

Episode 66: Connecting Language-Perceptions

Jodi: Welcome to ConneXions Classroom Podcast. We are so excited to introduce to you the opportunity for you to join us in a classroom setting where you will be taught the principles of connection. For those who have already joined us on the podcasts, and for those of you who have not, you are now ready to step into an extensive, hands-on, all-star, classroom experience to better understand why you are experiencing and interpreting life the way that you do.

You will be introduced to the foundational principles of personal integrity which are: how to live with impeccable honesty, rigorous personal responsibility, humility, vulnerability, openness, willingness, transparency, and boundaries.

This is a 12-week intensive course that consists of meeting one time a week for two hours. You will be given six workbooks. In each workbook, instruction will be given to you on core concepts of how to live your life from a position of emotional honesty, Reality, Truth, boundaries, validation, being able to recognize your distortions, and how choice plays a central role in all of your experiences and emotional outcomes.

Some of the concepts covered inside the classroom include: what validation and vulnerability are and how to animate those principles in your life, how to live in Truth rather than distortion, how to recognize your distraction, 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.

Hundreds of people have participated already and have drastically transformed their lives by living and being in Truthful, emotionally honest relationships. They report experiences of personal empowerment, emotional and mental sophistication being introduced into their relationships.

So, now it's your turn to come and participate. This classroom experience will change the way you interact with yourself and others in powerful ways, giving you the tools and emotional sophistication to connect deeply inside yourself and invite others in your life to do the same.

Come and experience connection. Go to www.connexionsclassroom.com, and hit the "Go to the Academy" button and sign up.

I look forward to meeting you and connecting.

[00:02:48] "And what does THAT mean?"

Good morning and welcome to July 3rd 2016. I'm Jodi Hildebrandt, and you are with us here at ConneXions Classroom Podcast. Thank you for joining us.

We're going to talk about the power of words, and what words mean, and how words are the vehicle into helping me connect not only with myself, but with God / my Higher Power, and with you. And so, this podcast is entitled "What Does That Mean?"

Before we go there, I want to introduce the academy to you. The academy is an online, in-person classroom setting that we have created for anyone in the world who wants to gather more information or glean more information about how to live inside their personal integrity. So, personal integrity is learning how to impeccably honest, how to be rigorously responsible, and live a life where you are open, you are willing, you are humble, you are transparent with yourself and with other people.

And so, if the podcasts have touched you in some way, if you are someone who has shared these podcasts with others because you find them helpful, I **guarantee** you, you will want to come join us in this classroom experience because not only will you have access to me to answer questions you have, you'll have access to others. Others around the country, others around the world, and start learning about how they live their lives, and what their personal meanings are, and how they are practicing how to live these Principles of Truth. Because the thing that's constant about all of us is that we're all responsible to be honest with ourselves, no matter what culture, what clime you come from, we all are being asked to live inside of our integrity.

So, if you will go to www.connexionsclassroom.com, and click on the "Go to the Academy" button, and all the different dates and times will drop down, and choose one that works best for you. Like I said, there are some that are online, there are others that are in-person. So, if you have the ability to come in person, you live in Utah or someplace close and you want to travel, they are once a week for 12 weeks. They're two hours at a time. We would love to have you. I'd love to meet you.

[00:05:12] Principles of Connection

So, let's go back to the podcast. What does that mean...? What does that mean? Here at ConneXions Classroom we're all about teaching how to connect. Connection is what we're all seeking—the ability to connect. And one of the ways that we connect is through being able to communicate. Communication can be done verbally and non-verbally. So, what communication offers me is the ability to animate Principles of Connection. The ability to animate and engage those principles of connection. So, what exactly are the Principles of Connection? Well, we just talked about them.

Learning how to live inside of your integrity. You must be emotionally honest in order to connect with self, with God, with another person. You also must be accountable for the choices that you make and the outcomes of those choices. You need to accept and be willing to engage your 24/7 state of vulnerability, and inside that state of vulnerability learn how to validate.

Inside those principles are other subsets of principles such as boundaries, and recognizing your distortions, and being able to forgive, and all sorts of other principles. So, I have done numerous podcasts on the Principles of Connection. I would go and listen to those, so that you understand what connection really is, and that it is an outcome of living principles that are about living inside Truth.

So, communicating. We do that all the time. Most of us are doing most of our communication through verbal and non-verbal. Whether we are using verbal cues or non-verbal cues, we are all

communicating constantly. But what does our communication mean? Who can, or who gets to be responsible to interpret what we are intending for someone else to hear and know? Well, here's the answer. You ready? You are. You are responsible to help the other person know what **you** mean by what you say. We are completely responsible for me understanding me, and you are responsible for you to understand you.

