



Connection Practice Coaching Guide

Public-Business



empathy + insight = connection

The Connection Practice for Clients



- (Introductory slide – It can be displayed before you begin your coaching session.)

Definition of the Connection Practice®

empathy + insight = connection

The Connection Practice is a science-based skill that unites empathy and insight to meet challenges in life. It quickly transforms confusion into clarity and conflict into connection.

Empathy is attained through a conscious connection to **feelings and needs**.

Insight is accessed through **heart-brain coherence**.

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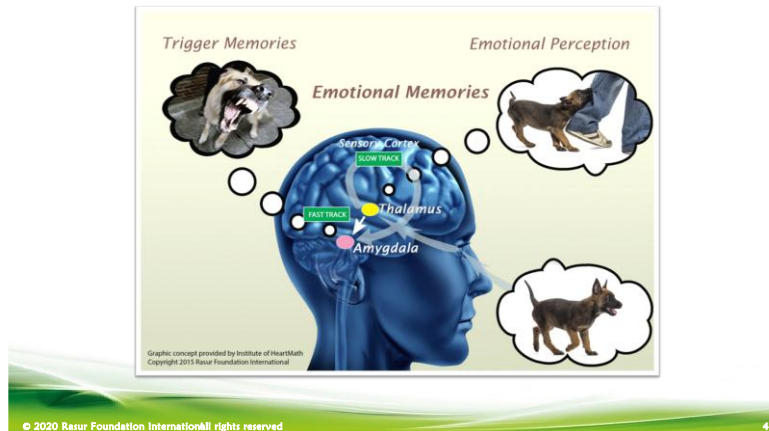
- (Read the slide.)
- Naming our own feelings and needs is self-empathy.
- By respectfully guessing the feelings and needs of another person, we are giving them empathy.
- You may not be familiar with the term heart-brain coherence yet; for now, it is enough to know that coherence helps us quickly access insights.
- The Connection Practice is a skill that unites empathy and insight to navigate life's challenges with greater ease and success.

Transition: So...

Why do we need the Connection Practice?

- (Read the slide.)

Transition: (Advance to the next slide.)



Here is an illustration of a woman’s brain who had a dog bite in her childhood [point to top left]. As an adult, when she sees a puppy on the street [point to bottom right], that input goes to the thalamus [point], the central distribution system for information in the brain. Now, if she took time to think it through on the “slow track,” [point] she would realize this dog is not going to hurt her.

- Our amygdala [point] is like an eavesdropper, looking to match current stimuli with memories, including good memories such as the smell of grandma’s apple pie and useful memories like knowing not to touch a hot stove.
- However, in this example, the amygdala made a “sloppy match” when it matched the puppy of the present with the dog bite memory from the past.
- When the amygdala is triggered by a painful memory match, it activates the fight/ flight/ freeze response because it thinks the same thing is going to happen again [point to top right]; the woman thinks the puppy is going to bite her.
- This pathway between the thalamus and the amygdala is called the “fast-track.”
- When we over-react because we are responding from our past experiences, we get trapped in negative emotional patterns that can lead to health challenges, conflict and even violence.
- With the Connection Practice, you will learn to manage your emotional reactions to stimuli and respond appropriately in the present.

Transition: So, what’s the first step?

We Need a Pause Between Stimulus and Response

Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.

~attributed to Viktor Frankl



- The first step is to create a pause between the stimulus and the response.
- (Read the Viktor Frankl quote or have your client read it.)
- Like the woman who was triggered by the memory of the dog bite, we can all learn to pause
- We then use the Connection Practice in the pause to get our irrational reactions out of the way and have access to our best intelligence.

Transition: What does the Connection Practice actually help us do in the pause?

What is Coherence?



► An optimal state in which the heart, mind and emotions are aligned and in sync.

