



"We cannot live only for ourselves. A thousand fibers connect us with our fellow men; and among those fibers, as sympathetic threads, our actions run as causes, and they come back to us as effects."  
— Herman Melville

## Introduction

Human connection is the power source for growth and transformation. As a plant needs sun, water and nutrients to grow, so it is with human beings. Through the support of those with whom you trust, be it family or friends, you receive the validation that you and your contributions are worthwhile. You learn that your feelings, ideas and dreams matter. The sustenance you derive from others stimulates you to offer your gifts, be of service and express your full potential.

Connection comes in many forms and sizes. It begins with awareness of self and a deeply held sense of your own being, and that includes your wishes, needs and desires. By staying aware and connected to yourself and your own experience, you are then able to open to others in a balanced, wholehearted way.

As you focus on staying connected from the inside out, you can then cultivate people around you that see, understand and appreciate your true nature. For example, go to places or attend events where you can connect with like---minded people to experience what being connected really feels like. Or try engaging in a new activity or hobby to meet others who share your interests and values. By noticing when and how you are nourished in healthy ways, you can choose situations and people who provide that vital support for you, and then focus less time and attention in places and with people where your energy gets depleted.

As you share your true self more and more, you may find that your confidence increases and that you attract others who mirror your enthusiasm for life. The loving support found in this context has miraculous power for healing, renewal and expansion. As you develop and stay connected to positive and life---affirming relationships, your capacity for giving and receiving grows, and your intention for healthy transformation can be realized.

### *What does connection mean to you? What's your definition?*

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### **Working Definitions**

- A relationship in which a person, thing, or idea is linked with something else.
- The action of linking one thing with another; to become joined.
- A means or channel of communication.

"I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship."

— Brené Brown

## CREATING CONNECTION

### Integral Practice of Staying Connected

In this skill building section of the guide, we will focus on the integral practice of staying connected--- to yourself, others and a group. Through this practice, the intention is to cultivate the capacity to become aware of your feelings, find language to express them and learn practices to impart your thoughts, feelings and ideas to be understood by others. This practice also focuses on your ability to inquire to understand yourself and others

This approach may be new and also challenging, as we are not often trained in the area of communications to address conflict or to even share feelings of a positive nature. Please exercise patience and compassion as you engage in learning and applying this practice. While the path of practice may feel initially rocky or unsettling, the desired outcome is to create deeper and more meaningful connections in your life. This is truly a transformative process that requires awareness, courage, generosity and kindness!

Let's explore where you are currently regarding connection. Take a personal snapshot of where you are now regarding connection, where you want to be and what's required to move in that direction:

#### **What connections sustain and nurture me now?**

Examples:

- Spending quality time with family and friends
- Being heard when I'm feeling sad, disappointed or excited
- Taking time for myself to reflect, read, journal or meditate
- Having someone ask me to listen to a problem of theirs

**What hold me back or diverts my attention from staying connected?**

Examples:

- Getting too caught up in work or “busyness”
- Fear that I might say something that will hurt someone
- Afraid of getting my feelings hurt or unable to receive positive feedback
- Not know what I’m actually feeling in a given situation