Now, who's responsible for you understanding me? Or me understanding you? So, this is where we get into a huge issue, because if I don't know how to understand you, and you aren't getting curious about understanding me, this is where drama enters the picture. Right here. Drama gets introduced at this crossroads, and it's where we invite distortion to come in, and we begin to react to it unless we are educated. Educated on knowing that I'm always responsible for me. And me knowing that I can't know what you mean unless I ask you what you mean. Okay?

So, I need to have the education, that's why we're here talking this morning—this is my attempt to invite you to learn something that will help you better communicate, so that your communication can be full of emotional honesty and being accountable, so that your communication can invite you into connection, not only with yourself, but with another person.

I can't know what you mean unless I ask you. So, when do or will I know that I don't know what you mean? That's a question. When am I going to recognize that I'm actually not interpreting you correctly? When am I going to know that? What's going to cue me in that as you're talking I'm not just doing my own interpretation about what you mean? That's a tricky question, because a lot of us just, we listen and then we're like, "Yeah, I know what you're talking about." And the person might go, "Really? Tell me what I'm talking about." And then I tell them what I interpreted and they go, "Nope, that's not right."

Have you ever done that? It's really humbling to go, "Yeah, I got it." And they go, "What have you got? What is it that you're understanding?" So, you repeat it back and they go, "Nope, that's not right."

So, the answer to this tricky question is so simple, yet the animation of the answer is very difficult because it requires me being conscious, and it requires my willingness to be humble and realize that I can't and don't read minds, and I can't and don't **know** what people mean unless I ask them.

That requires me being humble, is to ask them.

So, what are my cues that I don't know what someone else means? Like, how am I going to know that? Because when I'm listening to somebody, the whole time I'm sitting there going, "Yep, yep, yep. Got it. Got it." I mean, there are times when I'm listening to somebody and they say something and I'm like, "Uh, I don't understand that." And I'll ask. But most of the time, it's like, "Yep, I got it. I got it."

So, if someone says, "Hey, I'll meet you down at the gas station in a few minutes." That is wide open for massive interpretation. First of all, what gas station? And "in a few minutes," what in the world does that mean? I've got to know what gas station you're talking about and what does "in a

few minutes” mean? But I don't ask you those questions, I just go, “Okay.” So, then I assume I know where the gas station is because it's the one that I really like that is a few minutes further away from my house but it's the one we *always* go to—I'm telling myself this story—and “in a few minutes” means about five.

So, I show up at my favorite gas station in five minutes and you're no place to be found. And after 10 minutes goes by, and 15 minutes goes by, I start getting a little testy. I start getting a little bit upset. And all of a sudden, I get a phone call from you or I call you and I say, “Hey, where are you?” And they say, “I'm at home.” And I say, “You said you'd meet me down at the gas station in a few minutes, or in five minutes.” And the person says, “I didn't say five minutes. I said a few minutes. And I meant about 30.”

And so, this is the invitation to go right into victim, persecutor, rescuer—drama.

Here's your answer to that simple question but very hard animated answer. Here's your answer: the *instant* you become aware that you are telling yourself a story about what they mean is the instant that you say, “When you say down at the gas station, what gas station are you talking about?” And they go, “Oh, the one that's just right down the corner.” And you say, “The one that we never go to?” And they go, “Yeah, that one.”

“Well, why would you go to that gas station? We like going to the other gas station?”

“Yeah, I know. I do like going to the other gas station. They've got the crushed ice that I like. But this will be much faster, so I just wanted to go down to the one on the corner.”

“Oh,” I say to myself, “I would have totally missed that.”

So, the second—the instant—you become aware that you are telling yourself a story about what the other person means is the instant that you gain clarification. And you say something like this, “So, help me understand what you mean.” Or, “What does that mean?” Or, “When I heard you say *the gas station* and *in a few minutes*, explain to me what gas station and what a few minutes means.” And the person goes, “You bet. What I mean by that is the one on the corner and in 20 minutes.”

So, you are needing specificity. All the time, we are needing it, because what is not specific we, because we are so good at filling in the storyline, we will tell ourselves a big, fat, juicy story. And we will absolutely go with it, and say, “This is the Truth.”

So, here's an example. This is me. I say, “I can't believe you did that.” And then you start to being to interpret what *that* means. I can't believe you did *that*. And you start interpreting, you start putting meaning onto *that* and what *that* means. And what *did* means. I can't believe you *did that*. Instead of asking for clarification from me and saying, “Help me understand what you mean by *I can't believe you did that*,” I just start telling myself a story about what “I can't believe you did that” means. And what I need to do is I need to stop and say, “When you say *I can't believe you did that*, what exactly do you mean by that?”

Or here's another example: I say, "I'm tired of this." And you say, "Help me understand what *this* means."

