
THE ART OF CONNECTION

WHAT IS CONNECTION?

It is being engaged in something outside yourself that has meaning and purpose apart from you. It's not just to people but to ideas, beliefs, and a mission that drives progress.

Connection does not happen independently; it takes intention and consistent practice to leverage its potential. It's the number one human need, even before safety and security. It can be bonding over negativity or blaming others, or it can be celebrating the things that are going well and appreciating the great clients or community. What will you CHOOSE to connect around?

What is your INTENTION to connect?

Connecting is a skill. Skills require consistent practicing. Practice doesn't make perfect; it makes it permanent. The connection skills you are practicing - good or bad - will become habits. Behaviors become habits. Are your behaviors the ones you want?

WHY CONNECTION?

There's a significant correlation between feeling lonely and feeling exhausted. The more exhausted people are, the lonelier they feel. This is intensified by the ever-growing percentage of people that are working remotely.

People who feel more connected to others have lower anxiety and depression, have higher self-esteem, greater empathy for others, and are more trusting and cooperative. And as a result, others are more open to trusting and cooperating with them - connection matters.

HEALTH IMPACTS OF CONNECTION:

The foremost pillar of happiness is a sense of belonging. The opposite of belonging is isolation. Isolation leads to addiction - tv, shopping, food or substance. Connection is the cure.

Communal cultures are more mentally and emotionally healthy. People who are alone get sicker and die earlier.

Loneliness and depression have become rampant. Leaders suffer at more than double the rate of the general public.

FOCUS ON GIVING CONNECTION... NOT RECEIVING

If you are 4x more stressed and overwhelmed, spend 4x the effort to connect. There is a direct correlation to how much you need interaction with other people.

To connect with others, we have to give them our time, honesty, openness, and have shared experiences. We do not connect with others by trying to earn approval, awe, compliments, appreciation, envy, or superiority.

OPTIMISM & HOPE FOR UNCERTAIN TIMES

*People are feeling more disconnected than ever. It can feel like we're stuck, letting our boundaries slide, isolated, and settling for a less-than-ideal situation. We know that connecting authentically with ourselves is necessary before we can connect with others in a meaningful way. **Optimism & Hope** are the tools to shake out of this pattern and re-engage with the world around us.*

What is OPTIMISM?

Optimism is a skill or approach that does not depend on external situations, a place where people expect desired outcomes to happen in the future.

Optimism is a strategy for making a better future. Because unless you believe that the future can be better, you are unlikely to step up and take responsibility for making it so.

In every category: business, education, relationships, sports, and every walk of life– optimists consistently outperform and are healthier than pessimists. They are better at handling pressure, overcoming adversity, and having a higher degree of engagement.

Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement.
Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.
– Hellen Keller

What is HOPE?

Hope is to expect something with confidence and to cherish a desire with anticipation. It causes us to look forward to something that is not yet here. It's one of the most resilient, powerful, and productive strategies. When we are frustrated, overwhelmed and fear is present, we can intentionally create a HOPEFUL mindset and immediately change the state of our brain. We can down-regulate the nervous system and become calm and focused.

It will interrupt your negative thoughts and refocus you on what's possible. Hope is an expansive, progressive and necessary state for growth and engagement.

We can measure how soon people will die when they lose all hope. It's that powerful, and when focused on the future, it amplifies all measurements that matter in organizations and communities. Choose to cultivate and train it.

OPTIMISM v. HOPE

Optimism is your expectations for the future. When you're optimistic, you believe what you hope for will eventually happen.

Both hope and optimism are positive mental states.

Both motivate towards a better future.

Both involve favorable expectations of desired outcomes in the future.

Training OPTIMISM can raise your resilience and help you cope better with hardships.

Training HOPE can place you in a better position to reach your goals and to strengthen your tenacity.

WE NEED BOTH

People who are more optimistic and hopeful are better at handling uncertainty. They are naturally less afraid of the unknown.

Even better, it spreads to those around us.

We all need more of that.

TRAINING OPTIMISM TO LEVERAGE HOPE

7 minutes to A Powerful OPTIMISM PRACTICE -

What Optimism is NOT: Optimism is not naïve, fluffy positivity. It's not ignoring the bad, unfortunate situations or the feeling of pain.

What Optimism IS: Optimism is the FUNDAMENTAL belief that things will work out - even when they're not going according to plan. The knowing that tomorrow will be better than today.

BY TRAINING OPTIMISM, WE CAN INCREASE OUR CAPACITY TO HOPE.

The MORNING Practice: B.I.G.G.

This practice combines 4 different mindfulness techniques into one. A very maximized version to give you a sense of control over your mind, body, and how you will show up every day. Do this when you open your eyes or any time you need a mental reframe.

- **BREATHE** in through your nose for 4 seconds.
Exhale for 6 seconds or slightly longer than your inhale.
- Choose an **INTENTION** for how you want to show up today; define and decide how you will be.
Calm, Confident, Fluid, Powerful, Great listener, Open, Curious?
- Think of one thing you are **GRATEFUL** for and really feel the appreciation.
If removed, what level of loss would you experience - feel the gratitude that intensely.
- Sit up, put your feet on the floor, and **GROUND** yourself with your practice.
Know that you have CHOSEN a solid foundation for your day.

The key to this short practice is to be intensely present. Focus on each step with an intensity that your loved one's life depends on your level of focus.

The EVENING Practice:

Create a quiet 5-minute window to answer these questions toward the end of your day. You can do it inside your head or write it down to uncover patterns and witness growth.

- What is one thing that went wrong today, and can I think about it in another way? Optimists are remarkable re-framers. The more you practice reframing, the quicker you will be at it.
- What were my wins for the day? Focus on and reflect upon your strengths. What skills did you contribute to make them happen? Celebrating successes cements the belief that good things happen. This is an expansive and hopeful state. Remembering just 6 positive moments a day - and lingering on them for just a single breath - will begin to rewire your brain to a more HOPEFUL state.