

Welcome.

As we begin, I invite you to find a relaxed, seated position, to close your eyes if that's comfortable, and allow these beautiful words from Maya Angelou to greet you: "We may act sophisticated and worldly but I believe we feel safest when we go inside ourselves and find home, a place where we belong..."

This simple guided meditation invites you to visualize this sheltered place within, where you can be your true, authentic self — where your dignity and your worthiness are securely anchored at all times. This is the first step in building a life of belonging.

Begin by imagining yourself standing at the doorway of this home within. As you prepare to step across the threshold, pause to consider what constitutes the foundation of this grounded place at the center of your being. What are the values or qualities that form the bedrock of who you are and who you want to become? As you reflect on this, bring to mind 3 to 5 words that capture the essence of this foundation. Maybe your foundation consists of courage, compassion, or grace. Perhaps forgiveness or humor. I invite you to take a moment to bring your own qualities and values to mind. These are the foundation of your home within.



Imagine now the walls of this home within. They support the roof and they hold the windows that let the light in. And they are also held up by the practices and rituals that help you stand strong in your dignity and worthiness. They remind you that you are enough just as you are – and that you matter. As you envision them, think of them as strengthening you rather than closing you off from the world. Pause here to name what they are made of and what sustains them. Perhaps a practice like walking or writing or dancing reminds you who you are. Or maybe a religious or spiritual practice helps you get grounded in what you value and what your purpose is. When you visualize this home within and how you belong to yourself, are there some walls that feel sturdy and complete? Are there any that are only half built or need mending? Take a moment to note these as opportunities for further care and attention.



Just as you make your literal home your own by adding color, decor, a favorite chair, I invite you to name what makes your home within – this house of belonging – an expression of your truest self. What is essential to making it a safe and inviting space to

explore, grow, and strengthen what makes you uniquely you. As you envision this interior space, allow this to be a playful and fun part of your visualization. If you thrive in a book-lined room, what does that tell you about where you find courage and strength to be yourself? If you imagine a whimsical, colorful space in your home within, what does that suggest about your need for play and joy as part of your authentic expression? Take a few moments to consider the most essential elements of your home within; these are your list of must-haves that allow you to feel centered, nourished, and courageous.



Of course, a home is not a home without a protective roof to shelter you from the elements. As you envision this home within, take a moment to name what protects you from the external threats to your sense of belonging. When you're confronted by fear, doubt, or grief, like a storm arriving overhead, look around and identify where you can seek protection and shelter in this internal home. Do you find yourself in a particular room or surrounded by particular people? While this practice is about building a home within, it doesn't mean that you have to build it all alone. As you imagine this secure and sturdy roof, bring to mind the people, life experiences, or memories that help you establish a sense of belonging to yourself. Who and what help you complete this sheltering home within? Take a moment to name these for yourself.



As we come to a close, walk back across the threshold of your internal home and turn around to take it all in. Rename the elements of its foundation, its walls, the decorations, and the roof. Imagine its textures and colors, its places of strength or needed repair, its beauty. Whatever feelings arise, make space for them, imagining this place of belonging to yourself with compassion, kindness, and even some humor and delight. When uncertain or stormy weather arrives, what you envisioned in this practice remains available to you. You know your way in, so remember to dwell here. The key is always yours.