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# The Connection Code™

*5 Foundations of Enduring Relationship*

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Janna Findley Harris, M.S., Ed.S., LMFT

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[TheConnectionCode.co](http://TheConnectionCode.co)

## *Dedication*

*This book and related materials are the culmination of an entire career of providing therapy services to children, adolescents, individual adults, couples and entire families, ages two to seventy seven. Together, we experienced both pain, and joy.*

*Friederich Bonhoeffer conceptualized that a person's paramount calling lives at the point of intersection of one's greatest talents with man's greatest needs~ I consider myself extraordinarily fortunate to have found this "proper point of intersection" for my chosen profession. Through it, I have been allowed the ultimate privilege to spend time with each incredibly unique individual who graced the space within "my therapy chamber".*

*The growth and triumphs I have witnessed with my precious clients have made me realize the importance of sharing these critical components of relationship in a wider way than could be reached through my private practice. The result of that awareness is to have dedicated the time to create the*

*relationship assessment, write this book, and the companion workbook.*

*Having knowledge of these dimensions offers partners a shared lens through which to view their intimate relationship. This provision of a “common language” can then be utilized to isolate small situations before they snowball into larger ones, and with this shared foundational framework, offers opportunities to openly discuss and fully communicate without defensiveness.*

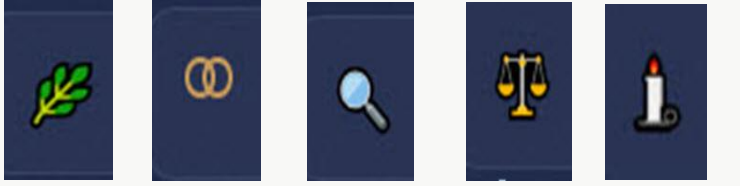
*So, in part, this book is dedicated to each of these very special people with whom I have worked. Each of these persons might remember a little “speech” I routinely give during each first session with new clients.*

*In it, I emphasized my hope that they make the time spent together productive, and that they work extremely hard, because for many years, this work took me away from my precious sons, Shawn and Trevor. Because of your sacrifice in not having me be “at home”, this book is also dedicated to each of you. You know how important you are to me, and how much I love you!*

*Lastly, this is dedicated posthumously to Indiana University's Dean Robert Richey, who surprisingly guessed my having ghost-written a grant proposal for an irresponsible employee of his, and awarded me a full scholarship and assistantship in order to allow me to obtain my graduate school degrees. Without his actions, none of this would have been possible.*

*Now, let's go provide important tools to heal relationships!!*

*Janna Findley Harris, MS, EdS, LMFT*



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## **Introduction**

Welcome to this small book – a companion guide to ***The Connection Code™ Relationship Assessment: 5 Foundations of Enduring Relationship!*** These pages explore five of *the most important qualities of a healthy long-term relationship or marriage,* as highlighted by over fifty years of psychological and relationship related research!

These critical components of successful long-term relationships will be explored and discussed, offering insights into potential patterns which may exist in the relationship. A few questions will be presented to

ask yourself and your partner. By providing clearer definition of each of these elements, partners can achieve a more complete understanding of their own behavior, resulting in a heightened awareness of themselves and each other, which can culminate to present an easier way forward to implement any changes desired.

In actuality, the word “marriage” is a misnomer – as it defines marriage as a noun – as a constant, something a person “has”, and is “static”. In truth, any relationship is constantly on the move, with the ebbs and flows of life, as the partners are either increasing closeness through their daily interaction or moving apart and even potentially experiencing tiny tears in the fabric of their relationship.

Having a long-term committed relationship or marriage is not a noun, as something a person “has” as

they might have any other object. Instead, a successful enduring relationship is a “*lifelong path and experience*” and is one that asks us to show up with courage, kindness, and growing self-awareness. The focus of these pages offers a gentle mirror to reflect how five important dimensions – demonstrations of positive regard and respect, empathy for your partner, authenticity of self, behavioral alignment between one’s words and actions, and emotional intimacy are each living (or longing to live more fully) in your relationship.

