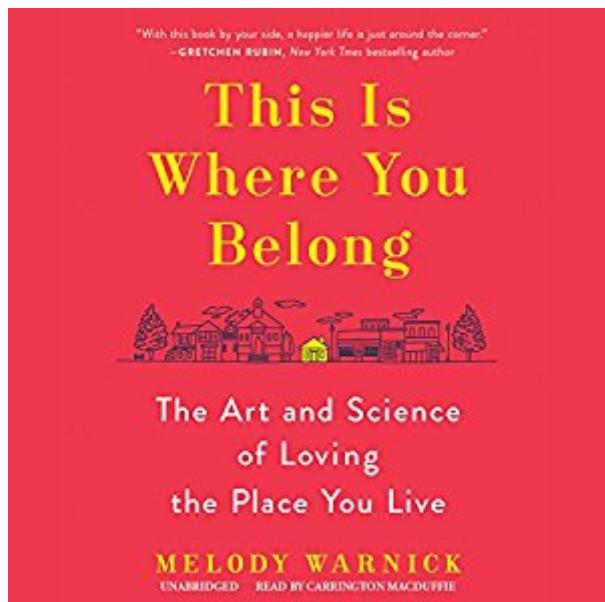


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# This Is Where You Belong: The Art And Science Of Loving The Place You Live



## Synopsis

In the spirit of Gretchen Rubin's *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 her sixth move - 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 likable 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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When I saw this book had only 2 reviews I felt I had to speak up. I don't write reviews on books even though reading is practically my religion for the simple reason that I feel my voice doesn't really add to the conversation. When power house books like All the Light We Cannot See is getting 23, 752 reviews and counting I feel like a drop in the ocean. I'll just keep reading and keep my opinions to myself (or to close friends). What changed was that this unique book fell into my hands at the right time. In less than 3 months I'm leaving my home state with my husband, dog, and all our worldly possessions to cross mountains, desert, and snow (all of which this Houston, TX girl has never seen in her 28 years) on my husbands 30th birthday because we are chasing a dream of the grass is greener WAY on the other side. Vancouver, WA might turn out to be a huge disappointment but that craving for a fresh start has promoted us to hit the reset button and start life anew in another state. Melody Warnick, the author of this book, has done what I'm about to do 6 times in her life. According to Warnick on average a person will jump ship 11.7 times. These statics show that a lot of us have fallen into a habit of chasing the next best thing, hoping that in a new land they will finally feel that internal warmth and inner knowing of "home". For Warnick after move number six from Austin, Texas to Blacksburg, Virginia she was sure that she would finally be wooed by Blacksburg and be at peace. But Real Blacksburg as opposed to Fictional Blacksburg (the one Warnick had created in her head while obsessing scrolling through Google Street View at 1:00 am) was, as she said, bleak. She wasn't happy and the thought she will once again have to move didn't make her joyful. Her girls were getting to be school age and she wanted them to have something permanent. A real sense of home. And so, Warnick begins Love Where You Live Experiments in her new hometown. This time she was staying. How does a book about staying help someone like me who has decided to go? The answer is complicated. In reading this book I have learned the reason why I have felt so uneasy all these years in my home state isn't about the politics, the heat, or the bugs. Because the things she writes about are things I have done and still have felt no attachment to my place. Texas has been the home of my head but not my heart. And once I land in Washington with nothing more than my bed, dog, and husband what I'll be searching for to make me feel at home won't be the next Pottery Barn duvet cover. I will be walking the streets, eating local foods, saying hi to my neighbors, and spend my money at the local art supply store as opposed to the mammoth Hobby Lobby. Maybe I'll volunteer at the library and go to coffee houses rather than stay at home sobbing on my bathroom floor and lamenting that I ever moved in the first place. When I go

I will be sure to take this book and the reminder that the warmth of home doesn't happen overnight. That just because I pack up and leave doesn't mean that I'm a newly made person. And that to truly love a place and stay where you are beings with the simple act of experiencing joy for as long as you are there.

Warnick expresses well many of the thoughts and feelings I have experienced each time I've moved to a new locale. The wishful hopes of a new beginning. Learning what is not so great about the new place. What has to happen if you are ever going to be satisfied with where you are. The futility of trying to decide ahead of time how things will be at a new address. I thoroughly enjoyed reading about the experiences and discoveries that Warnick had during her journey from place to place, and learned a lot from her sociological research.

When everyone is talking about finding the right place to live, this book is a refreshing look about how to fall in love with just about any place you find yourself. Lots of compelling checklists about buying local, volunteering, getting involved in politics, and finding happiness in your surroundings. I particularly love the author's Love Where You Live Principles list in the back of the book. The whole book seems aimed at helping the reader accomplish #11: "Experience joy for as long as you're there."

We have moved nine times in the past nine years and are on move number 10 to San Francisco. This book really spoke to me and my life experiences--I have to put down roots fast and I know I won't be living in my current location forever. It had lots of great practical ideas for getting involved in your community and getting to know people fast. Would be a great buy for a military family or anyone with chronic restlessness.

This book has inspired me to make some changes in my life to help me love the place I live. Melody Warnick has taken her time to include research that is intriguing and accurate. The writing is clever and enjoyable. I do not typically read a lot of nonfiction, but this book is easy to read and pulled me in.

a very simplistic read. Nothing of substance more like a cheer leader story. Stopped reading after 3-4 chapters  
Bill Clancy

Living in Blacksburg, VA, I found Ms. Warnick's mention of local enterprises interesting enough for me to follow up on. I also enjoyed her thoughts on walking. At present I do not drive a car and basically use a combination of walking and riding Blacksburg Transit. Walking is the best, of course.

Coming from someone who has been moving her whole life, this book has helped me know how to connect with my town and put down roots. This was well-researched, helpful, but also cathartic. Melody Warnick has a personable and engaging writing style. Would highly recommend.

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