



This Is Where You Belong: The Art and Science of Loving the Place You Live

By Melody Warnick

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In the spirit of Gretchen Rubin's megaseller *The Happiness Project* and Eric Weiner's *The Geography of Bliss*, a journalist embarks on a project to discover what it takes to love where you live

The average restless American will move 11.7 times in a lifetime. For Melody Warnick, it was move #6, from Austin, Texas, to Blacksburg, Virginia, that threatened to unhinge her. In the lonely aftermath of unpacking, she wondered: *Aren't we supposed to put down roots at some point? How does the place we live become the place we want to stay?* This time, she had an epiphany. Rather than hold her breath and hope this new town would be her family's perfect fit, she would figure out how to fall in love with it—no matter what.

How we come to feel at home in our towns and cities is what Warnick sets out to discover in *This Is Where You Belong*. She dives into the body of research around place attachment—the deep sense of connection that binds some of us to our cities and increases our physical and emotional well-being—then travels to towns across America to see it in action. Inspired by a growing movement of placemaking, she examines what its practitioners are doing to create likeable locales. She also speaks with frequent movers and loyal stayers around the country to learn what draws highly mobile Americans to a new city, and what makes us stay. The best ideas she imports to her adopted hometown of Blacksburg for a series of Love Where You Live experiments designed to make her feel more locally connected. Dining with her neighbors. Shopping Small Business Saturday. Marching in the town Christmas parade.

Can these efforts make a halfhearted resident happier? Will Blacksburg be the place she finally stays? What Warnick learns will inspire you to embrace your own community—and perhaps discover that the place where you live right now . . . is home.

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Editorial Review

Review

“With this book by your side, a happier life is just around the corner.”—**Gretchen Rubin, bestselling author of *The Happiness Project***

“[Warnick's] journey to feeling attached to where she lives is scientific and packed with research, but also feels like an old friend's casual banter. This practical exercise in intentional place-based happiness is for the homesick and the optimistic alike.”—**Shelf Awareness**

“Two books in one: a well-researched survey of the literature on place attachment, and a how-to guide for readers wanting to fall in love with where they live.”—**Library Journal**

“A series of research-backed ways to be happy in a new home.”—**Time**

“Where we choose to live is the single most important decision we make. Melody Warnick shows you how to find a place you truly love and even more importantly how to make it your very own. *This Is Where You Belong* is an important book for so many people out there who are choosing their place to live.”—**Richard Florida, author of *Who's Your City?* and *Rise of the Creative Class***

“*This Is Where You Belong* deconstructs one of the most important decisions a person makes in the new gig economy: where to call home. With boundless curiosity and spirited, seamless prose, Melody Warnick's placemaking manifesto will make you want to be a better neighbor, wanderer, and citizen of the world.”—**Beth Macy, author of *Factory Man***

“Between the lines of this marvelous book is a deeper message for those who seek it. Yes, you can find happiness just about anywhere—and Melody Warnick will show you how—but some places are happier than others, and those considering a move would be wise to read these pages first and see where they lead.”—**Jeff Speck, author, *Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America, One Step at a Time***

“A charming, thoughtful book about how to find new joys in your own hometown. With suggestions on walking, buying locally, and visiting farmer's markets, it's a reminder that the best place to live can be where you already are.”—**Janice Kaplan, New York Times bestselling author of *The Gratitude Diaries***

“Our neighbors are an overlooked but critical resource in so many ways. This great, readable book from Melody Warnick nails why we should all be doing more to invest in our communities and neighborhoods to create more connected, happier, healthier, and safer spaces.”—**Daniel P. Aldrich, author of *Building Resilience and Site Fights***

“I live in and write about a small Alaskan town and Melody Warnick quantified so many of the reasons why I love Haines. This must be the best how-to book ever written on how (and why) to love the place you live. Read it and share it, and then go out and make your community better.”—**Heather Lende, author of *Find the Good: Unexpected Life Lessons from a Small-town Obituary Writer***

“Thoughtful, witty, and engaging, Warnick combines personal anecdotes and thorough research to uncover the power and impact of connecting with the people around you. A fun and worthwhile read.”—**Marc J.**

Dunkelman, visiting fellow at Brown's Taubman Center for Public Policy and American Institutions, and author of *The Vanishing Neighbor*

“Warnick convincingly argues that one of the most important relationships in your life is with where you live. This book is an empowering guide for anyone who wonders if they will ever feel like they really belong to a community. I already feel more inspired.”—**Kelly McGonigal, author of *The Upside of Stress***

About the Author

A freelance journalist for more than a decade, **Melody Warnick** has written for *Reader's Digest*, *O: The Oprah Magazine*, *Redbook*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Woman's Day*, *Parents*, and *The Atlantic*'s CityLab. She lives with her family in Blacksburg, Virginia.

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James Dickens:

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