The goal within these pages is to expand the examination of these dimensions into richer territory. Here you will find thoughtful explanations of why each dimension matters in the context of meaningful relationship, what it looks and feels like when it is thriving, what it may look like when it needs attention, and gentle, practical ways to nurture it over time.

The language is intentionally mature and reflective — written for people who have lived enough life to know that love deepens not through perfection, but through intentional presence.

You may be wondering why the sexual side of marriage is not highlighted as a separate issue. After all, physical attraction is often what initially sparks interest in another *during its initial chapter*.

In its purest sense, one's sexual relationship is an important factor in sustaining a relationship longer term. However, it is the high level of functioning of the very parameters discussed within these pages which lead to greater attraction between partners on an ongoing basis. For partners to develop greater sexual intimacy, the overall health of multiple dynamics within the marriage is the predictor. Initial sexual attraction cannot stand on its own.

As you move forward through the exploration of the five areas, consider this to be a quiet adventure. Much as a flowering bud unfolds slowly or as a wave forms prior to cresting, exposing its beauty and intricacies, you will begin to understand the beautiful complexity of sharing a life with another person. Read one dimension at a time, and give yourself ample time to fully contemplate the integration of the dynamics within your relationship with the concepts integral to the information.

If it feels right, discuss each section with your partner. Let the ideas settle gently into your shared story. The goal is simple: to help you see your personal relationship more clearly, appreciate its strengths more fully, and move toward greater closeness with hope and realism.

At the conclusion of the descriptions of each of these concepts, you will be better able to analyze potential instances in your own relationship – and integrate them with the individual dimensions (and how they can overlap, which may be why you never fully understood them previously).

Keep in mind that The Connection Code™ is based on critical and valid research, leaning on the findings of the most highly respected authorities in this field. Once this information is learned, you can rely on it for assessing *any* relationship, as these core qualities transcend relationships with parents, children, colleagues, and friends. The concepts can act as a prism through which to view all relationships, if you allow.

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*Being fully known and loved  
by a partner for which one has  
ultimate respect is one of the greatest  
achievements and pinnacles of success  
life has to offer.*

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**Positive Regard / Mutual Respect:**  
**The Foundation of Dignity in Relationship**

For any long-term relationship or marriage to thrive, much less survive, it must be given the time, attention and prioritization it deserves. That is *Rule Number One*.

“*Mutual Respect*” in any long-lasting committed relationship or marriage is the steady, daily honoring of your partner’s inherent worth, autonomy, and vulnerability. It is not grand gestures; it is the quiet refusal to diminish, dismiss, or control another human

being who has chosen to build a life with you. Your partner is *the most important person in your life – part of honoring an important relationship or marriage is to treat them as such*. They are not merely to be treated as the “Worker Bee”.

Being fully known and loved by a partner for which one has the ultimate respect is one of the greatest achievements and pinnacles of success life has to offer. In the context of a long-term partnership, respect becomes especially important because *this* relationship exposes us — our habits, our moods, our private selves — in ways no other relationship does. When positive regard for another is present, both partners feel safe to be fully themselves. Disagreements can occur without the fear that one’s dignity is at stake.

It is important to recognize that the development of a close, intimate relationship requires the willingness

to make the relationship a priority and choosing – again and again – to invest your time and energy into it, rather than only that leftover part of you remaining at the end of a long and stressful day.

Active behaviors of this might include setting aside uninterrupted time to talk when asked or on a regular basis, following through on even small promises, or simply turning toward your partner rather than away when they reach out. When partners regularly choose to put the relationship first, rather than treating it as an afterthought, they create an atmosphere in which both people feel genuinely valued and respected. Each of these seemingly small acts carries a powerful underlying message: “You are important to me. I respect you enough to give you my attention, my effort and my presence.”

