**5 Core Connection Levels**

**(Self, Others, Nature, Existence, Work)**

**This is a workbook designed to help you highlight how you are and are not connected. Use it as a roadmap for self-improvement and healing in your relationships. Feel free to print this, scribble all over it, and share with anyone who might benefit.**

**Definitions**

**Connection**: The experience of being in conscious contact with something/someone.

**\*Health**: "State of being in balanced relationship in most of the 5 Connection Levels."

**\*\*Sickness**: "State of being in imbalanced relationship in most of the 5 Connection Levels."

**Balanced Relationship**: Reciprocally beneficial with a positive quality of connection.

\* “100%” health may be impossible, but in therapy, that is our trajectory. While you or I may never achieve “perfect” health, we can at least work towards improving our health!

\*\* “100%” sickness may also be impossible. Even the act of suicide does not demonstrate complete sickness; the person may love others or nature, in my view.

**Black/White Vs. Degree**

The questions listed for each of the Connection Levels imply that the extent to which we are/are not in connection is measured in degrees, ie. “on a scale of 1 to 10.” Observe that the questions are not answered with a black/white/yes/no rating system.

When answering these questions, think not in terms of "I love myself/I don't love myself." Think in terms of HOW MUCH you love/don't love yourself.

Why? The human experience is often more complex than "yes" or "no." Thinking in terms of black and white can be useful in expediting decisions, but not so much in tracking progress or capturing the truth. It can be helpful to realize that, for example, I do not TOTALLY feel unsafe with ALL people, but just a little bit with some people at some times. This drastically reduces the size of the "problem" and makes it more manageable. Getting out of black/white thinking is a great step towards courageously facing reality, which is in fact a huge sign of self-love.

**Instructions**

1. For the following questions, rate yourself on a scale of 1(low) to 10 (high). Jot down any qualifications/context to your answers if you like. Some questions don’t ask you to rate anything; they are prompts to help deepen your inquiry.
2. Review your answers and journal on the “Notes” pages: What stands out to you? What are your strengths? Growth areas? What specific actions would improve your connections?

**Self**

* Mental
	+ "How much do I love myself?"
	+ "How well do I take care of me?”
	+ “In what ways do I care for myself?”
	+ "How is my emotional balance?"
	+ "How balanced are my thought processes?"
	+ "How self-aware and conscious am I?"
	+ "How harmonized are my personality parts and instincts?"
	+ “How is my balance of acceptance vs. control?”
	+ “How well have I come to terms with and healed my past?”
* Physical
	+ "How is my exercise?"
	+ "How is my sleep?"
	+ "How is my diet?"
	+ "How is my activity and rest cycle?"
	+ “How are my use of chemicals, alcohol, drugs, and medications?

**Others**

* "How connected am I with other people?"
* “How is my relationship with my significant other/romantic partner(s)?”
* “How are my relationships with my children/dependents?”
* "How are my communication skills with others?"
* "How safe do I feel with others?"
* "How safe do others feel with me?"
* "How emotionally supported am I by others?"
* "How emotionally supportive am I of others?"

**Nature**

* "How connected am I with nature?"
* "How often do I interact with nature?"
* "How much do I receive from nature?"
* “In what ways do I receive from nature?”
* "How much do I give back to nature?"
* “In what ways do I give back to nature?”

**Existence**

* "How much do I feel spiritually connected?"
* "On what terms am I with the fundamental facts of life?"
* "How well do I know my reason for living? What is it?"
* “How meaningful to me are life, reality, and existence?" “What do they mean?”
* “How are my senses of purpose and direction in life?”

**Work**

* "How connected am I to the means by which I feed-clothe-shelter myself?"
* "How much does my work express my unique gifts?"
* "How fulfilled am I by the way I contribute to and am repaid by my community?"
* “How much do I work-to-live vs. live-to-work?”
* “How well am I creating my best possible job, career, and work environment?”

**NOTES TO SELF**

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