**What are some ways to stay connected that will nurture and sustain me in my life?**

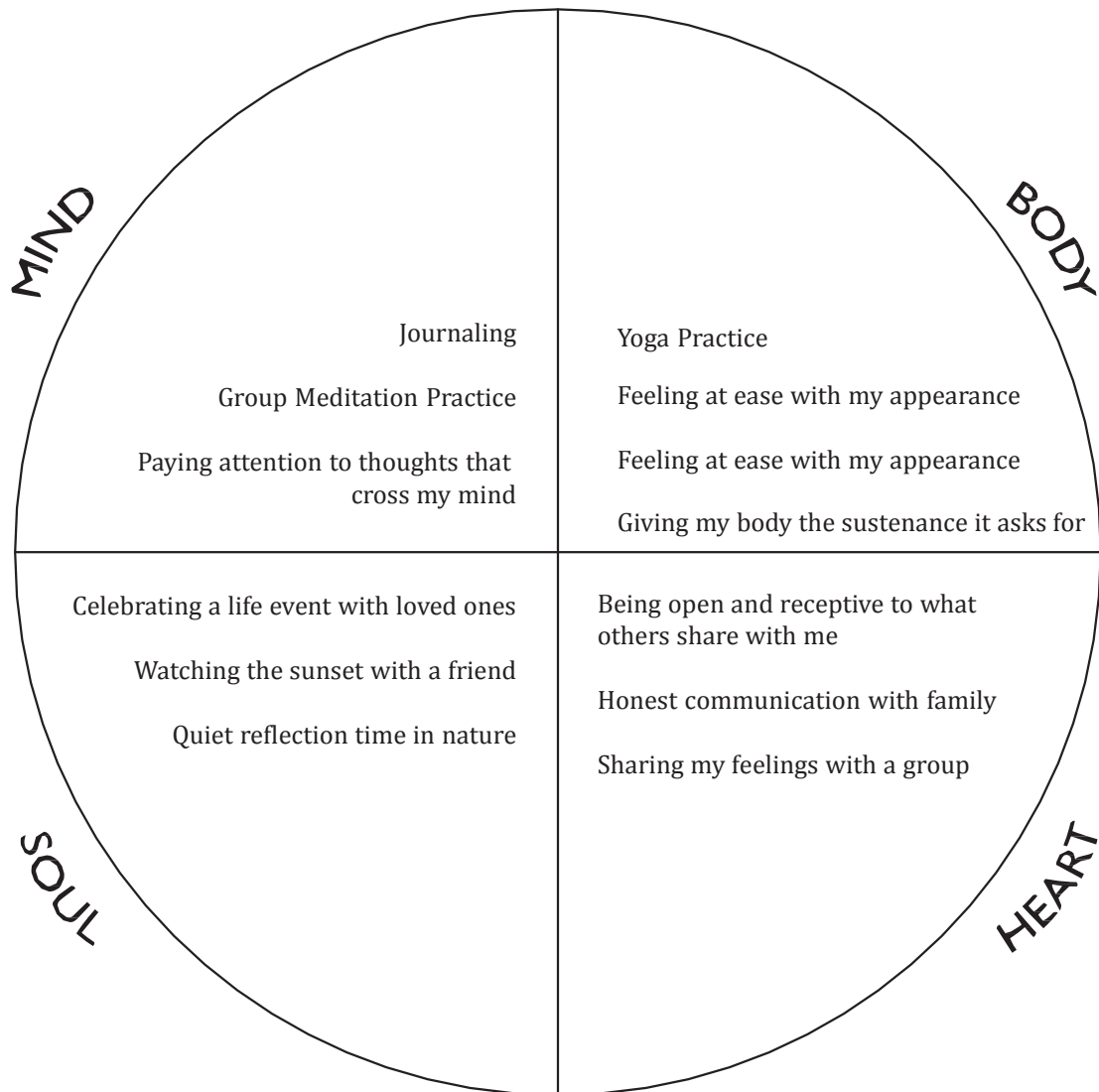
Examples:

- Daily practices of fitness, meditation and journaling
- Staying balanced and centered when listening to another
- Creating affirmations to focus on skillful communications, forgiveness and compassion
- Giving myself reflection time to notice what I am feeling in the moment

