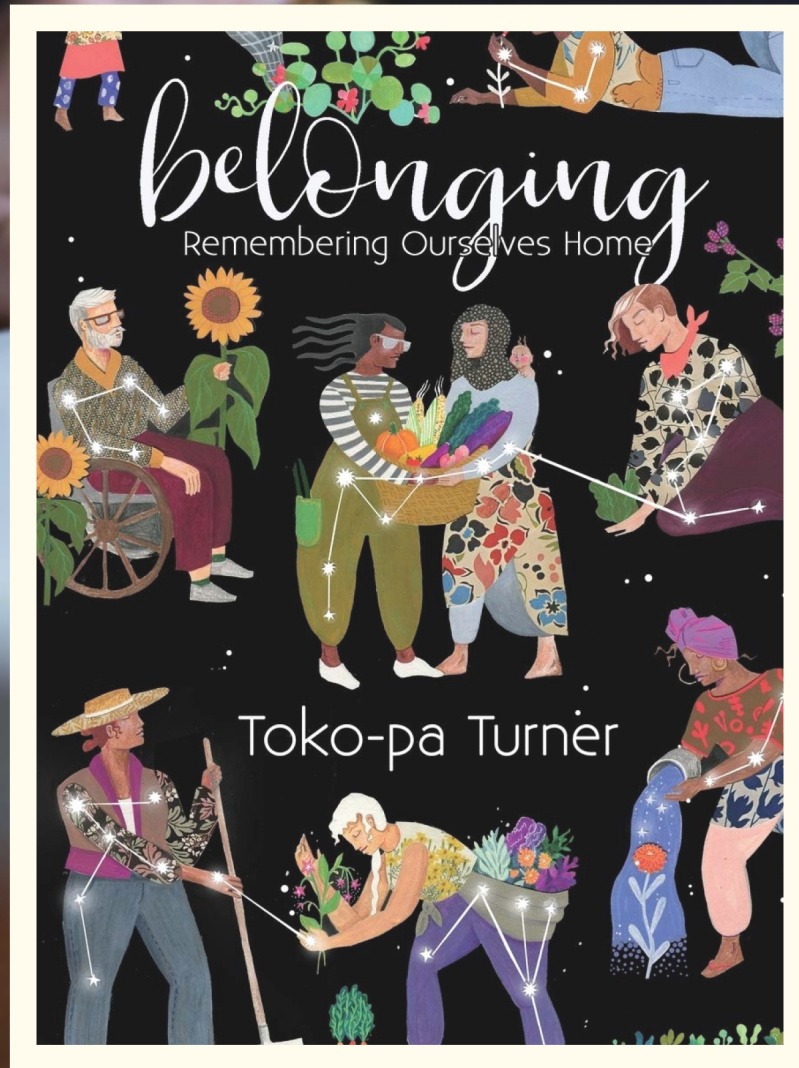




STEPH
JAGGER

A Reader's Guide

A collection of meditations and prompts to gently edge you into deeper connection with the book and yourself.



OUR TOP 10 FOR READING BETWEEN THE LINES

one

MARINATION

As we approach the entrance to the cave, the starting line of this book, let's check in on a couple things.

Firstly, let's talk emotions.

What emotions are present?

As you look at the cover of *Belonging*, what arises? Is there anticipation? Calmness? Resistance? Curiosity? For us, looking at the cover gives us a sense of comfort . . . we found ourselves taking a deep breath and felt a wave of warmth through our chest, and that response made us curious.

How about you?

Secondly, let's talk supplies.

As much of this book is about our listening to the wisdom of our dreams, we're gonna recommend that you have a journal on hand that is dedicated to logging your dreams.

As you jot down your dreams consider:

Paint a picture of your dream- what was happening in the dream? What colors or items especially stand out?

How emotions were present during the dream?

What emotions are present as you recall it?

Where do you feel the dream in your body as you recall it?

two

MARINATION

PAGE 15 (CHAPTER ONE)

Turner describes multiple kinds of yearnings for belonging. We suggest you head on over to PAGE 15 and read (or reread) those paragraphs.

