The Belonging Health Spectrum

A Framework by Dr. Radar Onguetou

Developed through Still Point Practice LLC

Understanding where people are in their experience of belonging can guide more compassionate leadership, healthier relationships, and stronger organizations.



Protective Survival

People feel unsafe or unsupported and focus on protecting themselves.



Fragmented Belonging

People feel connected in some moments but excluded or unsupported in others.



Quiet Strain

People contribute but carry pressure they do not feel able to share.



Functional but Guarded Belonging

People work well together but still hold back parts of themselves.



Integrated Belonging

People feel respected, speak honestly, and remain connected through difficulties.



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Organizational Development | Conflict Analysis and Resolution

Leadership | Belonging

The Five Domains of Belonging

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Five conditions that shape how people experience belonging.



Voice Without Fear

People can speak honestly, ask questions, and share concerns without fear.



Power Used with Integrity

People in authority use their power fairly, responsibly, and with respect.



Identity and Human Dignity

People are respected for who they are, not only for what they contribute.



How Conflict Is Handled

Disagreements are addressed honestly and fairly while protecting everyone's dignity.



Leadership and Moral Courage

Leaders face difficult truths, acknowledge mistakes, and do what is right.

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The Five Signals to Watch

Five signals that may reveal hidden strain in relationships and organizations.

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Perceived Trust

People begin to question whether others will treat them honestly, fairly, and consistently.



Carried Tension

People continue their work while carrying pressure from concerns that remain unresolved.



Unspoken Resentment

Frustration grows when people feel unheard or believe important concerns have been ignored.



Emotional Labor

People feel pressure to hide their feelings or manage their reactions to keep relationships working.



Conflict Displacement

Unresolved tension begins to affect other conversations, relationships, or situations.

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The Five Responses to Conflict

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Different starting responses. All protect something important.
Each has potential strengths and limitations.



Seeking Resolution

OFTEN PROTECTS
Progress

POSSIBLE STRENGTH
Moves people toward action.

POSSIBLE LIMITATION
May push toward resolution before enough understanding exists.



Seeking Understanding

OFTEN PROTECTS
Meaning

POSSIBLE STRENGTH
Creates space for listening and reflection.

POSSIBLE LIMITATION
May delay action when a decision is needed.



Seeking Clarity

OFTEN PROTECTS
Certainty

POSSIBLE STRENGTH
Looks for facts, structure, and understanding.

POSSIBLE LIMITATION
May keep searching when enough information already exists.



Seeking Safety

OFTEN PROTECTS
Security

POSSIBLE STRENGTH
Recognizes risk and the need for protection.

POSSIBLE LIMITATION
May avoid a conversation that eventually needs to happen.



Seeking Harmony

OFTEN PROTECTS
Connection

POSSIBLE STRENGTH
Pays attention to relationships.

POSSIBLE LIMITATION
May preserve surface peace at the cost of honest disagreement.

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The Hidden Layer

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

What may still be happening after everyone has left the room?

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The visible conversation tells part of the story. The hidden layer draws attention to what people may continue carrying and the conditions that shape those experiences.

A conversation can end before the experience of conflict has ended.

FOUR CONVERSATION LAYERS

What we often address during the conversation

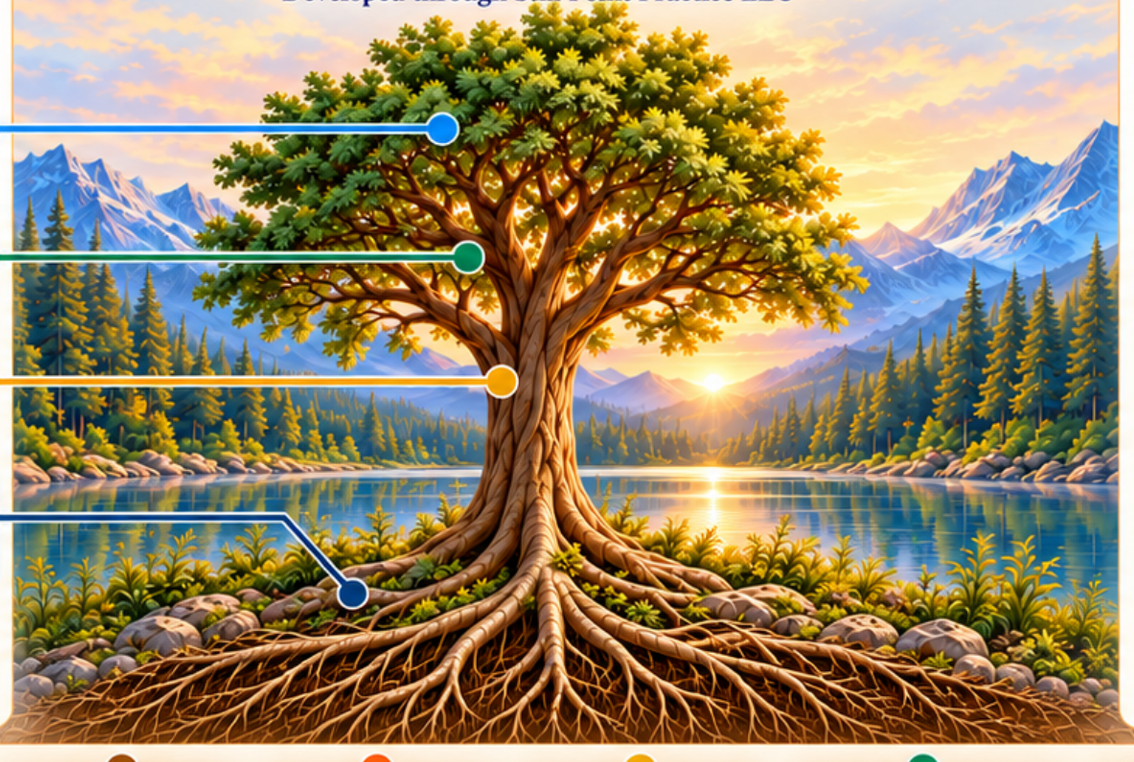
I — What Happened
What are the facts and the story?

II — Feelings
What did people feel?

III — Identity
What does this mean about me or us?

IV — The Hidden Layer
What may still be happening beneath the surface?

The first three conversations—What Happened, Feelings, and Identity—are adapted from Difficult Conversations by Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen (2010). The Hidden Layer is Dr. Radar Onguetou's proposed conceptual extension.



FIVE POSSIBLE LINGERING EFFECTS

What people may continue to carry after the conversation ends

Monitoring
Continuing to watch what is said, done, or not done.

Restraint
Holding back what is still on the mind.

Rumination
Replaying the conversation or possible outcomes.

Emotional labor
Managing feelings to keep working relationships.

Accumulated cost
The ongoing impact on energy, trust, health, or sense of belonging.

SIX ROOT-LEVEL FACTORS

What may be gathering beneath organizational life and what conditions can be tended so healthier growth becomes possible.

- Relational history
- Carried tension
- Unspoken resentment
- Emotional labor
- Conflict displacement
- Perceived trust

What happens beneath shapes what grows above.

Reflection. Did the conflict end, or did it move somewhere else?
A conceptual guide for reflection.

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