Or maybe you say, not asking for clarification of *I'm tired of this*, you say, "Well, I'm tired of you." And you just react, you react to my statement of *I'm tired of this*, and you react in a way that goes right into drama, and you go into victim-persecutor and say, "Well, I'm tired of you." Instead of getting curious and saying, "So, when you say *you're tired*, what exactly does that mean? And when you say *of this*, what does that mean?"

[00:15:35] Common Statements

Now, I'm just going to read a bunch of statements that most of us use quite often. And I want you to think about, as I read these statements, how often you either use these statements or you hear these statements made, and you go into drama around these statements. And if you don't know what drama is, please listen to podcasts 26 and 27, and it will cue you in to what drama is.

So, either you have said this or someone has said this to you. And how you respond/react to what these statements mean.

Someone says, or I say, "It slipped my mind."

Or, "I'm afraid."

Or, "I didn't remember."

Or, "I'll get right on it."

Or, I found myself being defensive.

Or, "I'll get it done."

Or, "I can't do it."

Or, "It just wasn't working out for me."

Or, "I found it difficult to do it."

Or, "You're always on me."

Or, "Something came over me."

Or, "They owed me because of _____."

Or, "I should not have to."

Or, "It's never right."

Or, "I can't stand this."

Or, "I'll never be enough."

Or, "Don't tell me what to do."

Or, "I'm tired."

Or, "You don't understand me."

Or, "They left me out *again*."

Or, "I'm always last."

So, those kinds of statements are very ambiguous, if you haven't noticed. And it's wide open for all sorts of interpretation, and so it's our responsibility when we're speaking this way, to give more specificity, more clarity around what it is we're saying. However, for many of us, we speak in these kinds of dramatic ways. And so, if I'm not clarifying what I mean, then it is your responsibility as the listener to invite me to clarify what I mean, so that you as the listener don't react to what you think I mean by what I say. That's a lot of responsibility, it's a lot of consciousness.

So, any statement that is not communicated with much specificity from one person towards another person can be misunderstood / misinterpreted by the other. Especially if I myself don't clearly understand what I mean by what I said. I am responsible to be clear first. I must know what the meaning is of what I've said, so when someone else needs or asks for clarification, I can be right there to share and offer the meaning to them. It is my responsibility to be as clear as I can when I'm communicating, and it's also my responsibility to ask questions and become curious of others when they are communicating with me.

So I can place their meaning on their words, and not my own.

Inaccurate communication has taken place if I'm placing my meaning on someone else's words, and then I walk away believing that I'm understanding them, and all I've done is trick, and deceive, and manipulate myself into believing that I *know* what they mean. Because I just fill in the blanks.

So, don't do that. Don't do that. It's so tempting to do it—don't do it. Don't make up stories in your mind about what other people mean. If you do that, you are not truly interested in knowing them. If that's what you're going to do, is just listen to their words and then put your own meaning, you really aren't saying, "I want to know you, I want to understand you." You are only interested in controlling your interpretation of them. And then, you walk away and call that love, or intimacy, or understanding them, or some other type of illusion of connection.

So, if you do that, none of that is connection because all you're "connecting" to is your own made up storyline of them in your own head. It's like you ask them, "How are you feeling?" Or, "What do you think about that?" And then, you don't wait for their answer. Instead, you begin telling yourself what they think and what they feel. And then, you say, "Oh, I understand you." It's kind of crazy, it's very ridiculous. And all of us do it to ourselves and to others.

So, we need to practice being able to listen to each other, and the second—the instant—we don't understand something that the person said, and we can hear ourselves interpreting what they said or what they mean, stop yourself right there and ask. I don't know what they mean, so I need to

ask them for what they mean. It's their meaning you want if you want to understand them. Their meaning, not yours. Get their meaning. Understand their meaning. Ask them for their meaning, get curious about their meaning.

If you choose not to be curious with another when they're sharing themselves with you, and being to interpret their words to mean your words, you will enter into drama. You'll enter into drama. If you're doing that, you will go right into drama. Again, podcasts 26 and 27. There's some other ones on drama as well but those are the two main ones. Go listen to those podcasts and learn about drama because if you're going to choose to not be curious about what somebody else is saying to you, and you put your words onto what they mean, then you're going into drama.

The second you begin to place your meaning on someone else's meaning, and it is not the accurate meaning of them, and you don't correct your meaning because it is not your meaning that is their meaning, you will be telling yourself a deception about them and their story that they are attempting to share with you, and you will be in drama. Now, I'd rewind what I just said and I'd listen to it again because that's very important. You need to make sure that you understand their meaning, not yours. If you don't do that, you will go into drama, and drama is about me telling myself something that doesn't have Truth in it, and yet going with it, reacting to it, believing that that's the storyline.