A few examples of belonging include: belonging to our families of origin, belonging to the geography or current location, belonging with an intimate other, belonging to a purpose or vocation, belonging to traditions, belonging to the earth, the universe, and belonging in our bodies and our stories.

How would you describe your current sense of belonging?

Without judgment, simply notice:

Where in your life do you feel a strong sense of belonging? What does that feel like in your body? What emotions accompany that feeling?

Where in your life does belonging currently feel lukewarm? What does that feel like in your body? What emotions accompany that feeling?

Where in your life is belonging missing? What does that feel like in your body? What emotions accompany that feeling?

three

EXERCISE

PAGE 27-28 (CHAPTER TWO | The Origins of Estrangement)

In this chapter we explore estrangement, rejection, and outcasting.

Turner says, "Though the outcast learns to shift her shape to suit any habitat, it makes it harder to know her own true colors."

And

"Quite simply put, when we feel outcast, we are being shown the parts of ourselves we have cast out."

Grab your art supplies and your imagination.

In the center of the page, draw an outline of yourself.

Color in that outline with colors that feel true and reflective of the qualities of you.

Outside of said outline, draw the parts of yourself that you have cast out. There's no right or wrong here . . . this could include things like a heart for your longing for intimacy, or a tear for feelings of deep sadness you've pushed away, or a star representing your flair for entertaining and theatrics that was severed around long ago. Whatever they are, draw them, color them in, and see them in relation to yourself.

Look at your drawing and take a deep breath.

Are there any parts that exist outside of yourself that you'd like to invite back in? We know reclamation and coalescence of this sort takes time; we also know that it usually begins with a declaration.

So, dearest one: what, if anything, might you declare that you're inviting back in?

four

EXERCISE

PAGE 58 (CHAPTER FIVE)

Throughout this chapter we explore the dance of the masculine and feminine, yin and yang, within.

"Yin is often referred to as passive, negative and dark, while yang is the active, positive, sunny counterpart."

"Instead of negative, we might refer to yin as 'magnetic.' It is the realm of interiority, of holding, waiting and invoking. Instead of dark, we might say 'reflective,' like the moon, or 'gestational' like the soil. Yin is the place of refuge and rest, of containment and acceptance."

To use Steph's favorite made-up word, you might like to think of yin energy as "the womb-inescent" – a very alive space of mystery and creation.

Now, let's explore both the yin and the yang.

In what ways do you fuel and/or express your yang energy? List out five or so yang-activities.

For us, activities that nurture the yang within include things like dancing to power ballads and upbeat music, running, and scrubbing the stove.

In what ways do you nurture and/or express your yin energy? List out five or so yin-activities.

Yin nurturance for us includes things like stretching and slow yoga, a walk on the trails, and mindful washing of dishes.

And is there an in-between here, a place that feels it's a little of both, a part of you or an activity that is a beautifully blended state? Feel free to list those too.

Did you make your list? Good.

Take a moment and check in:

Is there an energy that's calling to you for further expression? Is your heart longing for more yin or more yang in this moment?

We're gonna encourage you to listen to the call and do an item or two this week from your corresponding list above.

For bonus points: Check in after completing said item(s). How do you feel? What does your heart whisper?



EXERCISE

five

PAGE 106

"We live under a kind of hegemony of positivity which emphasizes pleasure over pain, gain over loss, happiness over sadness, and the creative over the destructive. We are taught to 'rise above' things like anger, anxiety, sadness—and by whatever means necessary, stay in bliss and light. This kind of bypassing is dangerous because it teaches us to not only dissociate from the multiplicity of ourselves but from the magnificent spectrum of life itself."

This concept reminds us of something our lead coach, Shannah Crane Dimmick, talks about which is the Tree of Aliveness. On this tree she imagines leaves of all different colors, each leaf representing a different emotion. We may find some of these emotions more pleasant (or easy) to experience than others, but none are "good" or "bad" and all are equally valuable, for collectively they create our sense of aliveness. To feel is to be alive, and without the variety of leaves, in their dance of vibrancy and colors, the tree would be bare.

With this in mind, let's get artsy. Go on then, grab your art supplies.

Draw a tree with branches and leaves. Know that you'll be writing in the leaves, so enlarge them as needed (this tree need not be to scale).