## CREATING MY PRACTICE OF STAYING CONNECTED SAMPLE

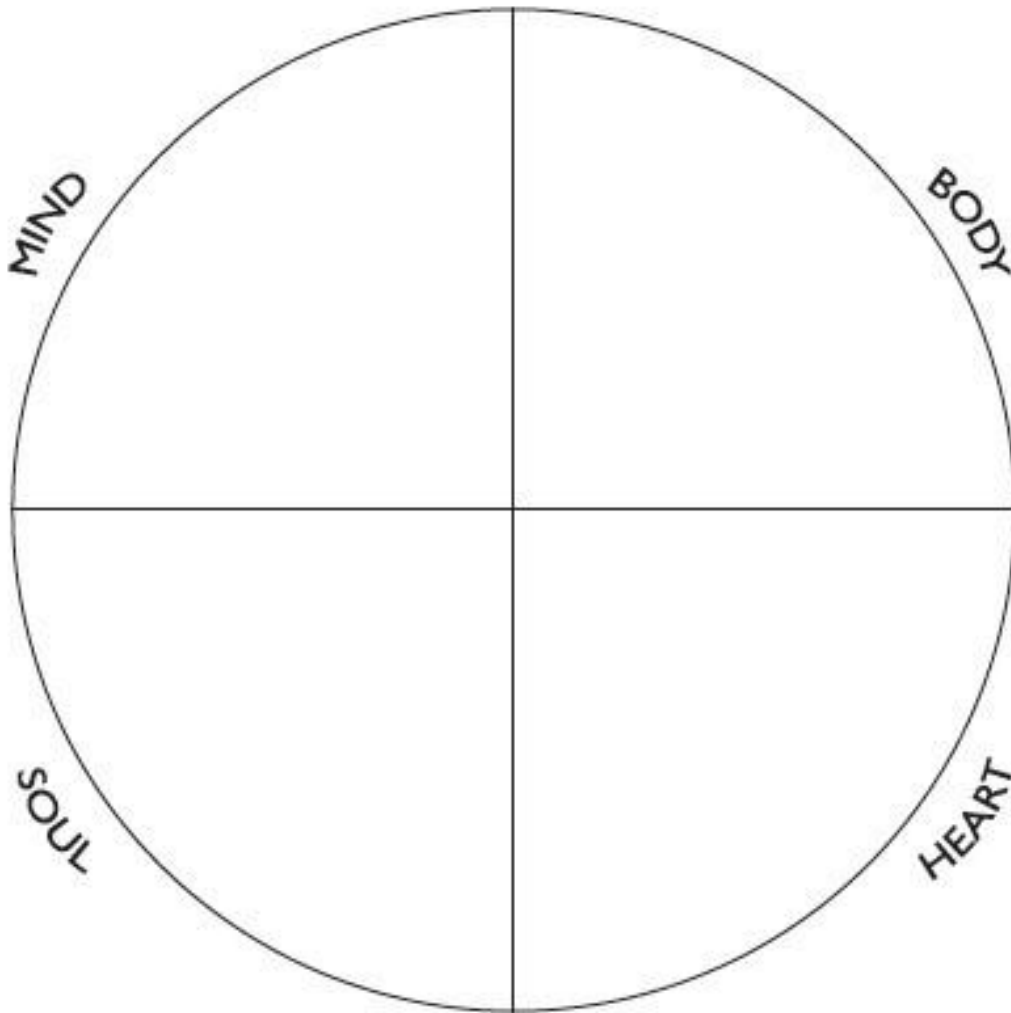
In viewing the graphic below, take a few moments to reflect on your practice.

Here is an example of ways you may stay connected in your mind, body, heart and soul:



## CREATING MY PERSONAL PRACTICE OF CONNECTION

Based on your ideal picture of practice, fill in the elements of connection you would like to incorporate into your life in the given section of the chart below:



## **STAYING CURRENT FOR EXPRESSING FEELINGS AND ADDRESSING CONFLICT**

### **Cultivating Relationship**

The Staying Current practice is one of the main components of Integral Transformative Practice®. It aims to minimize suffering in your own life and in the world. In the ITP program, the focus is on cultivating one's emotional being and is reflected in the 7<sup>th</sup> commitment or guideline of the practice:

*"I open my heart to others in love and service. I stay current in expressing my feelings to those close to me and take care of my emotional needs in appropriate and healthy ways, seeking counsel when needed."*

To nurture self---awareness and general psychological health, the practice is to share concerns as well as positive feelings that we have with ourselves, others or a given group. The intention of this practice is to use peaceful and skillful communications to build and deepen human connection. There is enormous comfort and healing found in witnessing the truth of another person's experience, hearing and understanding what is being shared as well as being heard and understood.

