

# Episode 58: Self-Love, Vulnerability, & Connection

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Some of the concepts covered inside of the classroom include: what validation and vulnerability are and how to animate those principles your life; how to live in Truth rather than distortion; how to recognize your distraction and your controlling behavior in your relationships; and how to live a life of peace rather than pain. Powerful concepts that change lives, beginning with yours.

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**[00:02:49]**

Good morning and welcome to ConneXions Classroom Podcast for the week of May 23rd, 2015. Glad you could join me this morning. Today's topic is going to be about self-care and how self-care leads to connecting—connecting to self, connecting to a Higher Power or

a God. And as an outcome of being able to connect to self and to a Higher Power or a God, we then can connect to other things, other people, other activities, other responsibilities.

But what I hope to share with you very clearly is that we must first forge a very strong relationship with ourselves and a Higher Power or God in order to be able to connect elsewhere in life, so that must come first.

Let's start off this morning talking about our innate need to connect. So, "innate" would suggest that it is a need, this necessary characteristic in life called connection that came with us to this planet. Many times, I watch parents who come into my office and they'll bring in their children, especially babies. Their babies are in their car seats and when the baby starts fussing as we're sitting there working in therapy, the parents will respond very quickly to that innate need to connect with their child. They'll either give them a bottle, or give them a pacifier, or pick them up and rock them, or pat their back, or make eye contact with them. And what they're doing is they're satisfying that need in that child to connect with the parent and create safety—create physical safety by feeding them, create emotional safety by acknowledging them, smiling at them, making funny faces, and they make a soul connection with that child.

I've watched other children come in who are a little bit older—two, three, four years old—and the child is not as maybe easily calmed as a baby would be. And so, I've watched parents struggle with trying to connect with their child. Here they are in the office and they're trying to get them to "be quiet," and the child starts screaming, or doesn't want to be here anymore, or the child has language now and says, "I wanna go. I don't like this." They're bored out of their minds or whatever. And the parent or parents are struggling to connect with that child and the things that they are *needing*, their physical needs or their emotional needs. Because once a child starts showing up in a way that isn't as easy to soothe—starts having their own will, parents sometimes struggle, people struggle. And the older we become, the more independence we gain—which is good, we need to do that. And we might have fewer and fewer people who know how to connect with those innate needs that we always have. We always have innate needs. I'm going to talk about what those are here in a minute.

But just so you know, this is now about blaming anyone, this is about understanding. Understanding the need to connect. It starts in infancy and it continues on throughout our lives. The needs *kind of* change as far as the presentation of what it is that we need; the more aware I become, the more I can meet my own needs and I get to language what it is that I need and invite other people to meet those needs. Whereas, when I'm a child, I don't have the understanding that I can meet my own needs and so therefore, I'm reliant or dependent upon my own environment/care providers—my parents, my family—to meet those needs for me.

However, sometimes I come from a family where they have not been taught, it's not been modeled for them how to meet needs. Maybe they do fairly well when I'm a baby and they

do somewhat okay when I'm a toddler, but as soon as I start getting language skills, their ability or inability to meet my needs is more apparent.

Again, this isn't about blaming. It's about you understanding that all of us from birth to death have innate needs to connect. And when I'm a child, it is my role as a child to *learn how to meet my own needs* and also to ask for my needs to be met.

And when I'm an adult, it is then my **sole** responsibility to make sure that those things happen—that I meet my own needs or I'm able to ask others for the things that I need.

Now, here's a caveat: just because I get really good at asking for the things that I need does not mean that someone is responsible to fulfill them for me. I just get to *ask* and if someone is not available for whatever reason—emotionally, physically, whatever—then I don't get to become upset or have expectations that they “should” meet my needs. It means I need to go find someone else who is actually available to meet those.

We're going to talk about connection and what it means it to be connected, and what it involves to be connected, whether I'm a child or whether I'm an adult.

So, I just got done talking about how everyone needs to feel and be connected. We need to be connected physically, emotionally, socially, spiritually. We all need those areas of our lives to feel connected—to ourselves first.

So, again, the difference between a child versus an adult is children are supposed to be being taught by the adults in their world how to meet those needs for themselves: how to physically meet their needs, emotionally meet their needs, spiritually, socially meet their needs.

