



empathy + insight = connectionTM

Emotionally-Safe Relationships

The Connection Practice[®]
empathy + insight = connection[™]

by Rita Marie Johnson and Ellen Anderson



is a U.S. 501(c) 3 non-profit organization founded by Rita Marie Johnson with the purpose of spreading the Connection Practice globally. Its vision is a world where every person practices the art of connection and passes this gift on.

Rasur Foundation International (RFI) gratefully acknowledges the work of the HeartMath[®] Institute and the Center for Nonviolent Communication[®] for inspiring the Connection Practice.

RFI is not associated with any group or religion. We take a neutral stand that enables all people to learn the Connection Practice.

info@connectionpractice.org • www.connectionpractice.org

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Table of Contents

Welcome to Emotionally-Safe Relationships	2
Emotionally Safe Relationship Slides	3
Our Inspiration: Rasur, Teacher of Connection	16
Practice Time: Habitual Response or Empathy?	17
Insight Review	18
When the Going Gets Tough, the Connection Practice Gets More Tender	20
Heart-Brain Insight Script	21
Guidelines for Sharing the Connection Practice	22

Welcome to Emotionally-Safe Relationships

Most of us have had painful or scary relationships where we didn't feel safe. Or we may have caused someone else not to feel safe. Now, with a better understanding of how the brain works and with the power of the Connection Practice (CP), we can eliminate a lot of this distress.

In your first CP course, you learned how to process your own turmoil, efficiently and successfully. This course will take you to the next level of fully utilizing the CP in your relationships with others.

As you become more skilled at embodying connection each day, you will experience enriched relationships, deep confidence and peace.

We are delighted that you are continuing your CP journey, as every person that learns the skill of connection creates a better world for all of us.

With joy,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rita Marie Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rita Marie Johnson

Creator of the Connection Practice

Founding Director of Rasur Foundation International



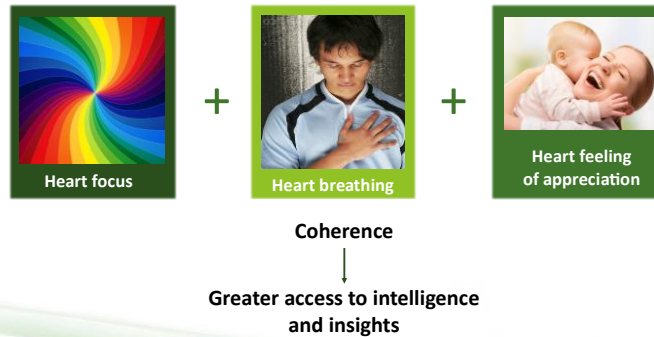
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Emotionally-Safe Relationships

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1

Review of Quick Coherence Technique



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2



Share your name, where you're from, and one way you have benefited from using the Connection Practice.

- Reduce stress quickly
- Find release from negative emotions
- Open your intuition
- Maintain emotional balance
- Resolve conflicts creatively

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2

Another Significant Benefit: Emotional Safety

- Harvard conducted a nearly 80-year study of Adult Development.
- Robert Waldinger, director of the study, a professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, said:

The surprising finding is that our relationships, and how happy we are in our relationships, has a powerful influence on our health. The people who were the most satisfied in their relationships at age 50 were the healthiest at age 80. Taking care of your body is important, but tending to your relationships is a form of self-care too. That, I think, is the revelation.
- The foundation of happy relationships is emotional safety, leading to physical health and longer life.

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4

Agenda

- The Connection Practice Vision
- The Importance of Emotional Safety
- Creating Emotional Safety in a Small Group
- Coherence and Its Impact on Emotional Safety and the World
- When the Going Gets Tough, The Connection Practice Gets More Tender
- Next Steps

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5

Our Inspiration: Rasur, Teacher of Connection



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Global Headquarters at Quizur, Culture of Peace



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Our Vision



We envision a world where people discover positive solutions to challenges, connect peacefully with each other and celebrate life.

