



A Mosaic of Belonging

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My connection to memory, reconciliation, and peace-building began as a deeply personal journey. At university, I held tightly to a single narrative of the war, one passed down through family, community, and political affiliation. It gave me certainty; it gave me identity. But soon, I was exposed to different ways of seeing the past. Through my involvement in social work and cross-sectarian projects, I encountered peers whose stories challenged mine. Their truths collided with what I had always believed. That is when I began questioning the very roots of my identity and political beliefs.

This awakening was not peaceful. It was painful, disorienting, and lonely. As I dared to cross the imaginary borders that still divide us—borders of memory, loyalty, and fear. I was met with resistance. I lost friendships. I was accused of becoming an outsider with dangerous thoughts. Maybe even poisonous. My curiosity, once celebrated, was now seen as a threat. I was “too much” for some, “too soft” for others. And at times,

I too wondered: why am I doing this?

But the more I listened, the more I realized how fragile our understanding of truth is. I began assembling a mosaic of stories, fragments of memory from across the Lebanese landscape. Each encounter, painful or joyful, added a new piece. Slowly, I came to realize that truth is not singular. It is layered, conflicting, and often uncomfortable. But it is in these tensions that healing can begin.

One of the most difficult things I’ve had to accept is the psychological violence that persists today. This violence is not physical. It is more insidious. It manifests as exclusion, silence, mockery, and shame. It appears when someone tries to express a different viewpoint and is immediately dismissed as a traitor. It surfaces when we are taught to accept rather than question, to follow not to think, not to cross lines drawn long before we were born.

In many ways, we are still at war, within ourselves and with each other.





I know that today's political polarization between left and right is not unique to Lebanon. Around the world, new conflicts are taking shape, fueled by misinformation and competing truths, each serving a different agenda. No, we are not the only victims; many youth are suffering across this world. But what makes Lebanon's situation particularly harmful is that we haven't healed from our own war. That unhealed memory has left the war and post-war generations with a violent twist: a tendency to cancel others, to dismiss their opinions, their suffering, their pain. And this, too, is violence.

I now understand that reconciliation is not just about national unity or political agreements. It is about making space for complexity. It is about allowing others to exist in our memory, even when their truths challenge ours. It is about acknowledging that there are wounds we did not cause but still carry. Wounds we have inherited through silence.

I write this reflection not because I have answers, but because I have questions. Questions about who gets to belong in this country.



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About who defines our history. About whether it is possible to build a citizenship that is not built on fear, or on forgetting.

I believe that young people can lead this transformation, if they are given the space to feel, to express, and to remember without fear. But today, we are often expected to remain neutral, apolitical, and detached. Even when we witness injustice, we are told to stay silent to "protect the peace." But peace without justice is only another form of oppression. Silence is not neutrality. It is complicity.

I do not claim to have transcended my biases or my pain. I still carry the weight of my background. I still struggle to reconcile love for my community with the harm its narratives are causing, especially toward today's youth who do not





adopt them. Even within a single religious community, there are tribal, familial, and ideological fractures. And those who oppose the dominant narrative often face the same silencing tactics. The cycle repeats.

But I am trying. I am listening. I am learning.

And maybe that is what this country needs: more people willing to listen. More spaces that

allow young people to wrestle with memory without being punished for it. More courage to say, “I don’t know everything,” and to sit with that not-knowing.

In the end, all I really want is to belong—to Lebanon, to a community of truth-seekers, to a future where no one is excluded for daring to ask: “Is there another way to remember?”

Is that too much to ask for?