So, we as adults/parents are needing to teach our children—we have them for 18 years, give or take—and it's our obligation to teach them about themselves physically, emotionally, spiritually, socially, sexually, and rear them in such a way that they can launch into adulthood understanding who they are, what their needs are, how they're responsible to meet them. And responsible means that they learn how to ask for help, they understand their emotions, and don't try to manipulate others to meet their emotional “needs,” that they are responsible for that. And when I say responsible, it also means, if I can't meet it myself, then I ask somebody else; I'm accountable for bringing people into my life who can meet those needs with me and for me.

So, we all need to be connected, and I want to drive this point home very, very clearly, that ***you must connect to yourself first***. You must connect to yourself first.

So, I'm going to tell you really quickly how to connect to self, and then we're going to go into more detail about actually how to do that.

So, the way that you connect with yourself and ***stay connected*** is that you must learn to live in your integrity. So, what does that mean, integrity?

## [00:11:27] Components of Integrity

Here are the components of integrity:

- You must learn how to be emotionally honest with yourself.
- You must understand yourself emotionally, you must feel your emotions and be honest about what you're feeling and then, as you're honest about what you're feeling, you are then **responsible** for what you feel. You get to take accountability for the things that you feel. It's not like, "Well, I feel that and so this person should make me feel better." It's, "Okay, I feel this *and* because I'm feeling it, I then am responsible for what I do with that and how I manage that."

Now, I'm not going to go into great detail about that because there's numerous podcasts that talk about honesty and responsibility. And so, I would encourage you to listen to those, but that is how you stay connected to yourself. You are a soul. You're not just a body, you're a soul. And so, the way you stay connected to your soul is that you live in this emotionally honest place and take accountability for what it is that you feel. And what that will do is it will create empathy, it will create emotional vulnerability, it will support you to validate, it will support you to be compassionate, it will support you to be accurate about what it is you're experiencing, it will support you to be accurate about what it is that you're seeing in life, and stay in Reality. It has incredible power in order to be emotionally honest, so that you don't distort the Reality that's in front of you.

## [13:07] Learning to Self-Care

So, how do we learn? Let's go back. How do we learn to connect? How do we learn to care for our self? Because what I just got done talking about is that being able to connect means that I care for me, I have self-love, if you will. I have self-esteem. How do I learn that? How do I learn to care for self, which means how do I stay connected to myself?

The ability to stay connected to self is really facilitated by your ability to validate and to be vulnerable. So, again, I have podcasts on validation and vulnerability as well, so I'm not going to go into great detail about those. But let me just say that I can validate without ever being vulnerable. And I can also be vulnerable without validating. So, I can validate without being vulnerable and I can be vulnerable without validating.

So what that means is, when I validate, it means that I am saying to the person, "I see you, I witness you, I can appreciate what you're going through." It's kind of like sympathy. So, I can validate and be in a very sympathetic position where I don't show too much vulnerability, I don't really empathize with you, I just sympathize. It's like, "Oooh, that looks really hard what you're doing." Or, "It looks like you're really struggling with that." Or, "I'm sorry that you feel so sad." Those are validating statements but I really don't have to get raw or risk around validating.

And then, the other end is I can be vulnerable without validating. So, I can show risk, I can feel raw, I can feel kind of shaky emotionally, like, exposed. And I can be in that spot and not ever have someone validate, or not even have me validate *myself* that I'm there.

So, I can do both of these things independent of someone else. I don't have to have someone there with me in order to do those two things—validate and be vulnerable—but if I want to connect to another person where there's two-way connection, we **both**—both people—must be willing to be vulnerable *and* validate ourselves and one another. So, we both have to risk, we both have to get emotionally honest and share some kind of exposure, and be able to have enough safety with each other that we're willing to do that, and be willing and able to validate: to say, “I see you, I see how hard this is for you, I see how frightened you are, or I see how confused you must feel.” We're validating the emotion of the experience.

So, vulnerability without receiving validation in return is a risky position to be in. If I'm vulnerable and no one acknowledges it, I feel *really* exposed, I feel *really* scared.