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8

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 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

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9

Definition of the Connection Practice®

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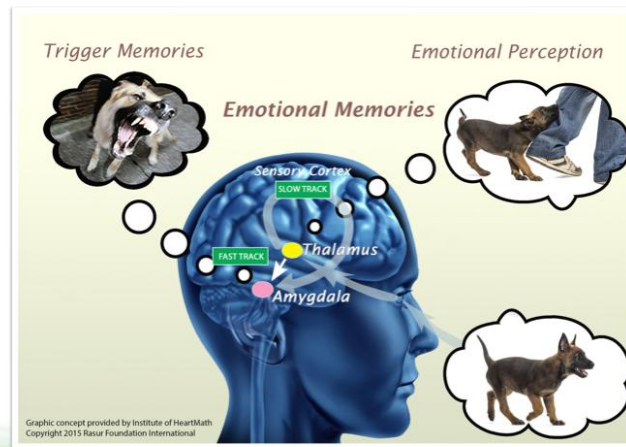
The Connection Practice is a science-based skill that unites empathy and insight to meet challenges in life. It quickly transforms confusion into clarity and conflict into connection.

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

Insight is accessed through heart-brain coherence.

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10



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10

How to Move from Automatic Reaction to Choosing Your Best Response

1. **We don't want the irrational reactions of the amygdala.** The Connection Practice extinguishes these reactions:

- Naming feelings calms the reaction of the amygdala.
- Heart-brain coherence efficiently resets our reaction to a more intelligent state.

2. **We do want access to our best intelligence.** The Connection Practice enhances two forms of intelligence:

- Empathy, a form of social-emotional intelligence, is achieved by naming feelings and needs.
- Insights are increased through heart-brain coherence.

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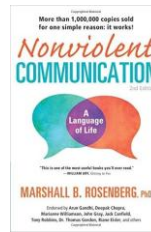
12

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

The Center for
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Communication®

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13

The Nature of Needs and Strategies

- Needs are life-energy in us seeking fulfillment, independently of a person, location, action, time or object. They are experienced by human beings everywhere as universal requirements, like respect, autonomy, or connection. They provide the conditions for a human being to thrive. After we identify an unmet need, we become more resourceful in meeting that need.
- Strategies are the many ways we get our needs met.
- People can choose life-enriching strategies or tragic strategies for getting their needs met.
- Being empathetic doesn't mean we allow people to meet their needs by using tragic strategies that hurt others.
- We can address tragic strategies with empathy, honesty, healthy boundaries and natural consequences. As a last resort, when violence is involved, we may have to use the protective use of force.

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Power as a Beautiful Human Need

- In the Connection Practice, power is defined as the human need to influence others or a course of events to create positive change. We call it “power in our world.”
- When people use the term “power over” in describing someone who is dominating others, they are actually speaking of using forceful energy or actions as strategies to get a deeper need met.
- That deeper need is often “to matter” or “to be safe,” even if it appears that the person knows they matter and feels safe. Those who use force as a strategy, without considering the needs of others “to be safe” and “to matter,” are disconnected from their own beautiful power within.

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The Three Kinds of Empathy

- **Cognitive:** Simply knowing how the other person feels and what they might need; this is sometimes called perspective-taking.
- **Emotional:** Feeling along with the other person as though their emotions were contagious.
- **Compassionate:** Understanding a person's predicament, feeling with them and spontaneously being moved to help, if needed.

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The Importance of Emotional Safety in Relationships

- Remember that, according to Sarah Peyton in *Your Resonant Self*, the amygdala is asking 12-100 times per second, "Am I safe? Do I matter?"
- It makes sense then, that to connect with someone authentically, it's important they first get the message they are safe and matter to you. After that message reassures the amygdala, other aspects of emotional safety such as trust, respect, honesty, and acceptance are easier to achieve. The greater the sense of emotional safety, the more a person can allow themselves to be vulnerable without fear of judgment, ridicule or harm.

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17

Creating Emotional Safety and Deepening Connections in Groups

- In researching what makes a team effective, Google's *Project Aristotle* found that what really mattered was less about who is on the team and more about how the team worked together. They found that psychological safety was the most important factor. We call it "emotional safety."
- In this demonstration, observe how we help people in a small group, who don't know each other, feel safe and that they matter.