Complimentary and longstanding research has confirmed that couples who consistently turn “toward each other” as regards a bid for affection or connection, rather than ignoring or deflecting them, builds the *emotional security* that sustains the relationship through conflict and difficulty. Consistency in this regard provides the security and assurance that one’s “reaching out” will be welcomed and accepted, and assists in the ongoing growth of sexual intimacy, as well.

Mutual respect strives for “win : win” outcomes in all situations. Neither partner tries to have a one-up position, or desires to have it. *Respect*, as a critical dimension of relationship, is demonstrated when:

- Your partner’s opinions and feelings are treated as worthy of as much serious consideration as your own, even when they differ from your own.
- Boundaries are honored without resentment.
- Vulnerability is met with care rather than criticism or indifference.

Respect may need attention if conversations frequently leave one person feeling small, unheard, managed, or worse, manipulated.

The gentle path forward is to pause before speaking and ask: “Am I treating my partner as someone whose dignity I am committed to protect — including from my own frustration, or even when I strongly disagree with some position my partner holds?”

When in crucial conversation with one’s partner, it is often useful to attempt to try, as much as is possible, to think of what is being presented not only objectively, but through a filter of non-reaction. Especially if the topic has been discussed on a previous occasion, or seems to be a habitual “thorn” in the side of your relationship, the slightest facial expressions and body language can be interpreted as rejection of what is being said – resulting in potential “distancing” emotionally by one’s partner.

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John Gottman, an esteemed researcher of more than thirty years in this field, concluded that what he termed “contempt” is the highest predictor of divorce. Specific behaviors he utilized to form his conclusion included “eye rolling”, “sarcasm” and “belittling”. Clearly, these behaviors would most certainly be noticed by one’s partner if exhibited frequently – and simultaneously work against any experience of feelings of “safety” or “unconditional acceptance”, which has long been identified by Carl Rogers, Robert Carkhuff and others as *required* in human interaction if there is to be emotional closeness.

Nowhere are the identified feelings of safety and unconditional acceptance more important than in a long-term relationship or marriage, and the lack of it in one’s relationship can leave one feeling strongly rejected. *One can view a partner demonstrating*

*“contempt” to be almost the opposite of exhibiting “positive regard” or “respect”.*

Committed relationships can provide a “safe harbor” for partners. However, if “mutual respect” in a relationship is lost, it is difficult to reconstruct and reestablish, although it can be accomplished. However, if a partner consistently chooses to exhibit frequent displays of “contempt” or the behaviors become habitual, they can create toxicity in the relationship.

Additional expressions of appreciation for your partner’s unique perspective, apologizing cleanly when you have spoken carelessly, choosing language that affirms rather than critiques character, spending time in attempts at understanding, and conversing without blaming all create an environment in which partners, and therefore the relationship, flourish.

Demonstrating the critical component of *respect* in a relationship says to one's partner, "You matter to me. I see you. I value you. And I'm willing to show it with the words I choose, as well as how I spend my time and attention." The actions explored in in the seemingly ordinary actions discussed carry an important truth: "You are important enough for me to put you first."

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*When your partner prioritizes the relationship, creating time and space to intensely listen and understand, without passing judgment, without making assumptions or trying to alter you, their behavior engenders feelings in you of being valued and loved.*

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## **Empathy: The Bridge of Understanding**

Empathy is authentically sensing and caring about your partner’s inner experience — not just the words they speak, but the emotions, history, and meaning behind them. In marriage, empathy is the difference between living beside someone and truly living with them.

To exhibit empathy requires emotional maturity. It asks us to set aside our own immediate perspective long enough to truly receive another’s. Especially in the shared life of marriage or long term relationship — with

its financial pressures, parenting challenges, health changes, aging and other issues — empathy becomes a tremendous but necessary attribute rather than a luxury. Unlike sympathy (which feels sorry for someone), when we exhibit true empathy, our partner feels understood, and that we are *genuinely* “with” them. Being able to anticipate one’s partner will respond with empathy develops trust, and feelings of security.