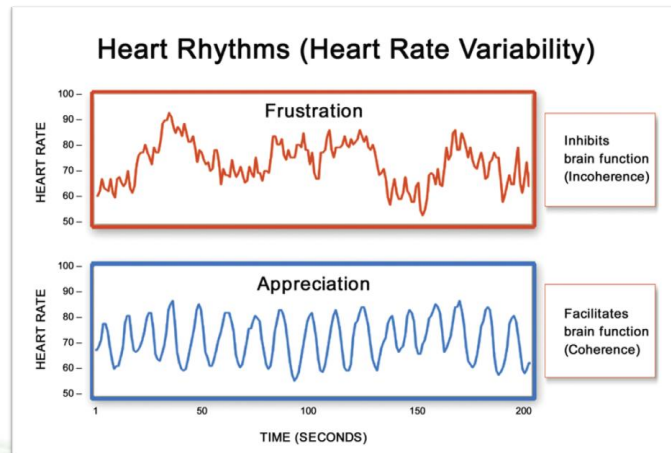
► Physiologically, the immune, hormonal, and nervous systems function in a state of energetic coordination.

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- We start by getting coherent.
- (Read the slide or have your client read it.)
- The boat on the left shows everyone rowing in alignment.

Transition: Coherence is when a similar state of alignment is attained in the body. This state can be measured. Let's see how this works.

How Coherence Impacts the Heart

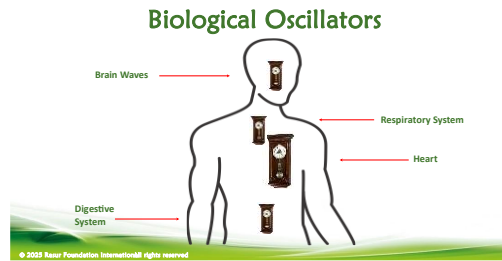


HeartMath® Institute

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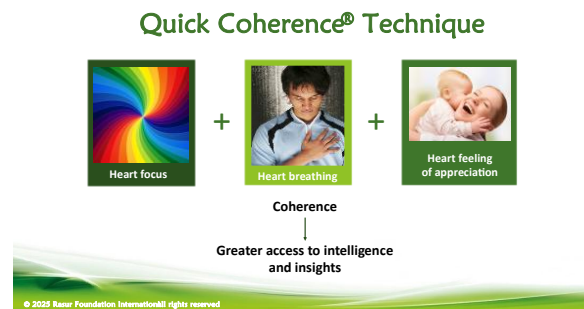
- Heart coherence leads to mental and emotional self-regulation.
- The graph of heart rhythms shows what is called Heart Rate Variability or HRV. This is not the same as the pulse rate. HRV measures the speeding up and slowing down *between* heart beats.
- (Point to the red graph) When someone is frustrated or having other negative feelings, the HRV is erratic, and brain function is inhibited. This is a scientific term called incoherence.
- [Point to the blue graph] When we experience a positive feeling, such as appreciation, it brings the heart into coherence.
- And the coherent heart pulls the brain into coherence so we can function at our best.
- The easiest way to get into this state is through “feeling” appreciation.
- Appreciation is something that makes your heart sing.

Transition: Let’s look at this in another way.



- Our body is a system of moving parts or what we call “biological oscillators.”
- Our brain waves, lungs, heartbeat and digestive system are all in rhythmic movement.
- Now, imagine the room behind me is empty, and I bring in all different sizes of old-fashioned clocks with pendulums that are oscillating back and forth.
- When these clocks first come into the room, the pendulums will be moving different ways (show wooden skewers or pencils of two different lengths not moving together).
- But eventually, the smaller ones will align with the biggest one (show skewers or pencils moving together). This is a principle of physics called entrainment.
- In our bodies, the heart is the strongest oscillator. When we use a positive feeling to get a coherent heart, all of the other oscillators entrain to it. The heart pulls the brain waves into sync. That is why it is easier and more efficient to change your feelings, which changes your thoughts, and then your life changes.

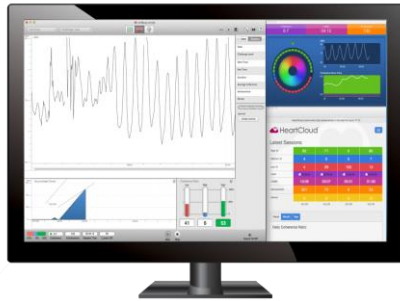
Transition: So how do we move into coherence?



