

From Isolated to I Belong

**A guide to creating meaningful
and lasting connections in your life**



by Gayane Kulikyan

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Guidelines for Sharing and Using This Work

Please treat information on these pages as confidential. If you feel inspired to share this work with a friend, invite him/her to sign up on my website <http://www.concordinlove.com> to receive this guide as a gift, along with subscription to my forthcoming newsletters and offers. If you want to share this in a professional context, please email me at Gayane@concordinlove.com

With love and respect.

Gayane Kulikyan, M.A.
Art of Relationships Coach

Welcome

Welcome dear one.

I want you to know that I have struggled with feelings of disconnectedness and isolation since the age of nine, when I, along with my family and thousands of Armenians, had to flee my birthplace of Azerbaijan due to ethnic cleansing. The world, as I knew it, was shattered. Suddenly life became unpredictable and chaotic, with constant changes. **I felt rootless** and with every move we took to a new country, I secretly hoped that I would find my home, a place where I truly belonged and where I could settle. Even though I wanted to experience close ties, at one point my heart was so full of pain and grief, that I remember making a decision that I wasn't going to make any new friends. I was tired of getting to know people and then losing them when it was time to move yet again. My heart was closed and I became distant. Life felt flat and meaningless.

Although war and consequent experiences brought destruction, loss and heartbreaks into my life and lives of thousands of people affected, it also gave me an opportunity to deepen my understanding of life and people. It helped me to experience compassion, empathy and acceptance of our humanity, including our shadow side. It sparked a curiosity in me to intimately understand people and bring to light the invisible and unseen layers within us. Finally and most importantly, it expanded my capacity to love and to be loved and fueled my mission of cultivating Global Citizenship in our world.

I started to turn my life around when I took responsibility for what was happening in my life. I was pushed by my pain and pulled by my Soul towards something greater. I graduated from a 2-year program with a Master's degree in Spiritual Psychology and I got certified as a Calling in "The One" coach. I have devoted hundreds of hours to learning from some of the best teachers and I have applied their practices to my life to find a way through my dark nights of the soul. As a result of the support I've received, I've experienced deep intimacy with myself, created meaningful connections, deepened my relationships with friends and family. I found a community of people whose passion for healing and calling for Global Citizenship is closely aligned with mine. Most importantly, with every passing day, I feel more and more at home within myself and in Life.

What It's Like For You

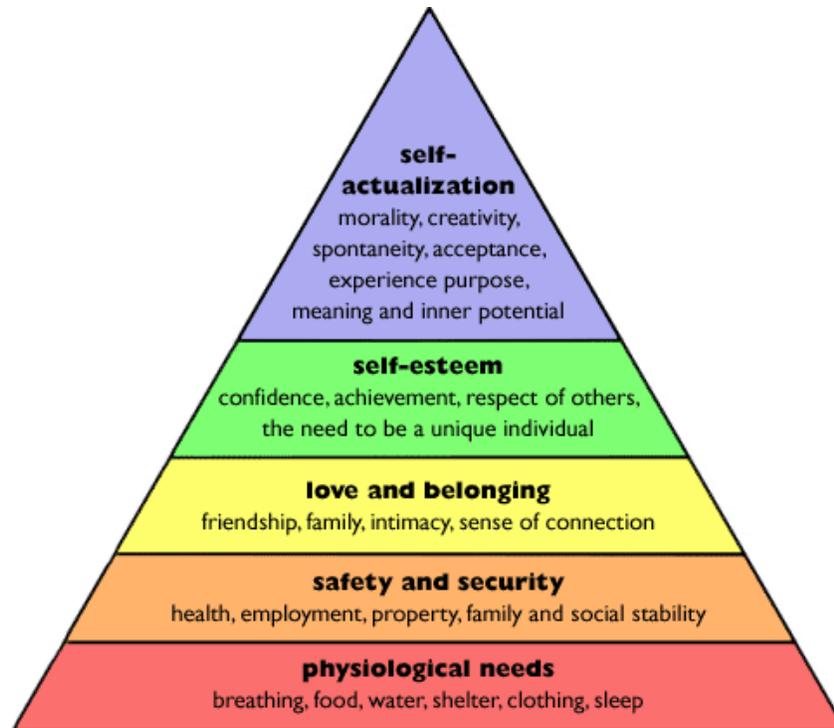
I sense how tired you are of feeling like you don't belong and how much you are yearning to find a way out of this painful place. Being rootless can feel like you are **living on an island of your own**, separated from people and even yourself. You might enjoy traveling, have a "nomadic" kind of a lifestyle which expands your horizons, helps you become more culturally sensitive, and that in general contributes to you being a well-rounded person. But the deeper truth that most people you know would never understand is that **you just don't feel at home in the world.**