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18

Activity 1: Creating Emotional Safety in a Small Group



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19

Debrief: Activity 1

- How did this activity help create emotional safety for those in your group?
- Trauma pioneer, Peter Levine, said: *Trauma is not what happens to us, but what we hold inside in the absence of an empathetic witness.*
- Did you notice that the guesses participants made in this activity feel like gifts?
- How does the gift of an empathetic guess help us remove our masks and become vulnerable?
- The Empathy Question: Are you feeling _____ because you need or value _____?

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20

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

HeartMath® Institute
expanding heart connections

www.heartmath.org

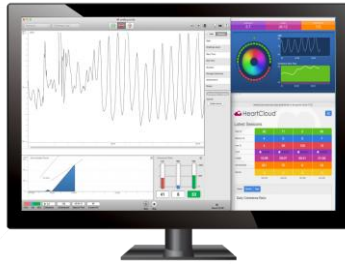
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24

Coherence Creates Emotional Safety with Yourself, in Relationships, in Groups and in the World



emWave® Demonstration



Order at this link:

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

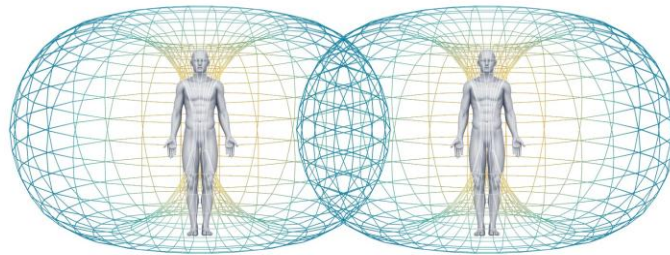




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27

Relational Energetics

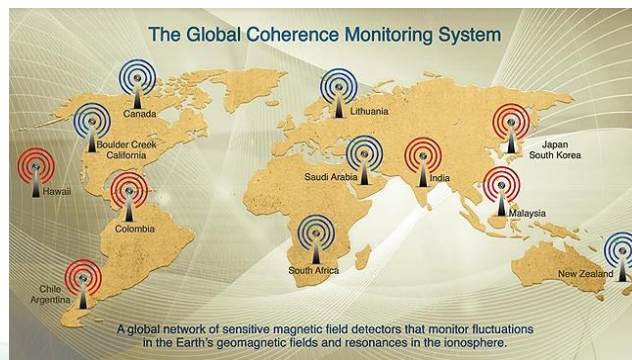


Free, daily coherence with others:

<https://connectionpractice.org/free-daily-support/>

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The Global Coherence Initiative <https://www.heartmath.org/gci>



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32

Activity 2: When the Going Gets Tough, the Connection Practice Gets More Tender

(page 20)

When processing a conflict where the person with the issue is stuck in judgment, you can deepen connection by adding three questions that help open the heart:

1. What was the trigger of the other person?
2. Do I feel authentic empathy for the other person, or do I need to go deeper?
3. Does my insight take both person's needs into consideration?

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51

Activity 2: Debrief

- When the going gets tough with a difficult conflict, the CP becomes more “tender” by adding 3 questions that help open the heart.
- When we become skillful in using the CP, we can save ourselves, and others, a lot of unnecessary suffering and speed up personal growth by helping them go deeper into their hearts.

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52

Using the Connection Practice for Celebrations Deepens Connection

- When someone shares a happy moment, and you guess their feelings and met needs, they feel seen and heard, which creates emotional safety.
- When appropriate, you can also help them identify their main met need.
- Then, if they are willing, you can lead them into an insight with the question, “What do I need to know about this need, _____, being met?”
- You will be amazed at the insights that flow from using the Connection Practice on celebrations.