- The Quick Coherence steps are on your Board.
- I invite you to say the steps quietly to yourself three times so you become familiar with them – please follow me and use the hand movements to help you remember the three steps:
 - Heart focus (hand on the heart)
 - Heart breathing (move the hand slightly out away from and back towards the heart)
 - Heart feeling of appreciation (sweep hand from on the heart to out away from the heart)

Transition: Now I want to show you the HeartMath software that helps us visually see when we are in coherence.

emWave® or Inner Balance Demonstration and Practice



To order, go this link:

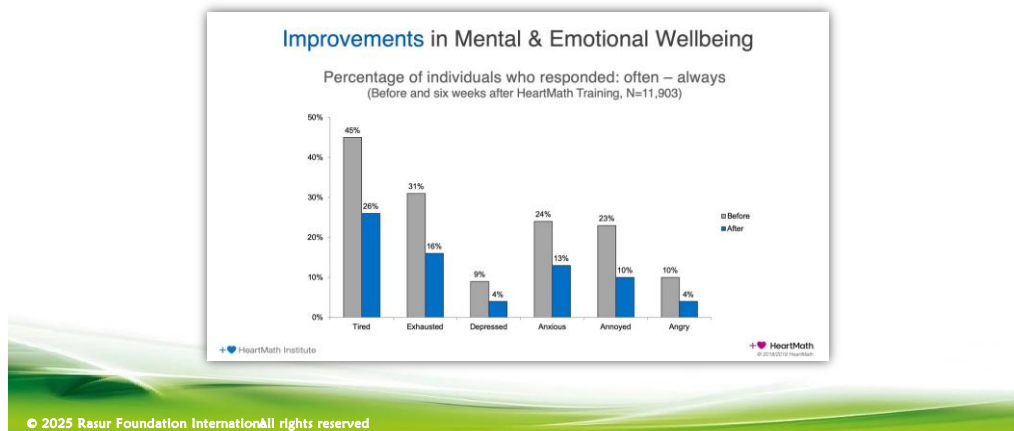
<https://connectionpractice.org/product/emwave-pro/>

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- I recommend you choose something to appreciate that is totally positive, such as a pet or a place in nature that always brings a big smile to your heart.
- What would you like to choose to appreciate? (Listen; respond as appropriate.)
- (Demonstration - You can demonstrate either the Inner Balance or the emWave. If your client has an Inner Balance, you can coach them; otherwise, do it yourself and show them the Inner Balance or emWave screen as you describe the various steps. Adjust the following based on your coaching situation.)
- Please remove your earring if you have one on.
- This software measures heart rate variability or HRV. (Point to the screen)
- High coherence will be green, medium will be blue, and low will be red.
- (emWave): Low coherence is irregular, and high coherence is smooth and even.
- The software will calibrate and then read your HRV. (Run the program)
- (Show the coherence screen.) That's how it works!
- Now I will lead you into coherence using what you've chosen to appreciate.
- (Lead Quick Coherence: name each step; feel the energy move in you before moving to the next step. Invite them to open their eyes after several minutes.)
- How was that for you? Did you feel a shift into a more peaceful, happy state?
- (Respond based on what your client shares)
- You can order this product on the Connection Practice website at the same price HeartMath charges, and the Connection Practice will get a small commission.

Transition: Coherence is very powerful; here's an example.

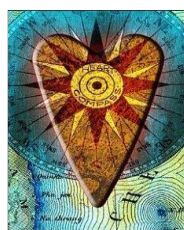
Impact of Coherence on Performance within Organizations



- When you get coherent, you function at your best.
- This HeartMath graph shows a study of the mental and emotional wellbeing of 11,903 healthcare professionals from various companies.
- You can see the results in gray – many of them were tired, and anxious. Some were depressed.
- The employees were trained in coherence, then they practiced it for 6 weeks. After that, they took the survey again.
- You can see how the negative feelings were reduced.
- You can imagine how the organization benefitted from this shift.

Transition: Now let's learn how coherence helps us access our best thinking, our insights.

Heart-Brain Insight Steps



- Identify your challenge or question.
- Do the Quick Coherence® Technique.
- Ask yourself: "What do I need to know?"
- Listen for the answer.
- Write it down.
- If there is an action step, write it down as well.



- Here are the steps to access an insight (read the slide).

Transition: I'm going to share one of my insights so you can get a bigger picture of how it works.