You feel stuck, unable to make decisions that will impact your life in the long run. You might feel invisible and misunderstood by your family and friends. The connections you have in life don't seem to touch the depths of who you are or even if closeness has been experienced, with time the relations just fizzle out. You might **find it challenging to be vulnerable with others**, to open up to new friendships and relationships for fear of losing them yet again. At the same time, you might feel a longing, something tugging at your heart, asking for a change or a different way.

I want you to know that **it's normal for you to long for connection and belonging.** And it is possible to experience the peace of an inner sense of belonging and meaningful connections in your life. In the following pages I will speak to the challenges you are most likely experiencing in your life and I'll explain to you how you can move through them with gentleness, love and compassion. There is no need for you to rush through these pages. Please take your time. It took me several years to get to where I am and I am still learning and walking down my path. The goal is to not "resolve" all your issues in one sitting but to rather learn to **become intimate with the difficulties**, to have plenty of patience with yourself and as hard as it might hear right now, to enjoy the journey.

To give you a brief history and the importance of what you are seeking, in 1943 Abraham Maslow created a concept that human needs can be placed in a hierarchy. He stated that **belonging and love are essential needs** in human development, along with self-esteem, self-actualization, physiological and safety needs.

In 2011, Maslow's theory has been tested by contemporary researchers Tay & Diener. They analyzed the data of 60,865 participants from 123 countries, representing every major region of the world. The results of the study confirmed the view that **universal human needs exist regardless of cultural differences**. Researchers made a discovery that the needs don't necessarily fall into a particular hierarchy and they can coexist simultaneously. For a list of human needs, please reference Appendix on page 18.



The need to belong is a natural part of being human and it's one of your birthrights. However, along your path various "negative" experiences blocked your way to connection and relatedness. Your need for belonging CAN be fulfilled once the blocks have been identified, healed and cleared.

"When you feel a peaceful joy, that's when you are near truth." Rumi

What is Preventing You From Feeling Like You Belong?

So, if the need for belonging and love is so strong, what obstacles prevent some of us from having these needs fulfilled? From my observations, studies, and inner work, I saw emerging themes that can block us from experiencing a natural and healthy sense of belonging:



Shame – when someone feels shame they hide their authentic self from others, which creates two layers of energy within a person. Typically, the person communicates with others from the top layer, losing access to the deeper layer which when tapped into can allow genuine connection to emerge.

Feeling rejected – this feeling could become part of your identity as early as at birth, if for example you felt rejected by your mom or dad, if you didn't feel loved and accepted by either parent. Rejection could also become part of your identity if you grew up in different countries/cultures and you didn't quite feel welcomed anywhere. In this space it becomes difficult to create and maintain connections in which you feel secure, held and loved.