I went to my parents' house over the weekend and was really vulnerable. I had my feelings hurt. My sister-in-law said something to me that was really hurtful to me and I was really vulnerable, and I went to my parents' house to clarify something and I did not receive any validation. I received logic. Like, “You shouldn't feel that way,” or “They didn't mean to,” or “I'm sure she didn't understand what you were talking about.” And so, that did not feel very safe to me because here I was vulnerable, and then I was not only not validated, but I was *invalidated* for what I was actually experiencing.

And so, that's why it's so risky to be in that position. Many people would not choose to put themselves in such an exposed position because it feels fearful and the possibility of discomfort, and hurt, and invalidation is very high. So, people don't naturally gravitate to this risky, fearful position; they tend to stay clear from anything or anyone that would trigger them to be vulnerable. They would stay away from anything that would trigger them to feel hurt, or pain, or sadness. But without vulnerability, things will stay on the surface of the relationship. So in order to deepen a relationship, you have to be willing to risk. You have to be willing to be vulnerable in order to connect with another person.

And so, here's this weird dichotomy of, you want to connect but you don't want to get hurt, and the only way to connect is to be vulnerable. And when you're vulnerable, you could get hurt. It's really frightening for us as humans. The relationship will forego emotional intimacy and connection because one or the other of you does not know how to be emotionally vulnerable and doesn't know how to validate the other person.

So, therefore, the person who is unwilling or incapable of risking emotionally and being vulnerable is not emotionally available to connect to, which is really sad because you want to connect, but if I get vulnerable and the other person's not vulnerable with me or doesn't know how to validate, there's no way for me to connect with that person because what they're saying is, “I don't get where you are.”

So, when I went to my parents after my feelings were hurt and my father did not validate me, I didn't feel heard, I didn't feel seen, I didn't feel like he understood why I was upset and why my feelings were hurt—he didn't get it. He went to a very rational position and then told me to *not feel bad*, to give some kind of logical explanation for why I was feeling the way that I was and that it was wrong. So, it was a very risky position for me, and unfortunately, he wasn't available to connect with me.

So, validating requires empathy and being vulnerable requires risk. Let me say that again. Validation requires empathy. To validate means you have to feel for the other person. Not sympathy, but empathy.

Now, I just got done saying that you could validate and not be vulnerable—and you can. But if you want connection, you *must* feel for the other person, you must be empathic with them. And being vulnerable requires you to risk. I can't be exposed without having some kind of emotional risk.

And so, these characteristics make real connection possible. When we're willing to risk and be vulnerable, *then* we're open to being understood, seen and heard, because we bring our vulnerabilities to the surface and show them to our relationships, so that our relationships can understand us.

Then, the people who are available emotionally can validate me and have empathy for me in that vulnerable spot. And so, when they're available and I'm available emotionally, we switch roles back and forth, validating, risking, and empathizing with each other, which draws me closer to them and them to me.

So, the validation and empathy creates emotional safety, which with time and consistency creates trust. It is the most beautiful cycle—that cycle of connecting—and that is the only way to do it. And so, what does that have to do with self-care?

Well, the only way to actually connect with another person, like true and genuine connection, is that you must be connected to self first. Now, there's lots of us in the world that feel very connected and we claim that we *are* connected. **And** here's the deal: if I don't know how to love self and care for self, then it is not a true connection, it's a pseudo connection. It feels like it, but it's a counterfeit because if I am not authentically connected to self, then I will have an agenda, and my agenda will contaminate my motives.

When I'm in authentic connection and love with myself, then I can offer myself to connect with other people and if they're not available, I don't take it personal. It's not an assault on me or an offense to me if they don't know how or don't want to connect with me. And that's how I know that I'm in true connection with myself is that I don't take things personal.

So, how do we learn how to connect and care for self? We learn through modeling—what we learned in our childhood. And whatever we learned in our childhood we will repeat in our adulthood. It's just the way it is. We go from birth to 18 and we wake up on our 18<sup>th</sup>

birthday and now all of a sudden, we're this adult, and nothing changes other than the sun rose and set. So, now I'm 18 years and 1 day older, and I'm 18 years and 2 days older, but my experience is not any different. What I know is what I've been taught. And so, I can be 27 and 3 days old and still be doing the same thing I learned in my childhood *if* I do not learn something different. And that's where education, that's where therapy, that's where coaching, that's where being around healthy people comes in, is that I need to be taught how to do this type of connection because I won't just figure it out on my own.