Spectrum of Heart-Brain Insights with Examples



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- (Share your best personal insight story:
 - The problem you were struggling with
 - The point at which you decided to seek an insight
 - Model the steps of doing Quick Coherence, asking “What do I need to know?” and listening inside
 - Share the insight that came, the action you took and the positive outcome)
- Explain there is a spectrum of insights, from not getting anything, to simply a change of feeling, to words or images to revelations. Discuss the reasons you might not get anything, such as too much caffeine or not having enough clarity before asking what you need to know, etc. Also, your answer might come along later. No matter what insight you get or don’t get, when you become coherent, you’ll be thinking better and any outcome gives you information you didn’t have before.
- Insights tend to come quickly. They are usually short and always positive.
- If the tone is critical, then it’s not an insight; it’s the voice in your head of your critical parent.
- The more you practice accessing insights and acting on them, the better you will get at trusting the process.

Transition: The Connection Practice is about empathy and insight leading to connection. We’ve covered coherence and insight. Let’s now look at empathy.

Feelings and Needs

- ▶ **Positive feelings** are signals of a perception of **met needs**
- ▶ **Negative feelings** are signals of a perception of **unmet needs**

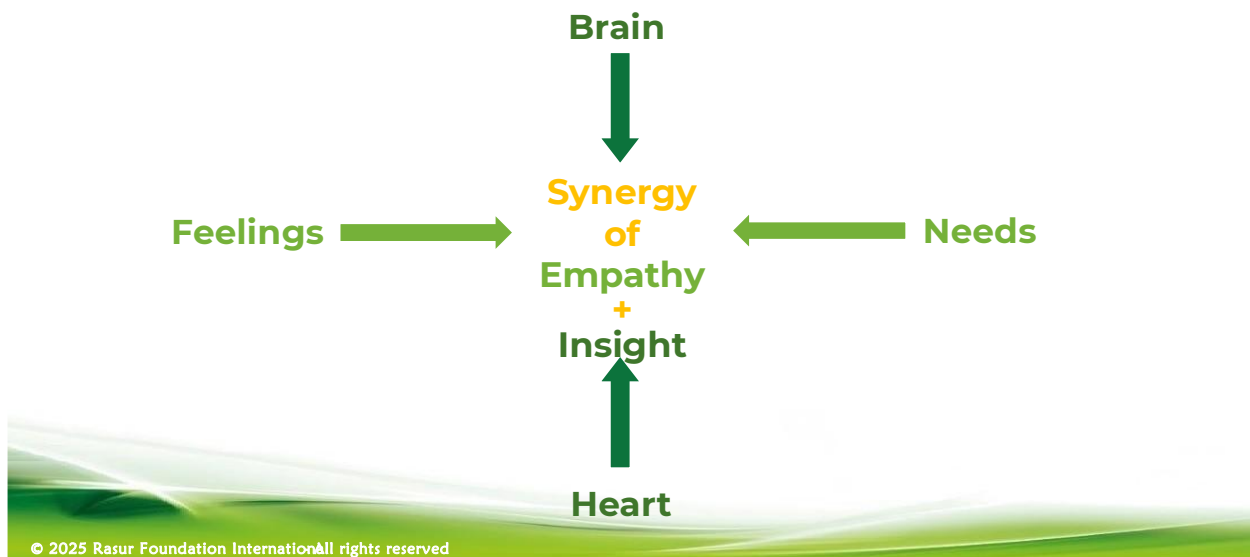
- We can sink into misery if we identify too strongly with our negative feelings.
- That's why we name our feelings and then move on to naming our needs. Together they liberate us from the negative charge and move us into self-empathy.
- You will find *Feelings and Needs* lists on pages 41-42 in your Manual.

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- In the Connection Practice, empathy is achieved by naming feelings and needs.
- We have both positive and negative feelings throughout the day.
- Our positive feelings are signals of a perception of needs that have been met, like when we feel grateful that we received support.
- Negative feelings are signals of a perception of unmet needs.
- Remember the picture of the woman's brain from earlier? When she saw the puppy, what unmet need did she have? (Participants guess a need for "safety.") However, if I saw that puppy, I would have met needs of love and connection. (Or "However, many people would have met needs of love and connection.")
- That is why we say that met and unmet needs are based on *perceptions*, which vary from person to person.
- If we identify too strongly with negative feelings, we may sink into misery and get stuck there. So, we name our feelings and then move to naming our needs.
- When we name a negative feeling, the charge on the issue is reduced, and the amygdala feels heard and stops shouting at us that we have an unmet need.
- This is the first step in giving ourselves empathy.
- When we name an unmet need, we tend to get curious about how to meet it rather than upset that it's not met.
- Naming our positive feelings and met needs is important, too, because this helps us fully experience our celebrations and builds our resilience.