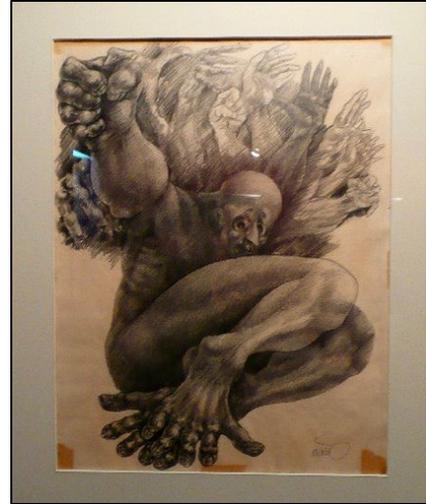
Lack of attunement – If, as you were growing up, nobody around you mirrored your feelings, needs and desires back to you, then you might feel lost in the sea of your inner experiences. Lack of attunement can lead to a sense of disconnectedness from yourself as well as people around you.

Aloneness can create a barrier between you and the world. A client of mine described this feeling as if she is standing behind a glass wall and she is looking at all these people on the other side but for some reason she can't join them.

Whatever sorrow shakes
from your heart, far better
things will take their place.”
Rumi

Grief that is not healed obstructs the flow of love in relationships. A metaphor that can be used here is one of the sun that is shining and if the heart is full of grief, it can't take in the sunlight.

Fear usually is experienced as a contraction in your physical and emotional bodies. As humans, we have a tendency to withdraw or pull away when we feel afraid. As we unconsciously engage in this habit, it might be difficult for others to find access to us. Also, as we pull away, we usually cut off connection with others, with the external environment and we might avoid intimacy, contributing to a sense of separation that might already exist.



Surprisingly, some of us might even be afraid to belong. We are so used to being different, to standing apart and feeling like we don't belong, as much as we might think we are longing to belong, that to allow ourselves to experience belonging feels uncomfortable. We might even develop a strong resistance. To see that you have quiet a lot in common with others might feel threatening to your established identity, of being "not" like everyone else".

Even though numerous blocks to belonging exist, it doesn't mean that they are insurmountable. Once you learn to see clearly what is standing in the way, you can see "THE WAY" and actively walk the path towards creating meaningful connections and a sense of belonging in your life.



How To Cultivate Connection

In order to cultivate the state of being connected in life and with others, you first need to experience that sense of connection within yourself. The closest person you have in your life is YOU. This means that you need to start relating to all parts of you including pain, sadness, hurt, anger, loneliness etc. As you learn to relate to yourself and to embrace yourself with love, you'll then be able to authentically share yourself with others.



If we look at the word “connect”, it means to join, link, unite or bind. The visual representation can be compared to seeing a bridge that holds two or more people together at the same time.

With time and practice, you'll be able to see “the other” not as a separate person but as a human being with whom you share common humanity and ground.

As you cultivate love and compassion for yourself, you'll be able to share it with others and you'll be able to see people with more depth and clarity. A sense of peacefulness will also naturally grow within you, within your connections, and in the world.

**“The Sun's light looks
A little different on this wall
than
It does on that wall,
And a lot different on this
other one,
But it's still one light.”**

Rumi

What to Do Now

I invite you to set an intention to experience more connection and relatedness. The following exercises are designed to support you in this intention. As you become more aware of your patterns and as you learn to feel through what is emerging for you, you'll begin to create movement, you'll start to experience more relatedness with yourself and consequently with people in your life. Your relationships will become more authentic and with time you'll experience a sense of inclusion and belonging.

“Circles of Intimacy” Exercise

I invite you now to move through an exercise to become more aware of what you are currently experiencing in your relational spaces. Here’s a Link to VIDEO with Instructions to help you along the way: <https://vimeo.com/192210412>

- 1. List names of people who are currently in your life (i.e. partner, friends, relatives, people you know in community, acquaintances etc.).**

