to?