Transition: Now we want to integrate all the pieces together.

Connection Practice Summary

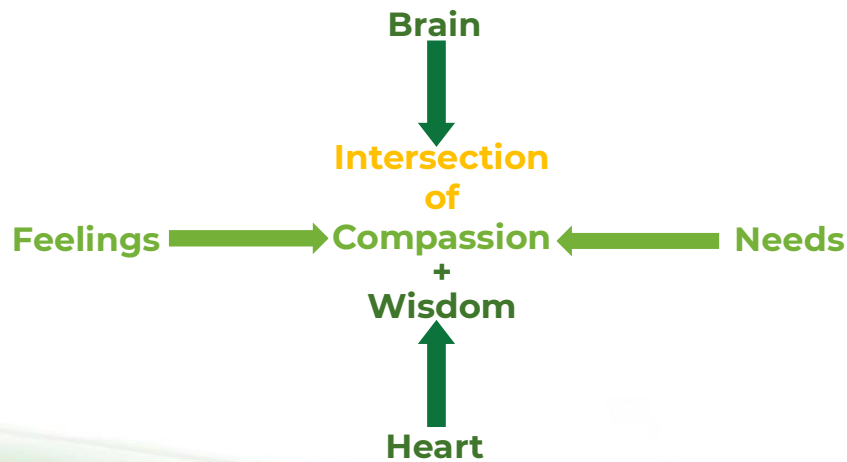


Whenever I explain the Connection Practice, I use this image to get it across quickly. I might be on an airplane or telling someone about it on Zoom, and -- in a flash -- they can see how it works.

- The horizontal axis shows that the language of feelings and needs is the fast track to empathy.
- The vertical axis shows that coherence between the heart and the brain is the fast track to insight.
- When we know exactly how to access these two great strengths, there is a synergy between them that helps us meet any challenge in life.
- With the Connection Practice, you are experiencing the synergy of empathy and insight to build connection.

Transition: (Advance to the next slide.)

Living from the Intersection of Compassion and Wisdom



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Living from the Intersection of Compassion and Wisdom

Compassion and wisdom belong together.

Compassion without wisdom can sink into misery.

Wisdom without compassion can be arrogant.

These two are like soulmates; they need each other.

When we combine these two great strengths, the synergy makes it possible to resolve challenges efficiently, creatively and peacefully.

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Now Let's Process One of Your Challenges



(Read the slide. Then stop the slides and begin your coaching session.)

Additional Slides Based on Age and Interest



Sometimes, you may know or learn that your client has interests above and beyond those covered in the public-business slides. It can then help to share additional slides to pique their interest and engage other aspects of their life experience. Use additional slides sparingly because the primary focus is on connecting with your client and offering them an experience of the power of the Connection Practice.

Rita Marie Johnson, creator of the Connection Practice



- Winner of the *Ashoka Changemakers Award: Building a More Ethical Society* - the Connection Practice was chosen from 79 projects in 32 countries
- Recipient of the *Nautilus Award in Psychology: Better Books for a Better World for Completely Connected: Uniting Our Empathy and Insight for Extraordinary Results*
- International Keynote Speaker
- Professor at the United Nations University for Peace, a graduate school for international leaders - taught the Connection Practice for graduate credit
- Over 100,000 adults and children have learned the Connection Practice, including its implementation in the Costa Rican public school system
- Founding CEO of Rasur Foundation International, which spreads the Connection Practice globally

- Here is some information about the creator of the Connection Practice, Rita Marie Johnson. She is the founding CEO of Rasur Foundation International, which sponsors the Connection Practice.
- (Have a participant read the slide).