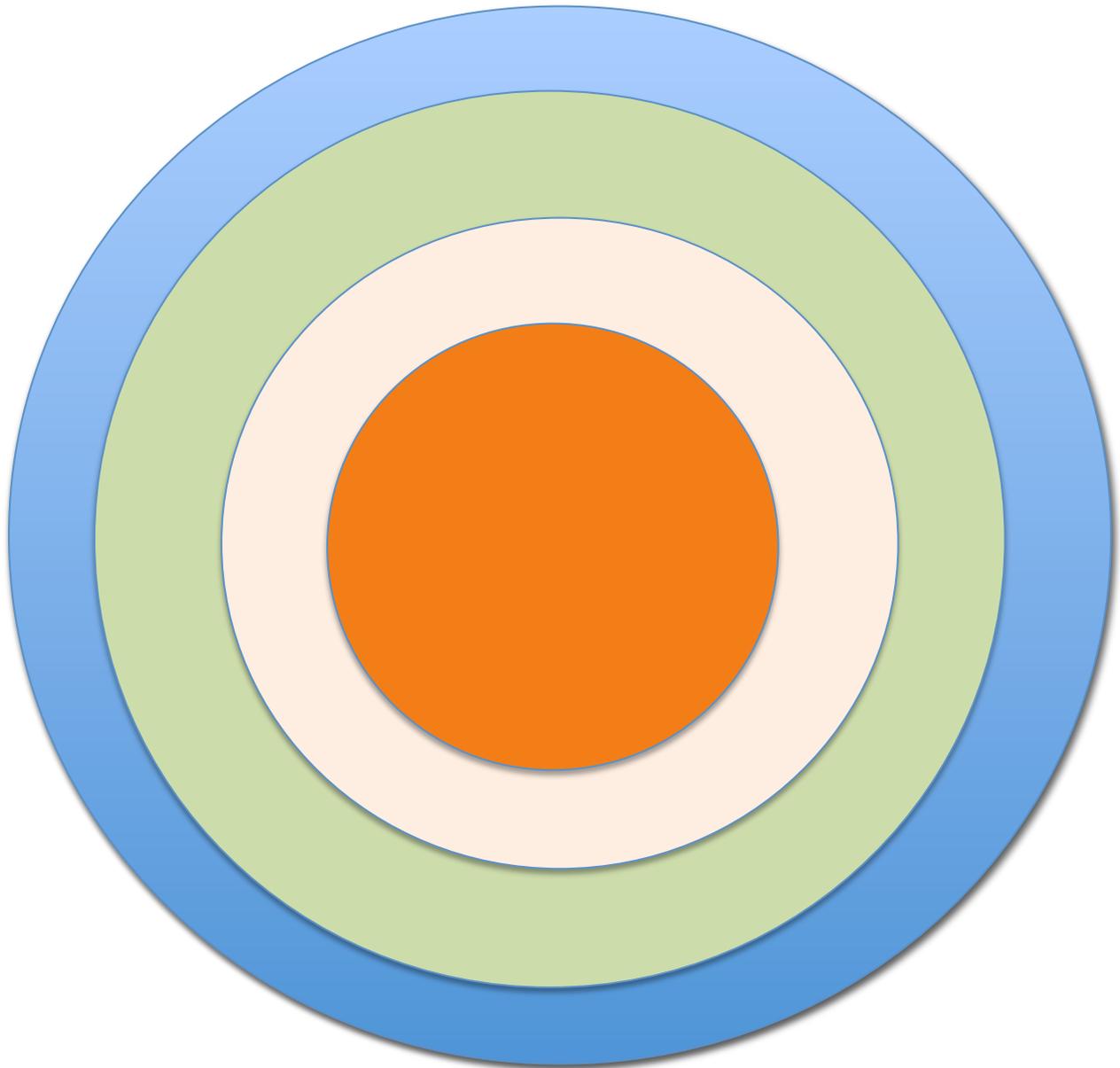
- 2. What is the degree of intimacy or closeness you experience with them?** (you can use images, adjectives, verbs to describe this)

- 3. Explore the intersubjective space - the space in between you and the other.**
 - What comes up for you? (feelings, body sensations, thoughts, intuitive knowing). You can use “Feelings Inventory” in the Appendix to help you identify your feelings.

Once you complete this exercise and look at what you wrote, notice if any patterns emerge for you. Do certain feelings, behaviors, thoughts consistently show up in your relationships? Whatever it is, simply accept it without judgment and allow yourself to be with this information. In the “Coming Home” Journey (see below for more information) we can continue to explore this deeper and you’ll have the tools to transform these patterns, so your relationships can move into greater health and fulfillment.

