

## **Moving Beyond the Limits of Disability Inclusion: Using the Concept of Belonging Through Friendship to Improve the Outcome of the Social Model of Disability**

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**Abstract :** The medical model of disability, though beneficial for the medical professional, is often exclusionary, restrictive and dehumanizing when applied to the lived experience of disability. As a result, a critique of this model was constructed called the social model of disability. Much of the language used to articulate the purpose behind the social model of disability can be summed up within the word *inclusion*. However, this essay asserts that *inclusiveness* is an incomplete aspiration. The social model, as it currently stands, does not aid in creating a society where those with impairments actually *belong*. Rather, the social model aids in lessening the visibility, or negative consequence of, difference. Therefore, the social model does not invite society to welcome those with physical and intellectual impairments. It simply aids society in ignoring the existence of impairment by removing explicit forms of exclusion. Rather than simple *inclusion*, then, this essay uses John Swinton's concept of *friendship* and Jean Vanier's understanding of *belonging* to better articulate the intended outcome of the social model—a society where everyone can *belong*.

**Keywords :** belong, community, differently-able, disability, exclusion, friendship, inclusion, normality

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