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## Three Studies Explain Why the Connection Practice Works

### 1. Naming feelings reduces the reaction of the amygdala.

In a UCLA research study called *Putting Feelings into Words*, 30 participants were shown photographs of people who were emotionally upset, and then were asked to label the emotion (for example, “angry” or “fearful”) while the researchers measured the response of their amygdalae. The researchers found that naming the feelings in this way reduced the amygdala’s response.

In a control group, the participants looked at faces and selected a name underneath them that corresponded to the person’s gender, like “Harry” or “Sally” while the researchers measured the response of their amygdalae. The researchers discovered that the amygdala – the part of the brain that sounds an alarm in time of danger – was *less* active when an emotion label was attached to the upset face, compared to when a name was attached. This leads us to believe that when the amygdala has been triggered, naming feelings reduces its reaction. Naming feelings is the first step in the Connection Practice.

*Source: Putting Feelings Into Words: Affect Labeling Disrupts Amygdala Activity in Response to Affective Stimuli*

Matthew D. Lieberman, Naomi I. Eisenberger, Molly J. Crockett, Sabrina M. Tom, Jennifer H. Pfeifer and Baldwin M. Way  
*Association for Psychological Science*, Volume 18 – Number 5, p. 421-428

### 2. Naming needs leads to empathy.

In a study on the *Neural Substrate of Human Empathy: Effects of Perspective-Taking and Cognitive Appraisal*, subjects were asked to imagine the feelings of someone who was receiving medical treatment and whose face they saw in a video clip. They were also given information about whether this person’s medical treatment had been successful or not. Behavioral measures and the brain responses of these subjects showed that when subjects had a context for understanding another person’s needs, it enhanced their empathic responses. Naming needs is the second step in the Connection Practice.

*Source: The Neural Substrate of Human Empathy: Effects of Perspective-taking and Cognitive Appraisal*

Claus Lamm, C. Daniel Batson and Jean Decety  
*Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, Volume 19, Number 1, p. 42-58

### 3. Heart-brain coherence leads to insights.

*A Brain Mechanism for Facilitation of Insight by Positive Affect* showed that people in a better mood are more likely to solve problems by insight. Research demonstrated that self-reported positive affect of participants uniquely increased insight before and during the solving of a problem, as indicated by differing brain activity patterns. People experiencing anxiety showed the opposite effect, and solved fewer problems by insight. Heart-brain coherence changes an individual's mood to one of positive affect, which results in the insights that are discovered in the last step of the Connection Practice.

Source: *A Brain Mechanism for Facilitation of Insight by Positive Affect*,  
Karuna Subramaniam, John Kounios, Todd B Parrish and Mark Jung-Beeman  
Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience, Volume 21, number 3, p. 414-432

**Conclusion:** When the steps of the Connection Practice are followed, irrational reactions are reduced and insight for daily living becomes accessible. This has been confirmed by the personal experience of over 2,000 people from all walks of life who have taken the Connection Practice Foundations Course.