

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Be kinder than necessary because everyone you meet is fighting some kind of battle. – J. M. Barrie

HAVE YOU EVER FELT LIKE you did not belong anywhere? Are you navigating between two realms and not fitting in with either? That is precisely how I felt growing up.

Welcome to my story, where my openness to experiences and vulnerabilities is a doorway into my journey filled with surprises and profound insights. It is a rollercoaster ride of emotions, from the excitement of exploring a new city to the heartbreak of feeling disconnected from my roots. Through my autobiography, I hope to share my experiences and perceptions with readers seeking a sense of connection. I hope by sharing my personal life, you will discover valuable insights and methods to navigate your path toward belonging.

You may be wondering where I belong. The answer is not as straightforward as you may think. To truly understand, I need to go to the beginning of my deep-rooted longing for why I felt the need to connect. Thus, I embarked on a journey of self-discovery rooted in one key element of my identity, which was calling for exploration: my name.

What is in a name? Is a name significant? Some people believe a person's name reveals their origins. If this is the case, what does my name indicate about me? Where did I come from, and what is my background? My first name is Indian, but my last name is Canadian. So, where do I, as a person on this big blue marble, truly belong?

My autobiography was born from a curiosity about the significance of a name. I wanted to understand how my name affected people's perception of my background and where I could belong because I had never known my biological last name. The absence of this crucial piece left me feeling disconnected, prompting a journey to uncover not just a name but a profound sense of

belonging and self-discovery.

Despite my East Indian appearance, I am a stranger to its culture and language. Adopted and raised by Caucasian parents, I do not visually look the part. Still, my speech reflects the influence of Canadian English, creating a divide between my visual identity and cultural connection. This is the crux of my conundrum: I speak like a Canadian but do not look Canadian, and I look Indian but do not speak Indian languages. I find myself straddling two worlds, not entirely fitting in with the Whites or the Indians.

Apart from my children, I have no biological family, and my adopted family is limited. In my early twenties, I embraced a faith that differed from the standards commonly accepted by the world. This journey, however, has naturally led me to grow apart from those not sharing my spiritual path. Though, I have witnessed a wholehearted embrace of commitment among those who walk a similar spiritual journey as me. Amidst my responsibilities, I have also been reflecting on my journey and seeking a sense of belonging.

As I contemplate the title of my autobiography, an overwhelming rush of emotion surges within me while I think, wonder, and question: *Why was I an orphan? What happened to my birth parents? Will I ever have the chance to see them again? Am I worthy of being loved or showing love? Where is my place in this vast world?*

I invite you to take an emotional journey through my life, where I share personal stories of challenges, people, and choices that shaped me into who I am today. My book is a touching and deeply personal account of my life, where I make myself vulnerable to you, my esteemed readers.

We all crave a sense of belonging in some form. This is not just my story but a reflection of the universal human longing to find one's place in the world, a sentiment shared in countless hearts. By acknowledging this shared longing, we build connections that extend beyond individual experiences, fostering understanding and compassion among people.

As I delve into the heart of my journey, I will begin by explaining that my biological parents gave me up as a baby, so I became an orphan. Then, as a young teenager, my adoptive parents sent me off to Toronto on a train, leaving me parentless again.

Join me on my journey to find what I have been searching for all my life - a place where I truly belong.

We all have a story to tell, and this, my dear friends, is mine.

What hurts you blesses you. – Rumi