

What Tolerance Feels Like

November 2020 Blog, www.sharonmccann.ca/blog, © Sharon McCann, RPC, RCCH

November 16, 2020 is the International Day for Tolerance. According to the UNESCO Declaration of the Principles of Tolerance, tolerance means that “one is free to adhere to one's own convictions and accepts that others adhere to theirs. It means accepting the fact that human beings, naturally diverse in their appearance, situation, speech, behaviour and values, have the right to live in peace and to be as they are.”

If you were born into a family who immigrated from a culture or race different from the mainstream, you understand the importance of tolerance. Maybe you were bullied at school for your differences. Maybe you felt embarrassed among your peers about the foods you ate or how you spoke or dressed. If you were born into a family that is intolerant of diversity, perhaps you experienced intolerance of your own values and choices as you grew up.



Tolerance within your family, community, and society results in feeling Safety, Belonging and Dignity. [Prentis Hemphill](#), a former director for the global Black Lives Matter, says that oppression lives in people. For those of us who have experienced constant intolerance, we may be more familiar with fear, scarcity and pain, including emotional pain. We may be unfamiliar with what Safety, Belonging and Dignity feel like.

Developing the capacity and circumstances in our lives to feel Safety, Belonging and Dignity is our choice and our birthright.