So many things keep us from connecting. A lot of it is just not being educated, and it's truly sad because there's so many people that want connection, that desire connection but they have no idea how to attain it or how to create it.

### **[00:23:45] Barriers to Connection**

So, here are some things that keep us from connecting:

- Undealt with trauma can keep us from connecting.
- I just talked about the inability or not knowing how to connect—just that in and of itself will keep us from connecting.
- Conflicts—going into drama conflicts. So, conflict, at the root of it, it's not a good or bad word, it's just kind of a neutral word. It's like, I have a conflict, which means I see something different than you see it. That's it. But I can see something different than you and call it a conflict *and* go into drama. And if I go into drama, then I will not be able to connect because drama suggests that you're responsible for me and I'm responsible for you. And if you want to have more understanding of what drama is, go listen to the drama podcast.
- Our shame.
- Our pride.
- The ability to hold resentments keeps us from connecting.
- Having control issues—like feeling out of control or being super controlling.
- Maybe I was taught that I didn't have permission to feel emotions, and so, if I can't feel emotions, or I don't know allow myself to feel emotions, or I was raised in a home where only certain people were allowed to have emotions, then I will have disconnected from myself because I have to be vulnerable. Remember, I have to be vulnerable, and I have to be emotionally honest, and I have to be responsible for my emotions. So, if I don't *feel* them, there's no way in the world to connect with myself. So, it's not that I don't have them, it's just that I've tucked them away someplace, and they're probably outside of my consciousness, but I've got to get access to them.

- Expectations. It's fine to have expectations for myself. However, when my expectations then move onto you, they cross over a line and say, *my expectations need to be your expectations and if you don't meet them, then somehow you don't love me, you don't care about me, I'm not enough, I'm unworthy.* That's when we disconnect or make it so that we can't connect.
- Our skewed perceptions and/or fear keeps us from connecting.

And so, there are several other ways. I would like you to think about what ways keep you from connecting back to yourself. What prohibits you from being emotionally honest and then being accountable for the things that you feel, the things that you think, and the choices that you make? What keeps you from doing that? Because that is how you create connection, is being responsible within your integrity—being able to be honest with your feelings and what you think. And then, also the choices that you make.

I mentioned before that there are two ways to connect. We all have physical bodies and inside those physical bodies is a soul. And so, we connect physically with ourselves, with or physical bodies, and we also connect emotionally or spiritually. When we feel emotional and spiritual connection, we feel open, we feel surrender, we feel compassion, we feel safe, we feel vulnerable.

The way that we connect with our physical bodies is that maybe we exercise, or we notice physical pain when it happens, it's like, "Oh I'm feeling something, I'm connected to it." Most of us have no problem recognizing when we're in physical pain.

I'm going to give an example of being connected emotionally and physically—it's actually connected and then not connected at the same time.

I took my son to Mexico last year. We were traveling around Mexico. We went down to Cabo San Lucas. And one of the days, we decided to go bungee jumping. I've been bungee jumping a couple of times, I did it when I was younger and it was fun. But here I am, I'm middle-aged and bungee jumping just didn't sound too fun—just physiologically I wasn't really excited about that kind of wear and tear and my body. And yet, I wanted to *connect* with my son physically and emotionally. I'm not suggesting that if I didn't bungee jump, we couldn't connect, but I wanted to go do something that he wanted to do.

And so, we went to this place, they picked us up in this rickety old van, we drove down this dirt road that had ruts in the road from the water and the rainstorms. The road became more and more—it was hard to see the outline of the road, so we were driving into the desert. And I'm becoming a little bit more concerned about the legitimacy of this place that we were going to.

So, we finally get there and we go into the office area and they basically have us sign our lives away. They hand us this paperwork and say, "Sign here at the bottom." Literally, it's like, "If you die, we're not responsible." I mean, I think it said that literally. And I'm like, "Oh." So, I say to them, "So, anybody die here?" (*Like they're really going to tell me the*

*Truth*). So, I'm trying to connect emotionally, let's get some honesty between you and I. They're like, "No, no, we've not had any problem." And they're telling me this in their broken English.

