



Healthy Habit #2: Generate Connection Practice

In response to hurt feelings, disappointment or misunderstandings, those with a secure attachment style have the habit of quickly moving to repair the relationship, rather than withdrawing their love, or moving to defend to try to protect themselves from further hurt.

In other words, securely attached people have a practice of putting “relationship enhancement activities” above “self-protective activities.”

Securely attached people also understand that times of mis-attunement are normal, and they don’t tend to catastrophize the limitations or mistakes of their partners. They are therefore less reactive and more resilient in the face of feeling hurt and disappointed. They tend to not take things personally, and they rarely lose sight of the overall value of the connection in spite of having hurt feelings.

While securely attached people may eventually lower their expectations and/or their investment in the relationship in response to how others consistently behave in spite of their attempts to better the connection, they'll more likely do that than cut the connection off completely. In this way, they're able to weather the inevitable storms that are normal to all intimate relationships and build bonds that have the potential to last a lifetime.

Personal Practice: In Healthy Habit #2, you are invited to practice generating connection in the aftermath of feeling hurt or disappointed.

1. **Think of Someone Who Hurt You.** Think of a person who has hurt you, disappointed you, insulted you or failed you in some very tangible way.
2. **Notice What He or She Did or Did Not Do.** Notice the specific thing they did or did not do that disappointed and hurt you.
3. **Notice Your Response.** Notice how you responded to feeling hurt and afraid. Did you withdraw your love? Punish that person? Harm their reputation by gossiping about them? Or did you make a move to generate repair and reconnection?
 - a) If the latter, were your attempts received or rejected? If received, how did you further attempt to heal the rift?
 - b) If rejected, what did you do with that? Make them wrong? Devalue the connection? Try to get revenge? Or did you keep your heart soft, and continue to stay open to the possibility of a repair between you?
4. **Consider Their Perspective.** Notice how married you are to your perspective and be willing to consider that there might be more to the situation than you are currently seeing. You may wish to imagine that you could step into the shoes of the other to try on their perspective to give you a more holistic view of the situation between you.
5. **Consider How To Generate Reconnection & Repair.** Consider how you might generate reconnection and repair in the aftermath of this rupture of attunement between you. Perhaps you could begin praying for the other person's happiness? Send a consolatory email? Maybe call him or her to invite a healing dialogue between you?

Reflection Questions

Healthy Habit #2: Generate Connection Self-Inquiry

Journal on the following:

1. Ask yourself, “Who hurt me and what did they do (or not do) that was so disturbing to me? (For example, “John hurt me when he completely forgot our year and a half anniversary and went without me to the movies with his friend.”)
2. Ask yourself, “How have I responded to that disappointment?” (For example, “I shut down and stopped talking to John. I withdrew my love and I started flirting with Paul when I knew he was looking.”)
3. Ask yourself, “What might be valid and true about the other person’s perspective on this matter?” (For example, “I never actually told John how important it is to me to celebrate mid-year anniversaries and he may think that I only care about annual anniversaries.”)
4. Ask yourself, “How could I respond to what has happened in a way that would generate the possibility of repair and reconnection?”
 - a) Ask yourself, “What can I do within myself to keep my heart more open to this person?” (For example, “I could forgive John for not reading my mind and resolve to be more assertive in telling him how he could make me happy.”)
 - b) Ask yourself, “How might I respond to my disappointment in a way that has the potential to create more closeness and connection between us?” (For example, “I could share with John how much he and our relationship have come to mean to me, and I can ask him if we could celebrate future mid-year anniversaries in much the same way as we celebrate full-year anniversaries.”)
 - c) Ask yourself, “What expectations and/or investment do I have of this relationship that I may need to adjust (or lower!) in order to generate peace between us?” (For example, “I can lower my unrealistic expectations that John should just know what I want without my having to tell him!”)