Empathy is an incredibly important facet of a healthy relationship, even in moments of conflict or silence. It is demonstrably absent if one of you repeatedly says, “You don’t understand,” or when problem-solving suggestions rush in before the feelings of one of you seems fully understood by the other.

Ask yourself:

- When my partner shares difficulties or vulnerabilities, do I respond with genuine understanding rather than immediate solutions or dismissal?

- Am I able to appreciate their perspective with sensitivity, even when it diverges from my own lived experience?
- Does my partner feel truly seen and emotionally “held” within our life together?

Researchers have long recognized what couples quietly discover on their own. Carl Rogers, one of the most influential psychologists of the twentieth century, placed empathy at the center of all meaningful human connection, and described empathy as entering the private perceptual world of the other and becoming “thoroughly at home in it”. Robert Carkhuff built on Rogers’s foundational research and demonstrated that higher levels of empathic understandings are directly associated with greater growth and satisfaction in a relationship.

Although empathy is an emotion one partner *feels* toward the other, for empathy to highly function in a relationship, one also must communicate that

understanding and feeling for one's partner in such a manner their partner recognizes they *are* "with them". In this regard, some of the most effective tools one might use is "mirroring" of statements (which is simply repeating certain portions or entire statements), or "active, reflective listening".

In this regard, a partner might "mirror" partial statements their partner might make in discussing a sensitive topic, letting their partner know they have heard them. If questions still exist after additional clarifying conversation, often rather than directly questioning their partner, they can develop practicing the art of reflective listening, which often increases the probability that your partner will feel heard: "It sounds like this situation left you feeling...", followed by "*patient silence*". It is this type of lengthy silence which allows your partner to "check in" and take inventory of their

actual feelings, fully determining how a particular situation resulted in their feeling a certain way, or led to a certain action.

Importantly, it is only after a partner can concretely conceptualize and identify the issue in their *own* mind, and then share their entire awareness of experiences with their partner, that one's partner can be expected to fully understand and have empathy. Often, a partner can be confused about a situation in their own life, and it is *because* the beautiful dimension of empathy can be relied upon in their relationship that they unreservedly present their deepest concerns to their partner. In these successful couples, one often depends on their partner to assist them in clarifying the feelings they are experiencing as regards an issue, or to assist them in discussing actions they may choose to take.

Over time, this single habit can create an emotional climate of feeling deeply connected in a long-term relationship, which works to oust feelings of defensiveness. When a partner feels their partner is empathic toward their feelings, they feel “yoked” and that they are “pulling in the same direction”. That is the quiet power of empathy — not the absence of hard moments, but the security of knowing you will not face them alone.

In genuinely caring for our partner with empathy, we have a true understanding of their position, making it easier for us to offer kindness in our responses -- as we have invested and prioritized our relationship to consistently unravel truths and feelings.

In the architecture of a lasting marriage, empathy is load-bearing. It does not eliminate conflict — nothing does, but it changes what conflict means.

When both partners trust they will be heard rather than dismissed, disagreement loses its threat. The argument becomes a conversation, and the conversation becomes a bridge. Empathy transforms a relationship into a sanctuary, and a partner into a safe place to land. It is that slow-built security that sustains when everything else is shaking.

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### **Authenticity: Being “Real” Together**

Authenticity — often termed genuineness — is the alignment between “who you are on the inside”, and “who you show up as” in the long-term relationship or marriage. It is the willingness to be self-disclosing about one’s attributes, but also one’s failures.

It is the demonstration of *pure honesty* about how one truly feels. It means dropping the subtle performances, the polished or inflated versions of self,

and allowing your partner to know your “authentic self”, the person *you* know yourself to be.

In important relationships, authenticity matters! *Pretense can eventually erode trust*, because it can seem much like dishonesty. Everyone has imperfections – and although we enjoy being placed on the highest pedestal by our partner, hoping they will not notice our faults or discover some action or behavior we did not share with them originally, it can also be exhausting to balance on such a high perch.

Honesty truly is the best policy – and pretense can rapidly and sometimes permanently inflame tensions. No partner likes being expected to receive the “pretense as truth”.

