



You want to connect better with people, especially online.
Welcome to Connection School Practice!

Connection with others starts with you.

Here are a few guiding principles and practices to strengthen your own connection “muscles” first. Then, you will be better able to **more naturally and genuinely** connect with others.



Practice: Person or Object

Imagine a big “P” or “O” on someone’s forehead as you interact with them. Are you seeing them as a Person with hopes, dreams, needs, challenges? Or are you seeing them as an Object, something to be dealt with, overcome or tolerated.

Adapted from *Leadership and Self-Deception*, The Arbinger Institute in *Coaching Agile Teams*, Lyssa Adkins

Practice: Just Like Me

Bring the person to mind. Silently repeat the following phrases, and add your own.

This person has a body and a mind, just like me.

This person has feelings, thoughts, and emotions, just like me.

This person has ideas they want to contribute, just like me.

This person has been disappointed in life, just like me.

This person has needs, just like me.

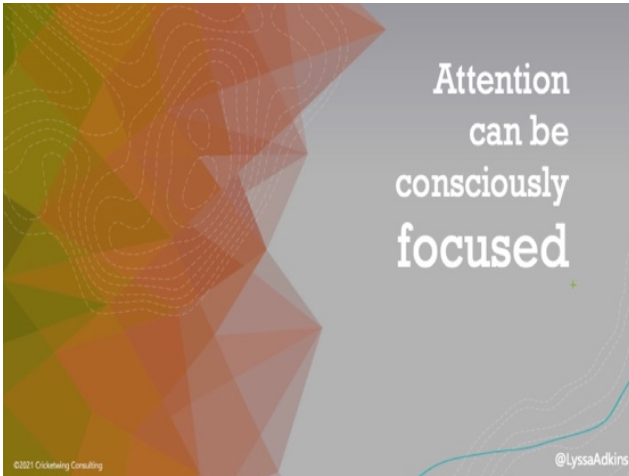
<Keep going with your own “just like me” sentences>

Adapted from <https://www.mindful.org/just-like-me-compassion-practice/>

“Just Like Me” becomes even more challenging when you dislike someone or maybe just dislike the impact of their actions on themselves or others. Maybe you judge them as not being kind, open, honest, skilled...whatever.

Even in this situation, the necessity to connect calls you to create a positive regard for them. Do this by changing your view of them. Regard the person as a human being with hopes, dreams, and desires (like your own) so that you can re-humanize them and re-establish the possibility of genuine connection.

Adapted from *Coaching Agile Teams*, Lyssa Adkins



It is said that attention is our most precious resource.

It is quite amazing that our attention can be pointed at so many different kinds of things and that, with just a suggestion, our minds can focus there -- immediately. When we pay attention to one thing, we exclude the many other things we are not paying attention to. Attention can be focused and we can use this precious resource wisely

Practice: Rotate your attention

Quiet your body, take a few breaths, begin to quiet the mind.

Bring your attention...

...to the sounds in your environment. Slowly, name them.

...to your eyes. Imagine pouring cool water behind your eyes, relaxing them completely.

...to sensations in your body. Temperature on your skin, pressure where your body meets the chair or floor, internal sensations of tight or loose stomach, chest, jaw.

... to the tip of your right index finger. As an imagination, a sensation, or an image, bring your attention to the tip of your index finger on your right hand.

To practice rotating your attention, you can use Yoga Nidra (free videos on YouTube).

Consciously prepare for the meeting or conversation ahead by setting your intention to guide your attention.

What is your intention for what we will *do or create* together?

What is your intention for the *attitude* you will bring so that it can go well?



What you intend will rotate your attention toward the things that are in-line with that intention. In other words, once you are aligned with your intention, you can more genuinely connect with people because you know what you want and you know the attitude you are bringing along. You can become so strongly aligned that you feel comfortable revealing your intention to help things go well. When people reveal their intentions, connection deepens because people know “where you are coming from.”

Practice: DBS (Dignity-Belonging-Sufficiency + Commitment)

What if you do not know your intention? You can ask a friend to gently ask questions that help you locate your intention. You can also use a mind centering practice, such as DBS, which ends with you asking yourself to identify your intention. In other words, what you are committed to creating.

During the meeting or conversation, let your intention guide you. When you notice disconnection with others, bring your intention to mind and see how it can guide your attention.

Guided DBS practice from coach Deborah Hartmann Preuss:
<https://abiggergame.today/dbs/>



People can hear almost anything as long as they know you care about them as you say it.

What if you strongly disagree with what someone is saying?

What if you agree but have something to add, or appreciate?

What if you just want to play “devil’s advocate” to make their idea better?

When you respond to someone, they are often wondering, “Are they with me or not? Do they like my idea or not? I hear their point, but what is their *position*?” This unease can interrupt connection and even put people’s nervous systems on high alert. To keep connection while delivering your appreciation/criticism/critique, first 1) make sure you are seeing them as a person, 2) have your intention clear in your mind so that it can guide your attention and then:

Practice: Listen FOR

When the person is talking, listen deeply. L-i-s-t-e-n and see if you can detect your answers to ANY of these questions:

- ...what is important to this person?
- ...what is the idea they really care about?
- ...what's not being said?
- ...what is their underlying state? (calm, excited, confused, agitated, etc.)
- ...what’s next for this topic? What’s next for them?
- ...what else do you detect “beneath the words”?
- ...what is the most generous interpretation of their intention?

Now, where can you **genuinely** align with them? Express your alignment FIRST before expressing a difference (appreciation/criticism/critique/etc.) This helps preserve connection no matter what content you are contributing and is essential if what you are saying is meant to be a challenge.