Label each leaf with an emotion. Include those that you experience frequently and not-so-frequently, those of the present and those of the past, those that you enjoy feeling and those that are a bit (or a lot) uncomfortable.

Notice how you feel in your body and in your heart as you label each leaf.

Make as many leaves as you need.

Next, color in your leaves. Follow your instincts and choose the first color that calls to you for each leaf. Strive to use as much variety in color as possible.

Once those steps are complete, look at your tree and soak it in.

What was that process like for you? What's here now?

MARINATION

SIX

PAGE 130 (CHAPTER TEN)

"Many will counsel you that there is a reason for your pain and that if you could only heal your underlying emotional wounds, pain would soon leave you alone. But the body is not an abstraction, and pain laughs at the over-simplicity of this way of thinking."

We don't know about you, but we felt a wave of relief as we read these words. The counsel that Turner refers to can at times open the door toward self-blame and shame for our physical pain. What a lovely and humbling reminder that the body is far more complicated than that pretense allows.

Let's take it slow here and check in on your experience and relationship with physical pain.

Do you experience pain regularly?

Where in your body? What does it feel like?

Is that pain communicating anything to you? For example, pain in our shoulders or neck or back is typically a reminder that we need more movement, indicative perhaps of a bout of over-working or shouldering a heavy burden. Discomfort in our throat often tells us we're avoiding a conversation or speaking up and using our voice in some way.

When you think of pain, what emotions arise? Are there feelings of fear? Shame? Rage? Pride? Surrender? What does your heart say?

When you think of pain, what stories arise? Do you recall something a parent said about pain when you were a child? Do you remember your thoughts as you witnessed someone else's pain? What does your mind whisper?

What's here now as you look back at your notes about your relationship with pain?

And because we couldn't help it, we'll go ahead and leave this here for you as well from PAGE 138 (CHAPTER TEN | Ancestral Wounds):

"Rather than endlessly seeking to get well, or yearning for 'how things used to be' or 'may be one day again,' we must be willing to walk with our pain. Or at least be willing to be willing to say, 'This too is welcome. This too belongs.'"

seven

QUOTE

PAGE 132 (CHAPTER TEN)

"The body is the home we never leave, though some of us may try."

What a beautiful reminder.

We're sending love, from our bodies to yours.

eight

QUOTE

PAGE 143 (CHAPTER ELEVEN | Leaving the Reedbed):

"Practiced well, longing is the act of honouring separation. It is the impulse of the soul calling us deeper into life. It says, 'It's time to go home.' It's a piercing ache in the heart that knows there is more than this and pulls us, like a magnet, in orientation towards it."

Drop down. Take a deep breath and tune in...

Tune into your longing.

Where and how do you feel longing in your body?

Can you name that which you long for? That which you're calling in? What are you wanting more of?

nine

EXERCISE

PAGE 188 (CHAPTER FIFTEEN)

In Chapter Fifteen Turner talks about presence and attentiveness. She remarks on how little “downtime” we give ourselves these days because we are often “checking our devices” or scrolling during moments of pause.

“But downtimes are like invitations to the unconscious,” Turner says. “They invite the question on your heart to form, they entice originality to emerge, they create a welcoming space for an unexpected encounter.”

To explore attentiveness (or lack thereof), let’s start with noticing.

One day this week make an effort to notice.

#1 Notice micro moments of stillness. These are moments of stillness that pop up, but aren’t necessarily planned like a meditation would be. Micro moments of stillness could happen any time... like whilst standing in line, or waiting for the kettle to boil, while enjoying a meal, or sitting at a red light. Keep your senses open and notice when these arise.

#2 Notice if there is an urge to reach for your phone (or computer, or book), or to add in a bit of noise by way of the radio or television, during these still micro moments. If that urge exists, simply notice it, without judgment or shaming.

#3 Notice the impact of seeing the urge to reach for a device. Sometimes noticing causes the urge to subside, other times the urge still lingers. Any and all responses are perfectly fine.

#4 Make a conscious choice from here on whether you would like to engage with your device or sit in the stillness.

After a day or so of intentional “noticing” check in:

What was the experience like?