When both partners can be honest about their thoughts, feelings, and limitations without fear of rejection, the relationship gains a rare and precious

quality: emotional safety. To be loved *in spite of our imperfections* by our partner is one of the greatest gifts we can ever receive.

Signs of strong authenticity include the ability to say “I was wrong” or “I’m struggling with this”, without elaborate self-defense. Its absence may show up as careful wording, or the quiet exhaustion of maintaining an image, *or feeling like one has to*.

Cultivating authenticity requires courage and mutual trust. A partner must trust they will be fully accepted prior to routinely sharing their most vulnerable selves. Ask yourself:

- Do I show up in our marriage with sincerity, and be self-disclosing, to allow my partner to experience the person I truly am?
- Do we both feel safe enough to disclose our genuine thoughts and feelings without fear of rejection or judgment?
- Is there consistency between the self I offer my partner and the self I present elsewhere?

If a person senses their partner is not coming from a place of genuineness of self, but instead consistently displaying a “false self”, it can lead to hidden resentments, or even suspicion. Additionally, when one partner is “locked” into behavior patterns which are disingenuous, it can extinguish the desire for the other partner to continue to feel comfortable being transparent in the relationship, and initiate a spiral which destroys intimacy.

The five dimensions being explored in these pages, in life situations, integrate with each other. The dimension of *respect* previously examined, can become greatly diminished and can be permanently damaged in a relationship where one or both partners are no longer sharing their genuine selves. No one wants to be in a relationship, at least not for long, when the experience feels “fake”.

Often in the research about this core facet of relationship, the terms “genuineness” and “sincerity” and even “realness” are used interchangeably, as each are recognized as a core condition for any meaningful relationship. Exposing one’s transparent self rather than a carefully constructed façade is critical to the ongoing development of emotional closeness.

Relationship closeness grows when both partners commit to a simple rule: “We will tell each other the truth *kindly*”. In genuinely caring for our partner with empathy, we have a true understanding of their position, making it easier for us to be kind in our responses – as we have invested and prioritized our relationship to consistently learn the intricacies of their feelings.

The reward is the vast benefit of being fully known, but still *chosen*, resulting in the security of feeling deeply loved... which is exactly what partners

were seeking when they first made commitments to the relationship.

At its highest level of functioning, genuineness is the dropping of all pretense, being openly vulnerable and exposing total self-disclosure to one's partner. Thus, *genuineness* acts as a “barometer reading” of the health of any intimate relationship.

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*Genuineness involves being authentic and  
honest in interactions.  
This authenticity builds trust and rapport,  
keeping the romantic relationship  
growing....*

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**Alignment / Congruence: The Quiet,  
Dependable Consistency in Relationship**

Congruity, as expressed in a significant relationship, is the ongoing alignment between *what we say we value* and *how we actually live*. It is the slow accumulation of small, reliable choices that tell our partner:

**“You can trust that my words and my actions will match – you can count on me to consistently make decisions and exhibit behaviors which validates what *we* have stated matters to us.”**

Over decades, it is this type of integrity which becomes the invisible foundation of any lasting relationship. One of the fastest methods to destroy trust in a relationship is when a partner's words and deeds are not aligned – when a partner states one *value* to their partner, but then routinely exhibits actions which are in no manner aligned with that value.

It is worth noting that the most devastating erosion of trust in a significant relationship or marriage is rarely born of dramatic betrayal. Far more often, it arrives quietly – in the repeated pattern of small acts of incongruency which accumulate over time.

Active examples include a partner who repeatedly states they will cease overspending, but does not – or who agrees to discuss decisions before implementing actions affecting both partners, but continues to act unilaterally. Or, one who promises to

prioritize the relationship, but whose choices consistently tell a different story.

Each instance, taken alone, may seem minor. But over time, the pattern speaks louder than any single act — and the message it sends is corrosive: "What I say and what I do are not the same," which can easily be interpreted as, "I just tell you what I think you want to hear, but really don't care deeply about this issue...or this relationship... or you".