The focus of the sharing is on the circumstance and feelings rather than on any opinions or judgments. Timing is very important for this kind of sharing and allows for mutual respect in the process. For the person or group receiving this information, it is important to be fully present and willing to listen. While we cannot be responsible for the feelings or actions of another person, this practice helps us to experience power over our own life.

Through self---revelation in an atmosphere of trust, we can learn to accept attributes we had not recognized or fully appreciated. We get new perspectives on our habitual patterns of feeling and thought and new foundations for work on ourselves and with others.

## Feelings/Emotions

In the section below, you will find a list of feelings, both feelings where your wants are satisfied and feelings where your wants are not satisfied. By becoming familiar with the language of feelings, you are better able to both identify what you are experiencing emotionally and then also express yourself skillfully to others. Please review this list.

### *Feelings likely to be present when your wants are being satisfied*

#### **Peaceful**

Calm  
Content  
Engrossed  
Absorbed  
Expansive  
Serene  
Loving  
Blissful  
Satisfied  
Relaxed  
Relieved  
Quiet  
Carefree  
Composed  
Fulfilled

#### **Loving**

Warm  
Affectionate  
Tender  
Appreciative  
Friendly  
Sensitive  
Compassionate  
Grateful  
Nurtured  
Amorous  
Trusting  
Open  
Thankful  
Radiant  
Passionate

#### **Glad**

Happy  
Excited  
Hopeful  
Joyful  
Satisfied  
Delighted  
Encouraged  
Grateful  
Confident  
Inspired  
Touched  
Proud  
Exhilarated  
Ecstatic  
Optimistic

#### **Playful**

Energetic  
Effervescent  
Invigorated  
Zestful  
Refreshed  
Stimulated  
Impish  
Alive, lively  
Exuberant  
Giddy  
Adventurous  
Mischievous  
Jubilant  
Goofy  
Buoyant  
Electrified

#### **Interested**

Involved  
Inquisitive  
Intense  
Enriched  
Absorbed  
Alert  
Aroused  
Astonished  
Concerned  
Curious  
Eager  
Enthusiastic  
Fascinated  
Intrigued  
Surprised  
Helpful



***Feelings Likely to Be Present When Your Wants Aren't Being Satisfied***

**Mad**

Impatient  
Pessimistic  
Disgruntled  
Frustrated  
Irritable, edgy  
Grouchy, agitated  
Exasperated  
Aggravated  
Disgusted  
Irk  
Cantankerous  
Animosity  
Mad, bitter, mean  
Rancorous  
Irate, furious  
Angry  
Hostile  
Resentful  
Enraged  
Violent

**Sad**

Lonely  
Heavy  
Troubled  
Helpless  
Gloomy  
Overwhelmed  
Distant  
Despondent  
Discouraged  
Distressed  
Dismayed  
Disheartened  
Despairing  
Sorrowful  
Unhappy  
Depressed  
Blue  
Miserable  
Dejected  
Melancholy

**Scared**

Afraid  
Fearful  
Terrific  
Startled  
Nervous  
Jittery  
Horried  
Anxious  
Worried  
Anguished  
Lonely  
Insecure  
Sensitive  
Shocked  
Apprehensive  
Dread  
Jealous  
Desperate  
Suspicious  
Frightened

**Tired**

Exhausted  
Fatigued  
Inert  
Lethargic  
Indifferent  
Weary  
Overwhelmed  
Fidgety  
Helpless  
Heavy  
Sleepy  
Disinterested  
Reluctant  
Passive  
Dull  
Bored  
Listless  
Blah  
Mopey  
Comatose

**Confused**

Frustrated  
Perplexed  
Hesitant  
Troubled  
Uncomfortable  
Withdrawn  
Apathetic  
Embarrassed  
Hurt  
Uneasy  
Irritated  
Suspicious  
Unsteady  
Puzzled  
Restless  
Boggled  
Chagrined  
Unglued  
Detached  
Skeptical