What did you learn about yourself?

ten

MARINATION

In her concluding remarks, Turner offers:

PAGE 245 (CONCLUSION)

“After all this time searching for a mysterious place in union with others and out in the world, may you find there was a home you’ve always-never known waiting within.”

As we wrap up Belonging, where are you now?

Take a deep breath, close your eyes, and drop in.

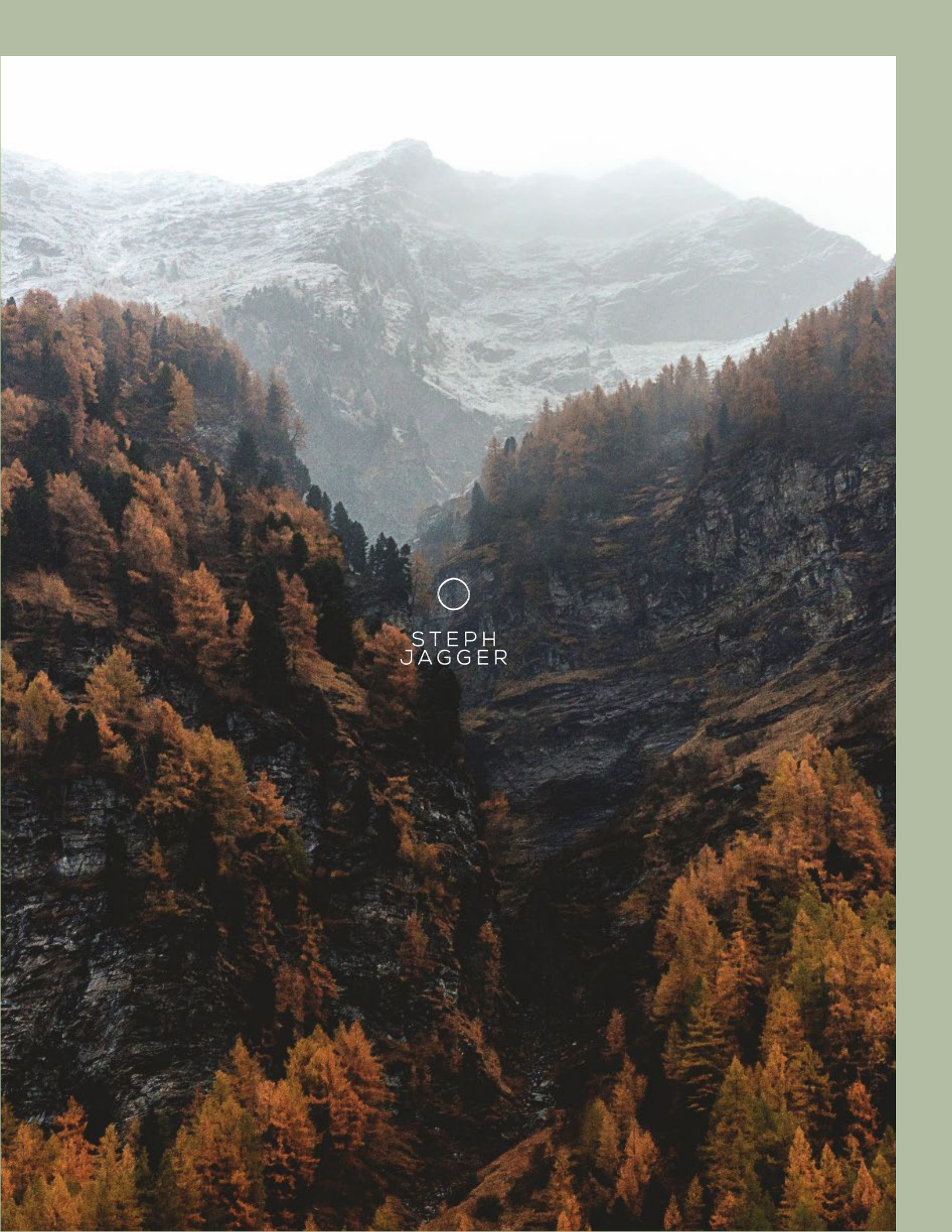
What’s different for you? Within you?

What’s softened?

What has been alchemized, transmuted and/or transformed?

To what do you hear your heart whisper: “This too belongs”?

NOTES



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