

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF **ELF** – Family Discussion Guide

Talk about difference, belonging, and the families we make.

Use this guide to connect as a family, talk about difference, belonging, and the families we make.

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BEFORE WATCHING

Set the stage and open hearts and minds.

- ★ Have you ever felt different from the people around you?
- ★ Younger kids: what makes someone part of your family?

2



WHILE WATCHING

Pay attention to difference, hope, and belonging.

- ★ Buddy is loved but does not fit. How does he seem to feel about that?
- ★ What does Buddy hope his dad will be like?

3



AFTER WATCHING

Reflect together and make meaning.

- ★ Why was meeting his dad disappointing at first?
- ★ Buddy had two fathers in a way. What did each one give him?

4



FAMILY REFLECTION

Go deeper with empathy, honesty, and connection.

- ★ What are the different ways a person can become part of a family?
- ★ Older kids and teens: where do you hold back what you really feel, and what might that cost?
- ★ Try this: each person names one thing they appreciate about our family that has nothing to do with looking alike.

DR. Z TAKEAWAY

“Where you came from is not the same question as who you belong to.

Blood, adoption, and the family we choose can all count, and *Elf* refuses to rank them.”

BELONGING



DR. MICHAEL ZAKALIK, PSY.D.
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Understanding minds.



Strengthening connections.