The Science Behind the Connection Practice

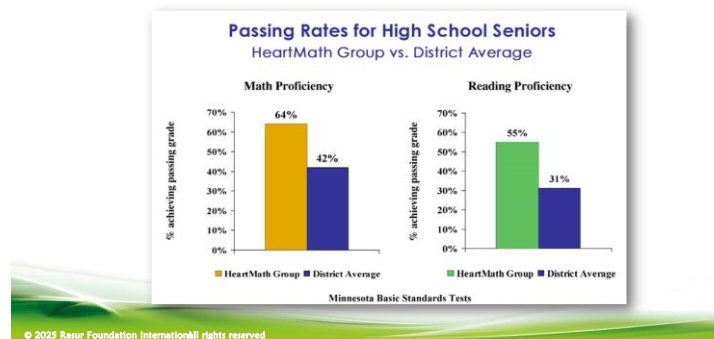
Research studies explain why the key elements of the Connection Practice are efficient and powerful in building social-emotional-spiritual intelligence.

1. Naming feelings reduces the reaction of the amygdala in the brain.
2. Naming our own needs and guessing another person's needs gives us perspective and is called cognitive empathy.
3. Heart-brain coherence reduces irrational reactions and brings about positive affect, which increases access to insights.



- (Read and discuss the slide.)
- When we are triggered, naming our feelings reduces the fight/flight/freeze reaction of the amygdala in the brain.
- In the Connection Practice, we learn to identify our own needs and to guess the needs of people we are in conflict with, which gives us perspective. This is called cognitive empathy.
- Affective empathy, by contrast, is the ability to share the feelings of another person, such as seeing someone crying and feeling like crying ourselves.
- Cognitive empathy is something that we can learn with practice.
- Heart-brain coherence is a very efficient way to reduce the reactions of the amygdala. It also gives us access to our best thinking, our insights.

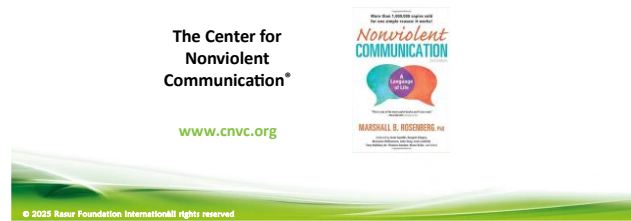
Impact of Coherence on Academic Performance



- Here is an example of how coherence can help students.
- The Minnesota Basic Standards Tests were given to high school seniors, and there was follow-up for students who didn't pass.
- All the students were tutored in the subjects they needed, and a subset of the students were also taught coherence (the HeartMath group).
- Then the students retook the test; coherence helped the HeartMath group do much better than the rest of the students in the district:
 - In math, 64% passed in comparison to the district average of 42%.
 - In reading, 55% passed in comparison to the district average of 31%.
- Coherence helped relieve the test anxiety, and the students could remember what they had learned; they were able to access their best intelligence.

empathy + insight = connection

Identifying **feelings and needs** is the fast track to **empathy**.



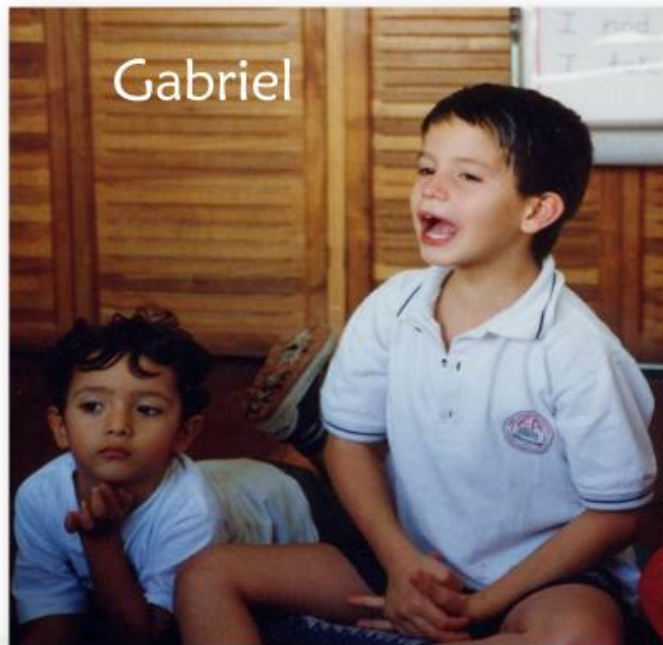
- The empathy part of the Connection Practice comes from Dr Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication, which is known as NVC.
- NVC is one of the parents of the Connection Practice.
- Although the NVC model has four steps, we only use the feelings and needs steps in the basic Connection Practice.
- The language of feelings and needs is the fast track to empathy.
- Rita Marie Johnson combined the essence of NVC and the essence of HeartMath to discover the synergy between empathy and insight that resulted in her creating the Connection Practice.
- She received the full support of the founders of these two methods, which is why she refers to them as the parents of the Connection Practice.

