**Healing Connections: 10 Journaling Prompts for Support & Belonging**By: Laia Bové, cōpe guide

When was the last time you felt truly connected to yourself and those around you?

According to research and author Brené Brown, community is fundamentally about connection and belonging. She emphasizes that true belonging only happens when we present our authentic, imperfect selves to the world. It is a place where we feel safe to be vulnerable and are accepted as we are.

Living with a chronic condition or receiving a difficult diagnosis can feel quite isolating. It can make you feel disconnected from yourself and others, even those closest to you. Showing up authentically when we are in pain requires courage and the right environment and people to be courageous with.

**“Stop walking through the world looking for confirmation that you don’t belong. You will always find it because you’ve made that your mission. Stop scouring people’s faces for evidence that you’re not enough. You will always find it because you’ve made that your goal. True belonging and self-worth are not goods; we don’t negotiate their value with the world. The truth about who we are lives in our hearts. Our call to courage is to protect our wild heart against constant evaluation, especially your own. No one belongs here more than you.” - Brené Brown**

This quote beautifully encapsulates the essence of belonging and community. It's a powerful reminder that connection starts from within and is fostered through self-acceptance and authenticity.

Journaling can be a powerful tool when facing chronic conditions, difficult diagnoses or even simply reaching health and wellness goals. I invite you to take some time—perhaps daily—to sit with yourself, maybe with a cozy beverage, and write. You don’t have to write anything in particular; you could set a timer or a fixed number of pages to write every day and free-write whatever is on your mind.

If you’re not sure where to get started and want some support and guidance, here are some prompts to help you explore and strengthen your sense of belonging:

**Support Network**

Identify three people in your life who you feel comfortable reaching out to when you're not feeling well. How can you express your needs and seek their support?

**Finding Gratitude**

Reflect on the people in your life who have been supportive and helpful in your journey with chronic illness. Write a short letter to each of them, thanking them for their support. Perhaps you even mail it to them.

**Community Experience**

Write about a time when you felt a sense of community or belonging with others who share similar struggles. What was it about that experience that made you feel connected to them?

**Authenticity**

Reflect on a recent moment when you felt comfortable being your authentic self. What made that situation or those people feel safe for you?

**Connection Practices**

List activities or practices that help you feel more connected to yourself. How can you incorporate these into your daily routine?

**Nurturing Community**

What community do you already have in your life that needs your nurturing to grow?

**Impact of Support**

Reflect on the times you have supported others, whether by sharing your experiences, offering insights, or simply being a listening ear. Reflect on the impact you have had on them and the difference you have made in their lives.

**Expressing Needs**

Write about what you need from others to better manage your chronic illness. This can include emotional support, practical assistance, or accommodations. Use this writing as a way to articulate your needs and communicate them with others later on.

**Advice to the Newly Diagnosed**

What advice would you give to someone newly diagnosed with your chronic illness? Write a letter to that person, sharing your insights and experiences.

**Imagining a Safe Space**

Imagine a space where you feel completely secure, peaceful, and restored. Write about its details, and brainstorm ways to incorporate some of these elements into your daily life.

Taking time to work with these or similar journaling prompts can help you find clarity. When you spend a little less time in your own head and you put your thoughts to paper instead, you gain perspective and start to see how much goodness there is in your life, even through the most difficult challenges.

By engaging with these journaling prompts, you can foster a deeper sense of connection and belonging within yourself and your community, you can let yourself remember that you are never truly alone.