And so, I'm feeling very connected to my body at this point. And I'm like, *I am going to pay several hundred dollars to go throw myself off of a hanging gondola in the middle of two canyon walls.* So, I'm feeling **super** connected to my body, and I'm also feeling very connected to my emotions. I'm feeling fear, I'm feeling confusion, I'm feeling self-doubt. And I turn to my son say and I'm like, "Are you sure you want to do this?" He's like, "Yeah, yeah, let's do this!"

So, I swallow hard and I go get the gear on. I put on the harness and everything. And as they were suiting me up, I became more and more afraid, which meant I was very, very connected. And it wasn't just I was afraid just reactionary; I was thinking about, *okay, here we are in Mexico, there's no government system that's checking these ropes or these bungee cords for the elastic and seeing how old they are. Or any of that kind of stuff. And what if we just get ahold of a bungee cord that's hard one too many extensions on it and it snaps?* And so, I thinking about all these real possibilities. I feel like I was very, very connected.

We get all dressed up and we've got our harnesses on, and they walk us over to this canyon wall. I'm trying really hard to stay connected to myself and not just completely disconnect out of pure fear, but trying to weigh my fear and my rationale at the same time. I was going back and forth between my emotions and my logic, my emotions and my logic. And I said to my son, "Are you sure you want to do this?" He's like, "Yeah!" I'm like, "Okay."

So, we stand on the edge of this canyon wall and it's probably about 200 feet up in the air. This gondola is hanging between two canyons—there's a big huge cord (metal rope). And there's a gondola, like a little cage, that comes bouncing across the wire towards us. It had been weathered—let's just put it that way. It didn't look super-safe. And so, we both get in the gondola with two other people and the instructor or the cable car guy. And he speaks fairly good English, and we start going out into the canyon.

So, we leave the canyon wall and as we're moving towards the bungee tower which is suspended between these two canyon walls, the gondola stops about 20 feet outside the hanging platform. Again, it's suspended between these two canyon walls. And we all look at each other, and I am **super**-connected to myself, my emotions, and my thoughts. And the guy radios in in Spanish and says, "The car stopped." I speak a little bit of Spanish so I understood him. And so, the gentleman who was in the bungee platform had this pole. He reached out towards the cable car where all of us were and the gentleman who was riding with us in the cable car grabbed the pole and kind of inched us across the wire to the hanging platform between the two canyons.

By this time, I was very astute to my feelings, and I then said, "I am not going to do this." I pulled my son aside very calmly and said, "You know what? I don't want to do this. I'm trying not to control the situation, I am fine with you jumping. However, I'm not really

interested in doing this. I don't want to jar my body and I'm not feeling super-safe with the way this experience is going.” So, he’s like, “Okay.” So, I had already paid for my jump and so I asked the gentleman, I said, “Can he take my jump?” So, he could jump twice, and the guy said that’s fine.

I opted not to jump. My son gets all set up to go, and I'm talking to him like, “Listen.” And I'm trying to stay connected to myself and also to him. Here’s me being vulnerable with him. I said, “You do not have to do this. You don't have to do this to be cool. You don't have to do this to be tough. If you would like to back out, I am totally fine with that. There will be no problem on my end and I just don't want you to be harmed or injured. But at the same time, if you’d like to do it, I will support you. Just know that I will either be the best and the most rad mother in the world because I let you go bungee jumping, or I will be the stupidest most ridiculous mother in the world if you die.” He and I laughed and I said, “So it’s up to you what you want to do.”

He decided to go, and he went out on the platform and he was jumping by his ankles. He jumped I think about 200 feet. And so, he got on the platform and the guy said, “Okay, when I count down to one, then you're going to jump.” And he told him exactly what he needed to do. And so, my son’s standing out there and the guy said, “Three, two.” And my son grabbed his arm and said, “Wait a minute, wait a minute. I'm not ready, I'm not ready.” So, he backs up from the edge, and it showed me how connected he was. He was feeling his emotions, he’s like, “Okay, alright. I can't look down. It just scared me when I looked down.” The guy’s like, “Don't look down, just dive out. Dive towards the bridge”—there was a bridge in front of us—“like a Superman dive.”

And so, he gets up and he counts three, two and my son goes, “Wait a minute. I'm not ready. I'm not ready.” And so, he was very connected to what he was actually doing, that I am voluntarily throwing myself off of a 200-foot-high platform. I was validating him like, “Honey, you don't have to do this.” But at the same time, I was acknowledging his vulnerability. And so, between the two of us, we were staying connected with each other.