It can also elicit unspoken words of, "I am the only one who matters — I am going to act alone but without taking this relationship or your feelings, or needs, into consideration". It is here, in these ordinary repeated moments, that trust quietly begins to fracture, leading to the diminishing of feelings of love.

It does not require dramatic betrayal. Small, repeated misalignments are often enough to plant

doubt, and doubt left unaddressed grows. One partner feels disrespected, disregarded and insignificant as they experience the incongruity of actions.

When a partner is *consistently* incongruent — when what they say and what they do persistently fails to align — their partner often feels the experience of it long before they can put a label on the “hollowness” they feel. It initially shows up as a vague unease, but can evolve into feelings of reluctance to fully trust, and as time moves forward, a quiet withholding of the whole self to continue to engage or remain in the relationship. The relationship does not necessarily shatter dramatically. It simply stops deepening but that loss can lead to total disintegration.

*It is not about being flawless; it is about being honest when gaps appear and working together to close them.* It is about having of open discussion about

inconsistencies – without defensiveness, and choosing and acting differently moving forward.

When a strong foundation of congruence in this manner is strong, partners experience a profound sense of unity, and security – the knowledge that they are building a life with someone whose character is *dependable*. Over time, it is this quiet integrity that becomes part of an invisible strength that permeates the relationship.

Integrity of relationship is thriving when:

1) promises (both large and small) are kept, 2) when values expressed in conversation are visible in daily behavior, and, 3) when apologies are followed by *genuinely chosen* changed actions. Conversely, this dimension may need attention when *repeated* disappointments create quiet doubt, or when one

partner senses a growing gap between stated priorities and lived reality.

Again, the path to greater alignment is found in the willingness to notice misalignments *early*, identify them openly, discuss them gently, and choose differently. Being able to trust your partner is one of the most important and fundamental concepts in committed relationship.

A few things to consider:

- Do my partner's choices and daily conduct generally reflect the values and promises we hold as central to our life together?
- When discrepancies arise between intention and action, do we address them with honesty and mutual accountability?
- Over the years, has our shared life reinforced a growing sense of reliability and trustworthiness?

To maintain a healthy, growing and deepening relationship, built on vibrant trust, partners must

demonstrate consistent alignment, exhibited with a genuine willingness of spirit, having full understanding of the importance of this dimension. Research has shown that couples maintaining this type of congruence in their own individual choices, while simultaneously sharing personal values and mutual goals with their partner, are on the path to a long-term successful relationship.

As psychologist Virginia Satir stated, “Trust is not built in the extraordinary moments – it is built in the ordinary ones.” Living out *congruence* in relationship offers a dependability of trust and belief in one’s partner. When highly functioning within a relationship, it is a critical component of the *foundation of relationship*”.

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### **Emotional Intimacy: The Courage to Be Known**

Emotional intimacy is the willingness to be seen — really seen — and to extend that same seeing to your partner. It is not simply companionship, nor the comfortable rhythm of shared responsibilities. It reaches beyond all the day-to-day into the tender territory of shared hopes, fears, longings and dreams not yet spoken aloud. It is the integration of you *with* your partner in ways that deepen over time, and must continue to grow if a relationship is to successfully endure through the seasons.

It is exemplified through the late-night conversations that remind you why you chose each other. It includes the quiet admission of insecurity, and knowing invites comfort rather than correction. It is the shared vulnerability that says, without words, “I trust you with the parts of me that are still unfinished”.

Emotional intimacy keeps the relationship alive, adding a “spark” to interactions. It is the knowing shared glance across a room or dinner table, without words. When it is strong, both partners experience a “safe harbor” in one another – a safe place to bring the full weight of being human and find it received. When it fades, even a stable and functional relationship can begin to feel more like a business partnership and less like a love story.

Ask yourself:

- Do we create space in our shared life to explore what lies beneath the routines and responsibilities of daily living?
- Am I open to being fully known by my partner, including the more tender or imperfect aspects of my experience?
- Does our relationship serve as a sanctuary where both of us can bring our authentic emotional selves without reservation?