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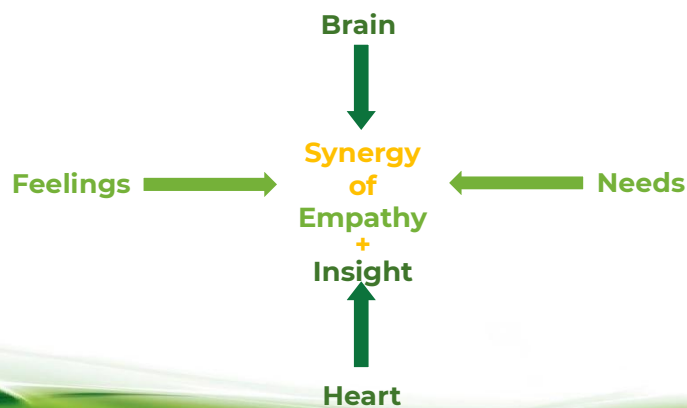
53

Expressing Honesty to Deepen Connections

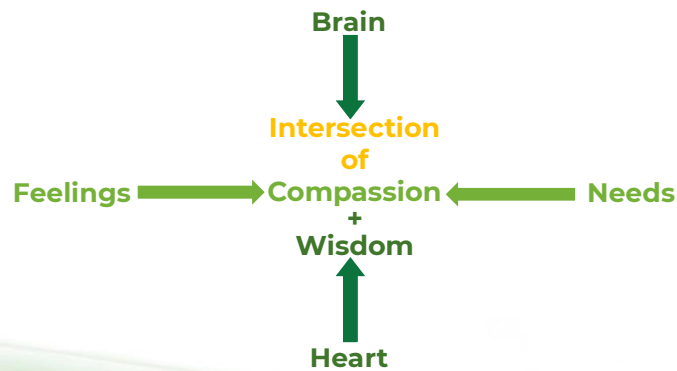
- Honesty expressed as criticism and blame usually disconnects us from each other. In the Connection Practice, we give empathy first and honesty second, so we have the best possibility of deepening our connection.
- Empathy is the great connector. Honesty is the great teacher.
- We need both for our personal growth.
- We express our honesty by describing what we observed and sharing our feelings and unmet needs.



Connection Practice Summary



Living from the Intersection of Compassion and Wisdom



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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Potential Next Steps

Certification	Connection Circle	Additional Courses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mentoring and assessment of readiness (2 hours) 2. Coach Certification (16 hours) 3. Trainer Certification (16 hours) 	<p>Participate regularly in a Connection Circle to provide additional practice and experience</p>	<p>Two options</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Connection Path 2. Connection Mediation <p>(available through Self-Study with or without coaching)</p>

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44

Other Practice Options



Make a habit of using Connection Practice Boards.



Practice with a certified Coach and/or a partner.



Join a Connection Circle.



Interact with others on the Connection Practice Facebook page and join the CP Global Community.

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45

Guidelines for Sharing the Connection Practice After This Course

1. As a graduate of this course, you can share what you have learned with family and friends.
2. If you become a certified CP Coach or Trainer, you can generate income by offering the Connection Practice to adults.
3. For further guidelines, see page 22 in your ESR Manual.

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60

**Before directing
the lightning in the sky,
we must first harness
the storms in our own hearts.**

From the Costa Rican poem, *Rasur or Week of Splendor*,
by Roberto Brenes Mesén

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61

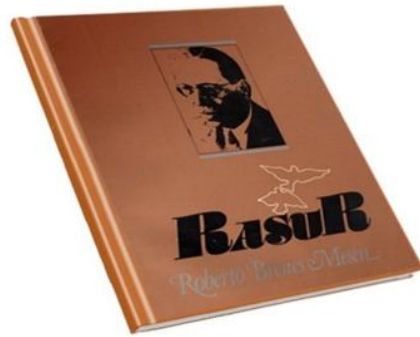
**Please share a met need from your
experience today.**

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46

Our Inspiration: Rasur, Teacher of Connection

Rasur Foundation International was founded to teach the Connection Practice. It's named for an epic poem, *Rasur or Week of Splendor*, by Roberto Brenes Mesen, a Costa Rican author.



One day, ages ago in Costa Rica, in the village of Quizur, all the children suddenly disappeared! A mysterious being named Rasur had silently called them into a mountain and was teaching them about the hidden treasures in their hearts. His words revealed how to live from compassion and wisdom, in harmony with others and with nature. Soon the children felt connected to each other and to all of life.

After realizing the youngsters were missing, the parents searched the countryside, calling for them. They heard them singing inside the mountain, and they looked for a hillside entrance but didn't find one. Instead, they had a timeless moment when their painful memories were erased and their innocence was restored

At day's end the children emerged, radiant with joy, and told their parents what they had learned from Rasur. Now the adults were reassured that their children were safe and were having an extraordinary experience in this unique classroom. They allowed the children to go back every day and, in the evening, would hear what their sons and daughters had learned.