Circles of Intimacy Diagram

Fill in the names of people according to the depth of intimacy and closeness you feel with them and describe what you experience in the intersubjective space.



Congratulations!

Congratulations on taking the first steps towards deeper connection and intimacy.

Obviously, this is just the first step on a much deeper journey, but I hope that taking the time to work through the Circles of Intimacy Exercise has helped to open your eyes to any patterns that currently exist in your relationships and what is contributing to you feeling like you don't belong in the world.

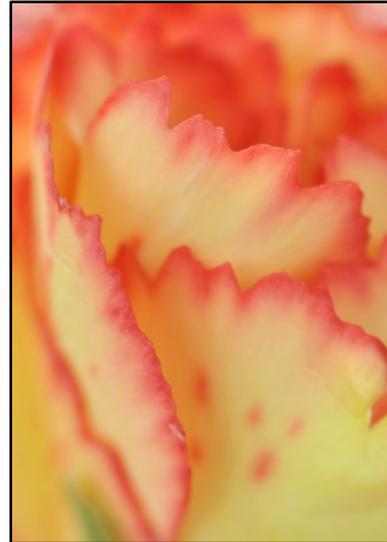
When one of my clients did this exercise she realized that the pattern of loneliness and isolation existed in most of her relationships. It looked like a hidden part of her life has been brought to light. From there on, she took action steps, internal and external, to cultivate more belonging in her life.



The Next Step

Human beings are relational by nature and because our blocks were created in relationships when we were growing up, **it's essential to evolve beyond these patterns** through relation and not just by working on them by ourselves.

To truly create a sense of belonging in your life is possible, but it takes time, a willingness to take the small steps that make a big difference, and to receive support along the way. That's why I've created a **three-month group coaching program** called the **"Coming Home" Journey**. It's more than a booklet - it's a journey that is designed to support you in creating meaningful connections, lasting relationships and ultimately cultivate greater belonging in Life.



In the program we'll cover such **topics** as: Cultivating Acceptance, Creating a Foundation Within, Healing the Heart, Relating to Your Soul, and How To Cultivate Connection, as well as Belonging. Each "Coming Home" Journey coaching circle contains **no more than 5 participants**, so each one can receive individual attention as well as support from the group.

If you have questions or want to register for it, just click on the link below and we'll set up a time to talk. The 40-minute session is complimentary.

CLICK HERE FOR MORE DETAILS AND TO SET UP A TIME TO TALK:

<http://concordinlove.com/coming-home-journey-group-coaching/>

If you prefer to work with me one-on-one, you can visit [this page](#) to learn more.

I look forward to connecting with you!

My wish for you is to find your home within, to settle into your place in the world and ultimately to enjoy the richness and complexity of relationships as well as Life.

*And remember, you are an integral part of Life. You were destined to be **HERE**. You belong in more ways than you can even imagine!*



With love and gratitude.
Gayane Kulikyan, MA
Art of Relationships Coach
www.concordinlove.com

APPENDIX

Feelings Inventory

This list can be used to help you identify your feelings. When you are aware of how you are feeling you can immediately experience a sense of connection with yourself and people around you. It is meant as a starting place to support you to engage in a process of deepening self-discovery and to facilitate greater understanding.

