

THE CHIMP PARADOX: BOOK REVIEW

THE CHIMP MODEL IN RELATION TO LONGING TO BELONG

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The mind management book *The Chimp Paradox* by Professor Steve Peters is a book designed to give the reader tools into understanding their mind to live a happier life. The book delves into a psychological model where our brain is split into various components. Peters simplifies the different scientifically complex areas into more everyday simple ideas. He discusses how anatomically the brain has seven different zones which he divides into three different names. To start he calls the instinct and emotional area of the brain, the Limbic system, The “chimp brain.” Next, he calls the logical and personal identity area of the brain, The Frontal lobe, the “human brain.” Finally, he groups the remaining five groups into one name, the “computer.” Through communicating with other chapters, the book is linked to our groups theme of *Longing to Belong* as it helps to explain why we feel social pressure and why we have such a strong desire to feel we fit in with those around us.

Within *The Chimp Paradox* Peters explains how the “chimp” can run your life - although not very well. He describes how it is mainly an emotional

and unstable machine but has its own personality within your mind. This book relates to how mental health can affect your sense of belonging through both the planets model and the “Chimp” model. Peters explains how the chimp inside your head is there from birth and co-inhabits your mind with you. He explains how sometimes you can get along with the chimp, but most times your own different and logical approach to situations can clash with the raw emotions the chimp uses to think with.

Peters explains that the more you allow the chimp to take control of situations, the more you will feel like you do not belong within your own brain, and as such this links the book to our theme of longing to belong. The lack of belonging at a foundational level of inside your own head will obviously cause you to feel a sense of misplacement amongst those around you. This can lead you to question why it is only you that has these strange issues that it seems nobody else has, causing you to feel like an outcast both in your own self and to other community groups.

The next chapter is called “The Troop Moon.” Within this, Peters explains how both the human and the chimp aspects of our mind welcome the idea of being in a “troop” for many reasons. However, he mentions that “the troop is something that virtually all chimps need” and that “The troop is something that nearly every human would like.” Within this chapter he explains how the need to become part of a community with other like-minded individuals is a deep-rooted survival instinct that comes from the benefits it would give our chimp ancestors living in the jungle. Human groups form as the human brain enjoys the company of companions and likes to share and look after others including vulnerable members of society. This causes a clash between the two opposing thought processes as the human being, a believer in society feels that everyone should be included, whilst the chimp wants to establish its own tribe of close family and friends, treating everyone

else like enemies. This links to our theme as we want to all fit in as a society. But we also want to establish a tight knit group of those around us that we specifically get along with, leaving everyone else to fend for themselves.

In summary, Peters' models of the chimp paradox relates to the theme 'longing to belong' as it teaches you how it is down to understanding yourself and your own mind in order to fit in with those around you. He teaches the reader that belonging to groups and finding friends with similar interests to your own is an evolutionary trait developed to increase odds of our ancestors surviving in the rainforest. He also teaches the reader that sometimes there are other operators within our own mind that can take control over the way that we act, which explains why we can sometimes feel like a guest within our own self.