

The Need to Belong

Advanced (C1-C2)



WARM-UP

Part 1. Think about your life right now. Complete the sentences with your own ideas and explain them.

1. Lately, I feel most like myself when I'm _____.
2. I feel most disconnected when _____.
3. Being around other people helps me _____.

Part 2. Read the statements. Which ones sound familiar to you? Why?

1. "I like my independence, but I don't want to feel invisible."
2. "I need time alone, but too much of it messes with my head."
3. "I feel better when I'm around people who really get me."
4. "I didn't realise how isolated I felt until I wasn't anymore."

Part 3. Think about a time when you felt part of a community (for example: school, work, sport, neighbourhood, online).

Talk about:

- what held the group together
- what role you played in it
- what changed when that connection ended (if it did)

VIDEO ACTIVITY

Part 1. You're going to watch a video called "What happens to your brain without any social contact?"

Imagine someone is completely cut off from other people for a long time.

Discuss:

1. What do you think starts to change first — thoughts, emotions, or identity?
2. Do you think humans are wired to cope with that kind of isolation?

Part 2. Watch the video.

Part 3. Discuss the following questions.

1. The video says peaceful solitude can reduce stress, but forced isolation is different. Where is the line between "alone" and "isolated" for you?
2. The video mentions "social reality testing" (a "sounding board" to check if our perceptions are rational). Who or what acts as your sounding board in real life?
3. The video says that without communication and tasks, a person's sense of identity and reality becomes threatened. What daily things help you feel like "yourself"?
4. The video describes a shift from rational thinking towards emotionality. When you're stressed or disconnected, do you notice your thinking change? How?
5. The video says solitary confinement can make it harder to connect with others later. Have you ever felt "socially rusty" after time alone? What helped you return?



Part 4. Read the quotes from the video and decide whether you agree, disagree, or partially agree. Explain why.

1. "Symptoms tend to become more severe and persistent the longer one's isolated."
2. "Social interactions and meaningful activities are essential for emotional stability."
3. "When someone's deprived... their sense of identity and reality becomes threatened."
4. "Norway... has one of the world's lowest rates of recidivism, indicating **we tend to get better together.**"

Part 5. Look at each of the situations below and discuss the questions.

1. Someone works remotely, lives alone, and realises they've gone days without a real conversation.

What might start to change first: thoughts, emotions, or identity? Why?

2. Someone scrolls all evening, but still feels lonely.

What kind of "social reality testing" are they missing?

3. Someone moves to a new city and feels invisible.

What "meaningful activities" could help them rebuild emotional stability?

REFLECTION

Write three small, specific actions that help you feel connected and mentally steady.

1. One person I can talk to when my thoughts spiral: _____
2. One activity that helps me feel like myself again: _____
3. One small habit that keeps me connected day-to-day: _____