Deepening emotional intimacy rarely requires dramatic gesture, but often begins with small, regular invitations: “How are you feeling about...?” or “I’ve been carrying something I’d like to share with you.”

The essential condition is that vulnerability, when offered, is met with acceptance rather than advice or judgment. Over time, moments of emotional intimacy quietly construct an impermeable bond.

This incredibly beautiful bond emerges, not only to provide a remarkable resilience in the relationship, but

one that also protects the relationship from potential intrusions by others. It provides daily nourishment to the couple, strengthening each partner individually, as they move toward their own aspirations and dreams.

The element of time can be either the enemy, or the blessing, as regards emotional intimacy. Relationship development *requires* time. If either partner fails to prioritize their time to a degree that it results in creating actions of taking their partner for granted, the predictable result will be for their partner to experience feelings of abandonment or even rejection. Emotional intimacy will necessarily suffer.

Any relationship loses its ability to rebuild if it becomes damaged significantly. Resilience is not an automatic attribute within a relationship – it is earned through energy and actions experienced, such that each partner feels there is still a meaningful relationship worth the effort.

A word of honest counsel: emotional intimacy, at its deepest level, flourishes most naturally between partners whose core values are genuinely aligned. Values, unlike habits or preferences, rarely shift significantly over a lifetime. The depth of intimacy possible in any relationship is, in part, shaped by the wisdom of an individual's choice made at the beginning. The first four dimensions of relationship, already discussed, act to create a strong foundation in a significant relationship. The fifth, that of *emotional intimacy*, is what the foundation makes possible.

Having the knowledge and skills which enable one to identify *respect, empathy, genuineness/ authenticity, and congruence* in relationships allows identification of any area of weakness, or patterns, which might arise in the relationship. Once identified,

having the in-depth understanding of these dynamics and how they interact further enables a couple to recognize weaknesses early, and implement behaviors to strengthen those areas in order to create a successful path forward. Utilization of this framework gives couples the necessary tools to remove any obstacle to emotional intimacy.

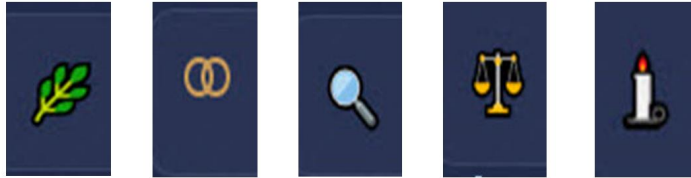
Emotional intimacy is not merely the goal of a healthy relationship – it is the *reward!*

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*Over time, moments of emotional intimacy quietly construct an impermeable bond that emerges, not only to provide a remarkable resilience in the relationship, but one that also protects the relationship from potential intrusions by others.*

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### **Conclusion:**

#### **Weaving the Dimensions into a Shared Life**

Any meaningful relationship is in a constant process and direction rather than a destination. It is important to remember that relationships are not static.

These five dimensions — respect, empathy, authenticity/genuineness, alignment/congruence, and emotional intimacy — are not separate qualities but threads in a masterfully woven tapestry. When one component is strengthened, the others tend to follow. When one is neglected, the whole fabric can feel the strain and begin to fray.

Your long-term relationship or marriage is already filled with evidence of these dimensions in action, even on ordinary days. You can either choose to attempt to isolate small issues as they occur, and take measures to improve your relationship in areas that could use a bit of “*fine tuning*”, or allow what began as small distancing to grow, through recurring patterns, and to evolve over time until there is potential for devastating consequences, resulting in the loss of the relationship.

How well do you *really* know your partner? Have they shared with you about their childhood in detail and in meaningful ways? Although the overabundance of dwelling on one’s past can be counterproductive, it is of paramount importance that couples have taken time to understand their partner’s prior relationship experiences, whether as a child or in prior important

adult relationships. *Love is a verb, and a caring partner will choose to be attentive to the “scar tissue” their partner experienced as a child as well as their adult life prior to being with them.*

As Harville Henrix has stated, “We are born in relationship, we are wounded in relationship, and we can heal in relationship”. Part of the yearning one feels for a successful and lasting relationship is due to the inherent and deep desire for “healing” of any scars remaining from one’s prior life.