He eventually jumped, and he jumped off and he said he doesn't even remember jumping, or falling, or anything. But then, he did it a second time and he had no problem doing it the second time. The second time he actually remembered.

So, that’s an example—kind of a fun example—of staying connected to yourself physically and at the same time, emotionally.

I’ve already talked about the need to connect with self first in order to connect with others. Here’s the paradox. We have to stay connected to ourselves and be in honesty and responsibility in order to be open and vulnerable to connect.

So, here’s an example. This actually happened to me when I was 16. I went down to Mexico, and we lived right by the border of Nogales. And I went down with my mother—and I still don't know how I did this—but as we were walking around the town of Nogales,

this is back in the 80s, I said to my mother, “Do you have the keys?” And she said, “No, I don't have them.” And I'm like, “Really?” We couldn't find the car keys, so we walked back to the car and the car keys were hanging in the door. And we had been out shopping in Nogales for probably four or five hours. And those keys were just sitting there in broad daylight. It was just a miracle that no one stole the car.

And so, here's where connection comes in. Because I left the keys in the car, my mother could have gotten really upset with me and said, “I can't believe you did that, that was so irresponsible, what were you thinking, you're not going to drive again,” right? And I could disconnect from the experience because the honest thing was that yes, I did leave the keys in the car. And the accountable thing was that I needed to own that I left the keys in the car and stay humble about the fact that wow, it was just a blessing that the car wasn't ripped off. But when I disconnect, I go into anger, I go into resentment, I go into blame, I go into some kind of drama, I go into fear. Those are all disconnecting responses. Or, I could stay connected to myself and when she says, “Oh my gosh, I can't believe you left the keys in the car, you're so irresponsible”—she says the same things—I can say to her, “I know, I know, what a blessing that the car wasn't ripped off. I wasn't paying attention obviously, and I am so fortunate—*so fortunate*—that the car is still sitting here.”

By doing that, I stay connected to the Reality and I stay connected to myself, because I was willing to take responsibility for the Truth of the situation. And even though my mother may not have responded well—it probably would have been more loving and supportive to say, “Oh my gosh, that really scares me”—instead of getting angry with me. If she could have said something like, “Wow, we are so fortunate, what if this would happened, I'm so grateful that it didn't happen.” That would have been easier for me to stay connected. And sometimes, we have a hard time not going into drama with things and not following the other person into their drama. But when we do that, we will disconnect.

#### **[00:40:04] Questions From Listeners**

I have a couple of questions that people have.

*Why is it so difficult to stay connected to ourselves?*

Well, part of the reason is because many of us have not been taught how to do it. And so, we've been enabled unconsciously to live in a state of drama or not take responsibility. And it's not a super-conscious process that we've been taught that, but we have, we've been taught it. And so, we don't even really know how to connect, let alone stay connected to ourselves.

*What is the difference between self-care and avoidance?*

Self-care is all those things I just got done talking about: being able to see yourself physically, and emotionally, and spiritually, and being able to validate, and be vulnerable, and be honest, and accountable. That's all self-care and when you do that, you will connect to yourself. Avoidance is just that, it's I *avoid* talking responsibility, I *avoid* being honest

with myself, I *avoid* someone else's drama because it's really uncomfortable. I don't know how to be emotionally honest while someone's in drama maybe. If I want to stay in self-care and not avoid, but not be a part of someone's drama, I can do that without avoiding. I could say to my mother, "You know what, your upset is understandable, and it's really uncomfortable to hear you become so angry at me over a mistake I made. I mean, yes, I left the keys in the car and it is very fortunate that the car was not stolen *and* you getting angry and you saying in so many words that I was foolish, or supporting this feeling of thoughts that I don't know what I'm doing, is really hurtful. And so, I'm going to basically 'set a boundary' around you, and I'm not going to be willing to talk to you until you're able to talk to me in a way that's respectful."

Now, I don't know any 16-year-olds that could say something like that. However, as you become older, and more sophisticated, and practiced at taking care of yourself, you will learn how to talk that way about yourself and be able to protect yourself, boundary yourself from people who don't know how to care for themselves and therefore they project their lack of love or self-esteem onto you.