Before long, the empathy of the villagers created a culture of peace; now people walked arm in arm and sat beneath trees to listen to each other. Insights soon led to a wave of creativity - an artist was painting a magnificent landscape of the mountains, and the musicians were playing symphonies that could take your breath away. Young people were creating vegetable gardens that looked like works of art, and the women's embroidery depicted the beauty of life.

At week's end, Rasur said he had to teach other children in the world. The children cried, "Oh no, don't go!" Rasur replied, "Don't worry. If you miss me, just bend your ear down to your heart and you'll know I'm there."

The children came out of the mountain one last time and told their parents that Rasur had traveled on. They all began to talk about the meaning of this visit. One of the men said, "Before directing the lightning in the sky, we must first harness the storms in our own hearts." They all agreed. Rasur had shown the way to live from compassion and wisdom, and the people of Quizur had been inspired to follow his lead. Now they knew how to live from the heart, an awareness that would be passed from generation to generation.

Practice Time: Habitual Response or Empathy?

Look at B's responses. Which are habitual responses, and which are empathic responses?

1. A: How could I do something so stupid?
B: Nobody's perfect. You're too hard on yourself.
2. A: Every time my mother and I talk, it turns into an argument!
B: Maybe you should take a communication class.
3. A: I feel awful about missing the appointment we made.
B: Don't worry about it. It happens to everybody.
4. A: I'm disgusted with how much weight I've gained.
B: Perhaps jogging would help.
5. A: I'm disappointed with your performance. I would have liked your department to double its production last month.
B: I understand your disappointment, but we had a lot of absences due to illness.
6. A: I asked her for help, but she said she was busy!
B: Are you feeling disappointed because you wanted support and hoped she could give it to you?
7. A: (child) Everyone is always telling me what to do!
B: That's not true.

Insight Review

1. When your heart rate variability is uneven or irregular, you might be experiencing a feeling of:
 - a. Frustration
 - b. Appreciation
 - c. Neutrality
 - d. Coherence

2. When we react with an intense emotion without thinking, it is a result of:
 - a. Heart rate variability
 - b. The reaction of the amygdala
 - c. The “slow track” circuit
 - d. Brain waves

3. Which tool serves to find specific, creative solutions to our problems?
 - a. The pause
 - b. Quick Coherence Technique
 - c. Appreciation
 - d. Heart-Brain Insight

4. The steps of the Quick Coherence Technique are:
 - a. Heart focus, heart breathing, heart feeling of appreciation
 - b. Focus on the heart, breathe through the heart
 - c. Close your eyes, breathe deeply, focus on your heart
 - d. Place your hand over your heart, close your eyes, breathe deeply

5. The Pause is a way to:
 - a. Stop violent reactions
 - b. Move toward coherence
 - c. Attain emotional freedom
 - d. All of the above

6. The steps of Heart-Brain Insight are:
 - a. Close your eyes, breathe deeply, smile.
 - b. Form a question, ask your heart for the answer to the question, and listen for the answer.
 - c. Do the Quick Coherence Technique, ask the question, listen for the answer, act on the answer.
 - d. Focus on the heart, breathe through the heart, feel appreciation.

7. Which is the strongest oscillating system in the body?
 - a. The brain
 - b. The lungs
 - c. The heart
 - d. The digestive system

8. Which can be used for practicing coherence?
 - a. Quick Coherence Technique
 - b. emWave Desktop
 - c. Inner Balance App
 - d. All of the above

9. Spending time in appreciation helps us:
 - a. Maintain coherence longer periods of time
 - b. Overcome the reaction of the amygdala
 - c. Feel peaceful
 - d. All of the above

10. The key to achieving coherence is:
 - a. Buying an emWave
 - b. Being alone and in a silent place
 - c. Generating a positive feeling in the heart
 - d. Touching your heart, closing your eyes

