

# BELONGING

The topic of belongingness is crucial in Adlerian Psychology; therefore, I will cover this part of the theory with some text and graphs. It's a complex topic, and I will try to forward it as clearly and concisely as possible, and if it doesn't make sense to you, please take your notes so we can discuss your questions during our next session.

The feeling of belonging has nothing to do with whether or not we objectively belong; it depends on if we FEEL we belong.

When working with adults, especially Expats, I discuss the idea of a universal sense of belonging within them. We belong to humanity and the world by our mere existence, and knowing this, or reminding ourselves of it, allows us to train that we feel we belong, because as stated already, we objectively belong.

If your child doesn't have to learn about belongingness as an adult, you have achieved a significant job as a parent. Knowing we belong objectively and in a perceived sense helps in moments of rejection, after losing something or someone important to us, and during any significant life change that could strain us.

Again, the child's belonging to the family is objectively given, but whether he feels to belong is perceived by his interpretation. Children have a mind of their own, and as parents, we have very little control over the interpretations and conclusions they make. But when they act in ways that upset us regularly, with the same patterns that don't show collaboration, they have possibly misinterpreted our intentions. We can analyze their behavior and correct their interpretations by changing how we convey our messages. The parents must understand whether the child has a place and which one it occupies from their point of view.

Their place may be interpreted such as:

I only have my place if I'm good (if they are being praised too often).

I only have my place if I win (when being the best is expected in other contexts).

I have to be kind (when kindness is a condition for being loved).

I only have a place if I perform well (when good performance is a condition for acceptance).

I have to be right (when power struggles are the norm).

These are only a few examples.

You will learn from this part of the Positive Parenting Training that your child, you, and every human being belongs unconditionally. If you can pass on this to your child through your actions, your gift to them will be an unshakable confidence for life.

# The two pillars of the feeling of belonging:

Pillar A – <b>I AM</b>	Pillar B – <b>I DO</b>
Refers to being a human and belonging unconditionally. This is about BEING.	Refers to behavior that requires compatibility and cooperation in the social environment. This is about DOING.
Parents can give a sense of belonging by showing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acceptance</li> <li>• Respect</li> <li>• Connection</li> <li>• Trust</li> <li>• Inclusion</li> </ul>	Parents can give a sense of belonging by allowing contribution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let them participate</li> <li>• Let them help</li> <li>• Let them have a say</li> <li>• Let them think along</li> <li>• Share responsibilities</li> </ul>

## Words matter:

How we usually speak is not coherent with separating the **Being** from the **Doing**, which should necessarily be, but it isn't in many ways. I don't know if this problem shows in all languages, but this is the case in all I speak, which are a few.

However, it is possible to formulate sentences in all languages to separate the two.

With a little thoughtfulness, effort, and training, we can make an immense difference in talking to make sense to the child and to provide them with great guidance.

## Ideas for changing the way you talk to your child, by avoiding the words ARE and BE:

You ARE a good boy.

I love your friendliness / kindness / generosity.

I appreciate you helping me / your sister.

I acknowledge your patience, thank you for waiting.

Stop BEING so loud!

Stop making this noise!

BE quiet now!

Stop shouting!

You ARE way too noisy!

This noise is too much now!

BE kind.

Act kindly. Help them feel good.

BE nice.

Do nice things / let them play with you

Play fair, play nice.

You ARE late.	You arrive late / you have a delay. I have been waiting for you.
Why ARE you upset?	What has upset you? What has happened to you?
ARE you tired?	You seem tired. Do you want some sleep / rest / to lay down?
You ARE a good student.	You do well at school. You study diligently. I like to see how well you do your homework.
You ARE a good friend.	Others can count on you. Your friends are lucky to have you as a friend.
You ARE messy.	I believe you have a mess with your things. Your room looks messy, that's not nice.
Don't BE in a hurry.	Take things slowly. Take your time.
You are BEING naughty.	That's a naughty way to do things.

These examples rate them as human beings. It's also a way to put a stamp on the child with the danger that they take it on as their identity or as a burden on them.

These examples show guidance, understanding, show that you see them and acknowledge what is happening. It's a factual way of talking and it praises or criticizes the act, not the person, which is important for correcting the behavior.

### **Your exercise:**

Your task for the next session is to think of ways you speak that include ARE and BE and how you want to formulate them in the future. Writing things down helps our brain to ingrain information much faster and more sustainably.

During our session, we will discuss ways to fulfill Pillar B that work for you and suit your child's age and capabilities.