It is the wise partner who prioritizes the time required to fully explore their partner’s layers of experiences and feelings. Through the amazing benefit of emotional closeness, enhanced by high level functioning of the *five foundations*, partners can finally feel a deep yet gentle enveloping of their soul by their partner, and transformation can occur.

Perhaps some of you reading these pages are not currently in a relationship but simply wondering what elements create healthy, long-lasting relationships. It is the fortunate person that learns identification of these facets of relationship prior to actually already having entered into a significant relationship. Armed with the knowledge learned here, a person can begin to assess their dating situations through the discriminating lens of how each of these dimensions emerge, as they get to know any potential partner.

### ***The Connection Code™ Relationship***

***Assessment*** offers a tools to help you better identify these critical concepts more clearly and prioritize areas of the relationship which you wish to address with clearer focus and added specificity. The intention of these pages is to assist you in “diagnosing” which critical component of your relationship is potentially creating

distance – each partner should often ask themselves, “Are we moving closer together or farther apart?. Remember, a relationship is always, always on the move.

***The Connection Code™ Workbook – Five Foundations of Enduring Relationship***” includes additional assistance – consequential questions for reflective consideration to assist you and your partner to truly clarify your feelings, as well as journaling prompts to allow full expression, tables for logging awareness of behaviors in “real time”, and tailored concrete actions and activities to implement alone or with your partner.

The workbook can be instrumental in assisting you to define exactly what it is you wish to work on in your relationship with your partner. It approximates having several therapy sessions and provides a very personal experience. It can provide the next step and is available at my website, [www.TheConnectionCode.co](http://www.TheConnectionCode.co) .

There, you can also join a free email list to receive additional bonus articles and other valuable resources, to include participation in upcoming workshop experiences or courses to provide you with additional tools and opportunities.

*No relationship is perfect!* What matters is the ongoing choice to see one another with fresh eyes, to respond with growing skills, and to keep choosing the relationship even when the path feels challenging.

May these reflections serve as a steady companion on your journey — reminding you to always remember the quiet miracle it is to have found someone with whom you can build a life, grow older, and continue each day to become more fully yourselves.

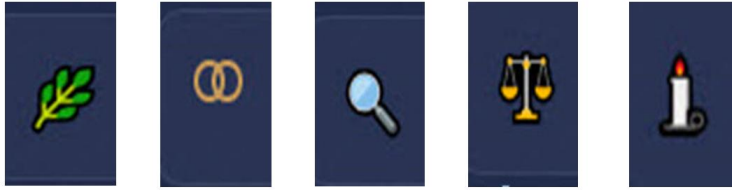
Enjoy the beautiful, exquisite journey...together!

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*... always remember the quiet miracle it is  
to have found someone with whom you  
can build a life, grow older, and continue  
each day to become more fully entwined  
as one...*

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*For additional tools, and resources, , visit*  
**TheConnectionCode.co**



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*For additional tools, resources, and support, visit*  
**[TheConnectionCode.co](http://TheConnectionCode.co)**



## About



Janna Findley Harris, M.S., Ed.S., L.M.F.T. holds degrees in counseling psychology from Indiana University and has been a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in private practice for over twenty years. She has served as a court-appointed expert witness in multiple states, contributing to high-profile and complex divorce and custody cases, also having extensive experience in mediation.

Over the course of her career, she has worked closely with individuals and couples navigating the challenges of intimate relationships, gaining a deep understanding of both the breakdown of connection and the path to repair. In this book, she shares some of the most effective insights, tools, and practices she has developed through her extensive career—offering individuals and couples a clear, practical framework for identifying patterns, changing behaviors, and establishing and rebuilding emotional intimacy.

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