Feelings when your needs are satisfied

AFFECTIONATE

compassionate
friendly
loving
open hearted
sympathetic
tender
warm

ENGAGED

absorbed
alert
curious
engrossed
enchanted
entranced
fascinated
interested
intrigued
involved
spellbound
stimulated

CONFIDENT

empowered
open
proud
safe
secure

EXCITED

amazed
animated
ardent
aroused
astonished
dazzled
eager
energetic
enthusiastic
giddy
invigorated
lively
passionate
surprised

GRATEFUL

appreciative
moved
thankful
touched

INSPIRED

amazed
awed
wonder

JOYFUL

amused
delighted
glad
happy
jubilant
pleased
tickled

EXHILARATED

blissful
ecstatic

PEACEFUL

calm
clear headed
comfortable
centered
content
equanimous
fulfilled
mellow
quiet

relaxed
relieved
satisfied
serene
still
tranquil
trusting

REFRESHED

enlivened
rejuvenated
renewed

HOPEFUL

expectant
encouraged
optimistic

vibrant

elated
enthralled
exuberant
radiant
rapturous
thrilled

rested
restored
revived

Feelings when your needs are not satisfied

AFRAID

apprehensive
dread
foreboding
frightened
mistrustful
panicked
petrified
scared
suspicious
terrified
wary
worried

ANNOYED

aggravated
dismayed
disgruntled
displeased
exasperated
frustrated
impatient
irritated
irked

ANGRY

enraged
furious
incensed
indignant
irate
livid
outraged

CONFUSED

ambivalent
baffled
bewildered
dazed
hesitant
lost
mystified
perplexed
puzzled
torn

DISCONNECTED

alienated
aloof
apathetic
bored
cold
detached
distant
distracted
indifferent
numb
removed
uninterested
withdrawn

DISQUIET

agitated
alarmed
discombobulated
disconcerted
disturbed

EMBARRASSED

ashamed
chagrined
flustered
guilty
mortified
self-conscious

FATIGUE

beat
burnt out
depleted
exhausted
lethargic
listless
sleepy
tired
weary
worn out

PAIN

agony
anguished
bereaved
devastated
grief
heartbroken
hurt
lonely
miserable
regretful
remorseful

TENSE

anxious
cranky
distressed
distraught
edgy
fidgety
frazzled
irritable
jittery
nervous
overwhelmed
restless
stressed out

VULNERABLE

fragile
guarded
helpless
insecure
leery
reserved
sensitive
shaky

YEARNING

envious
jealous
longing
nostalgic
pining
wistful

resentful

AVERSION

animosity

appalled

contempt

disgusted

dislike

hate

horrified

hostile

repulsed

perturbed

rattled

restless

shocked

startled

surprised

troubled

turbulent

turmoil

uncomfortable

uneasy

unnerved

unsettled

upset

SAD

depressed

dejected

despair

despondent

disappointed

discouraged

disheartened

forlorn

gloomy

heavy hearted

hopeless

melancholy

unhappy

wretched

Needs Inventory

CONNECTION	CONNECTION	HONESTY	MEANING
acceptance	continued	authenticity	awareness
affection	safety	integrity	celebration of
appreciation	security	presence	life
belonging	stability	PLAY	challenge
cooperation	support	joy	clarity
communication	to know and be known	humor	competence
closeness	to see and be seen	PEACE	consciousness
community	to understand and	beauty	contribution
companionship	be understood	communion	creativity
compassion	trust	ease	discovery
consideration	warmth	equality	efficacy
consistency	PHYSICAL WELL-	harmony	effectiveness
empathy	BEING	inspiration	growth
inclusion	air	order	hope
intimacy	food	AUTONOMY	learning
love	movement/exercise	choice	mourning
mutuality	rest/sleep	freedom	participation
nurturing	sexual expression	independence	purpose
respect/self-	safety	space	self-
respect	shelter	spontaneity	expression
	touch		stimulation
	water		to matter
			understanding

Feelings & Needs Inventory: (c) 2005 by Center for Nonviolent
Communication

Website: www.cnvc.org Email: cnvc@cnvc.org

Phone: +1.505.244.4041

References

Books:

“Legacy of the Heart” Wayne Muller

“Consolations: The Solace, Nourishment, and Underlying Meaning” by David Whyte

Audio:

“The Grief Process” by Stephen and Ondrea Levine



On-line Resources:

Simply Psychology

<http://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html>

PBS

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aso/databank/entries/bhmasl.html>

Teachings from Thomas Hübl:

<http://www.thomashuebl.com>