*Will you explain the importance of taking care of self first and how that relates to parenthood? It was modeled to me that it is selfish to take care of myself if someone else is in need. So, being a mom, it feels like there is no time left over for self-care, and I feel extremely guilty when I take time for myself.*

The first part of the question is *explain how to take care of self and how that relates to parenthood*. So, when you're a parent or let's just say when you have responsibilities, especially when you're a parent you have responsibilities to children. So, I was talking about modeling, if you are not willing to take care of yourself, then you will show a model for your children of not taking care of yourself, which then will translate into they don't take care of themselves. And though that may sound like "Oh, there's no way, if I just take care of them, they'll get how important they are and they'll take care of themselves." And the Truth is, is they won't. Do as I say not as I do - it's really the other way around. They will do what you do. They will not do what you say, they will do what you do.

And so, you get to model self-care for them. And if you will do that, then they will learn that they are important just as you teach them that you're important. And they will take time out for themselves to take care of themselves. And they will teach other people that it's good for me to take some time out. And it's good for me to hold my boundaries because I saw my parents model that for me.

And so, it is really easy to get overwhelmed as a parent and just lose yourself in those responsibilities. And you also are responsible to use your 24 hours that all of us have been given, and use it responsibly. And you've got to put yourself in there. That really is a choice for you. And possibly many people who are listening to this, they just think "There's no way, there's no way, there's no way." And the Truth is, there is a way. You just are not used to taking care of yourself and that's why it feels it's something that you're incapable of doing. However, it is very possible. And in order to start loving self, you have

to start caring for self. You're not just going to wake up one day feeling love for self; you have to honor yourself, value yourself, live in emotional honesty. And as you choose those kinds of choices, you will start taking care of self and thus loving oneself.

*What ways have you developed to practice self-care?*

Here are some things that I do. So, there's different areas of self-care. There's physically like I talked about. There's emotionally, socially, financially, nutritional, educational, sexually. Those are just a handful. Here are some things that I do that take care of myself spiritually and emotionally.

- I make boundaries for myself. And not only do I make boundaries, but I share those boundaries with other people. So, my relationships know what I think, know what I feel, know what I stand for. I share me with other people.
- Another thing I do for self-care spiritually and emotionally is that there's certain times of the week that I don't answer the phone. So, when I'm on the weekend, I have a really tight boundary around not taking phone calls, because I need the weekend to rejuvenate.
- I only place people around me—like in my inner circle, the intimate part of my relationships—that are nurturing or are validating, and who live in honesty. I don't want people in my life in that close circle that live in drama. It's too painful and I don't want to participate in that; I don't want that energy or that vibe around me.
- I do one-on-one time with people who are safe.
- I like singing. I spend some time, not a lot but some time, I have a little music box and I sit and I just sing to myself. It's very relaxing. It's very emotionally rejuvenating.
- I will journal.
- I mediate.
- I pray.
- Some of the physical things I do is exercise.
- I like keeping my space—wherever I'm at—clean and organized.
- Grooming is really important, taking care of your hair, your nails, your skin, your teeth, those kinds of things. Putting lotion on my skin.
- I also enjoy putting really nice-smelling scents in my house, so when I walk into my space, it smells good.
- Another thing I like to do physically is I like to drive with my convertible top down. I have enjoyed that for years. I've had several convertibles. Give me a car, I'll cut

the top of it off because I for some reason just really enjoy driving with the wind through my hair. It feels really free to me.

Hopefully, you are getting a sense of how important it is to connect with self first. It's not just important, it's necessary. In order to forge deep and close intimate bonds with other people, you must have a deep, close, intimate bond with self primarily. And as you do that, you will quite naturally want to share with another person.

That is all I have for this podcast, I hope that what you've heard has been helpful in some way, shape, or form. And if you have any questions that you would like me to answer, I really enjoy answering your questions, so go ahead and get on ConneXions Classroom Podcast and there's a space in there that says "Do you want Jodi to answer a podcast question?" And write that question down and I will answer it on up and coming podcasts.

So, between now and then, between now and next week, stay connected to yourself, nurture yourself, validate yourself, and just watch how much energy you have around loving oneself and thus being able to connect with other people.

Take care. I'll talk to you soon.

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