When the Going Gets Tough, the Connection Practice Gets More Tender

	Person Who Shares	Partner
1	a) Share your challenge with your partner. Focus on the trigger moment. Write it on the Board beginning with the word "When ...".	b) Listen with an open heart. Help zero in on the trigger moment.
2	a) Place relevant feelings on the Board.	b) Guess other important feelings; if confirmed, they are placed on the Board.
3	b) Listen as your partner guesses needs. If they are accurate, place them on the Board. c) Add any needs your partner missed.	a) Guess some needs. d) Ask what the main need might be.
4	a) Identify your main need and place it on the Board.	
5	a) Identify the trigger of the other person. c) Guess the other person's feelings and place them on the Board.	b) Help identify the trigger of the other person. d) Help guess the feelings of the other person.
6	a) Guess the other person's needs and place them on the Board.	b) Help guess the needs of the other person.
7	a) Guess what their main need might be and place it in that space on the Board. c) Close your eyes and ask yourself, "Do I feel authentic empathy for the other person, or do I need to go deeper?"	b) Place the two main needs together on the Board. d) If the answer is "no", reconsider the main need.
8	Partner gives instructions for steps 8 and 9, then leads Quick Coherence and remains silent after the last step. "Heart focus, Heart breathing, Heart feeling of appreciation."	
9	b) Access a Heart-Brain Insight by asking, "What do I need to know?" Listen for the answer and open your eyes when it comes. c) Share your insight with your partner and write it on the Board. e) Close your eyes and ask yourself, "Does my insight take both person's needs into consideration?" If the answer is "yes," you celebrate. If the answer is "no," your partner will lead you into Heart-Brain-Insight again.	a) Remain in coherence. d) Listen and don't comment. f) If the person answers "yes" to the question in e), celebrate together. If the answer is "no," you lead them back into coherence to seek another insight. Celebrate the insight; don't analyze it.
10	a) Write down how you will act on your insight.	b) Listen; don't offer advice or strategies.

Heart-Brain Insight Script

Now I'm going to share the steps of receiving a Heart-Brain Insight.

First, I will lead you into Quick Coherence, which you have already learned: heart focus, heart breathing and heart feeling of appreciation.

What will you use for the focus of your appreciation? (Pause for answer)

Ok, good.

When I lead you into Quick Coherence, after the third step of heart feeling of appreciation, I won't say anything more.

When you feel you are coherent, silently ask yourself, "What do I need to know?" Listen quietly inside, embrace whatever comes.

Then open your eyes, so I know you are complete.

Remember, please open your eyes when your insight comes. If you have your eyes closed for more than 4 minutes, I will ask you to open them.

Now I will lead you into a Heart-Brain Insight.

I invite you to bring your hand to your heart and close your eyes if you are comfortable with that.

Now bring your attention down to your heart, dropping all your energy down; heart focus.

(Pause as you do it with your client)

And now, breathe deeply and rhythmically as if breathing through your heart; heart breathing.

(Pause as you do it with your client)

Now, feeling appreciation for whatever is easy for you, like a big smile in the heart; heart feeling of appreciation.

Guidelines for Sharing the Connection Practice

1. As a graduate of this course, you can share what you have learned with family and friends.
2. If you become a certified CP Coach or Trainer, you can generate income by offering the Connection Practice to adults.
3. Please respect our intellectual property by asking for written permission from RFI if you want to copy or adapt Connection Practice materials.
4. Please do not define the Connection Practice as a combination of HeartMath and Nonviolent Communication (NVC), as there are legal agreements regarding this issue. One of the strengths of the Connection Practice is its simplicity, while both HeartMath and NVC have methodologies that are richly complex.
5. We appreciate people's creative intentions when they have added or coupled the Connection Practice with other methodologies. However, we have found that combining or changing it leads to individuals not experiencing the full power of the CP and as a result, they may conclude it doesn't work. Therefore, please use the Connection Practice in its purity.
6. If you want to sponsor a course, or help with outreach for a course, we'll be happy to work with you. We will supply you with marketing materials to make it easier for you.
7. If you are interested in teaching the Connection Practice to children and youth, we are happy to talk with you about becoming a Children and Youth Instructor or Curriculum Instructor.
8. Please contact info@connectionpractice.org for support in these areas or with any of your questions.