empathy + insight = connection

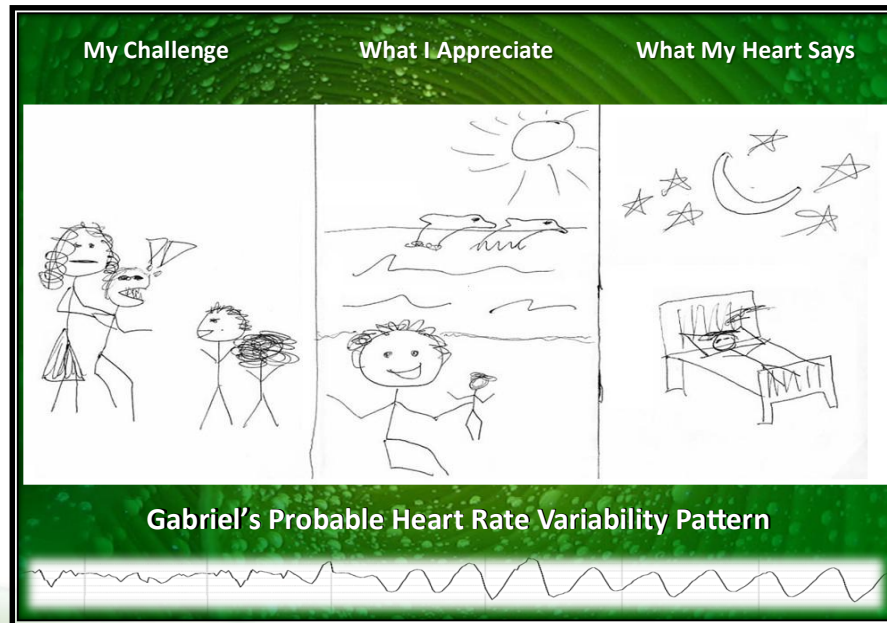
Heart-brain coherence is the fast track to **insight**.



- Insight is the second part of the Connection Practice; it comes from Doc Childre and the HeartMath Institute.
- HeartMath is our primary source for research on coherence and is like a parent of the Connection Practice
- Coherence is a very efficient way to access Heart-Brain Insights.
- Rita Marie discovered that the power of the Connection Practice is in combining empathy, the essence of nonviolent communication (NVC), with insight, the essence of HeartMath. Together they help us become more connected within ourselves and with others.
- HeartMath and NVC have fully supported the Connection Practice from its inception.



- This is a picture of a little boy in Rita Marie's school in Costa Rica; his name is Gabriel, and he was acting up at school and at home.
- His teachers, his parents, and Gabriel himself didn't know why, but he was a perfect terror.
- Rita Marie had just learned HeartMath. So, why not try the techniques they had learned, Quick Coherence and Heart-Brain Insight, to try to get some clarity on the situation?



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- They asked Gabriel to draw a picture of the problem, and he drew a picture of his mother holding him back to keep him from fighting with his brother and sister.
- Then they asked him to draw a picture of his happy place, where he was happy all the time. Gabriel drew a picture of a day at the beach with dolphins swimming in the ocean and him playing with his Ken doll and having a wonderful time.
- Lastly, they told Gabriel they would use the three steps they had taught him to reach coherence – Heart Focus, Heart Breathing, and Heart Feeling of Appreciation. Then, when he was in his happy place, he should ask his heart for an answer to his problem – What do I need to know? When he got an answer, he could open his eyes
- They led Gabriel through the steps of Quick Coherence, and after a few moments he opened his eyes in surprise. Gabriel said his heart told him he wasn't getting enough sleep.
- He was reading under the covers after his mother put him to bed, and she didn't know it; when she woke him in the morning by shaking his leg, he woke up angry and was angry all day long.
- Gabriel got his own answer, so he was motivated to go to sleep at night, and his behavior improved dramatically. It was a wonderful change for everyone.