Many times, I don't even realize that I'm in drama, that I'm in distortion because I won't stop. I *don't* stop and ask questions to gather correct information. I don't stop and ask myself, "Is that really what they mean? Is that really the Truth?" Drama is the absence of understanding what people mean.

Drama is the absence of understanding what people mean. *Not* going into drama is about me understanding, hearing you and what you mean. Not about me hearing **me** tell **me** about what you mean.

Let me say that again. Not going into drama is about me understanding and hearing you and what you mean. It's not about me hearing me telling me about what you mean.

So, seek to understand before being understood. Hear, listen, repeat, ask questions, gain clarification. What you hear is about them, not you. Ask them, "And what does that mean?" Ask them that, *what does that mean?* If you're willing to start asking those kinds of questions, one, you won't voluntarily walk into drama and two, you will have the ability to actually start connecting with other people.

I want to read some statements, and I want you to just imagine what this means for you. So, if you've said these statements, I want you to think *and that means...* Okay?

If I said, "I can't live without you." What does that mean to you? What does that mean to you?

If you were to say, "You make me feel really smart." What does that mean to you?

Go to the emotion of those statements and either recognize the Truth of that statement or the distortion of that statement, because everything that we say is either in Truth or it's in distortion.

So, if I say to you, “You don't need to be sad.” What do I mean by that? What do I mean by that? Is that statement about me trying to control you? You don't know. You don't know; all you know is that I say, “You don't need to be sad.” But if you interpret that as, “Oh, I guess I don't. I guess I'm *wrong*.” Then, you know, you're going into drama with me. you need to say to me, “Jodi, what do you mean by *I don't need to be sad*?” And I might say, “Well, you don't need to be sad because when you're sad, it really is uncomfortable for me, so don't be sad.”

So, that clearly is *my* distortion. It's my distortion, not yours.

So, instead of reacting to what someone's saying to you, get curious about what they *mean* by what they're saying to you. So, if you say, “You think you know more than me.” I'm going to say to you, “Help me understand what you mean by, *I think I know more than you*. What does that mean to you?”

And I'm going to listen for your emotion, and I'm going to listen for either the Truth in your definition or the distortion in your definition. I'm not going to go into the Truth or the distortion—again, there's a lot of information that I've recorded over the past couple of years about Truth and distortion, so I would go study that and start learning how to recognize the difference between Truth and distortion. And, just know that when you hear yourself speak and you hear somebody else speak, you are responsible to know what you mean and you are responsible to get curious about what they mean. And according to what someone means, it's either going to be in the Truth or it's going to have some kind of distortion in it. It might have some Truth and then mixed in with distortion or vice versa.

For Example:

So, if I say, “I can do whatever I want.” And someone goes, “What does that mean?” It means that I'm scared and I feel inadequate, that's what that means. *I can do whatever I want*. It's like wow, that's an interesting thing to mean, because I would never have guessed that, that that's what that means, because me saying, *I can do whatever I want* does not sound like, *I'm scared and inadequate*. I mean, it kind of sounds like I'm capable and nothing could stop me. But when I really get down to the core of it, it feels like I'm incapable.

And so, sometimes we say things but what we're really meaning is that I'm afraid, or I feel like I'm out of my league, or I'm going to be discovered, or I'm bad and unworthy. But that's not the words that come out of my mouth, and so it's very important that I start getting curious about what it is that I mean.

So, I'm going to read a couple of other statements to you, and I want you to listen to what the interpretation is.

I say to myself, “People are at my offices are idiots.” What that really means or what it becomes is, *I feel frustrated and overwhelmed*. So, *people at my office are idiots*, if I were to say that to you, my guess is you'd have a very different interpretation for what that means than what my core meaning really was. And so, if no one says, “What does that mean, Jodi, *people at your office are idiots*?” If no one gets curious about that with me, then they just go with it, like, “Oh, I guess they are idiots.” Instead of saying, “What does it mean that people are idiots at your office?”

And so, when someone asks me that question, I start reflecting and I start saying things like, “I had a co-worker whom I felt undermined me the other day right in front of my boss, and I felt really upset and really frustrated. And I was doing the best I knew how, and then my boss came to me and told me that I wasn’t showing up to the job—that he had an expectation I would show up differently and I wasn’t meeting that expectation. So, now I just feel frustrated and overwhelmed.” It’s like wow, look at that. The comment of *people at my office are idiots* turned into this storyline behind that statement that really meant I feel afraid, and I feel scared, and I feel frustrated, and I feel overwhelmed. So, there’s emotion that’s driving our statements.

Here’s another one. *My husband is thoughtless.* If I don’t get curious when someone says that, or if someone doesn’t get curious when I say that, then they’ll never understand that me saying, “My husband is thoughtless,” really means I feel neglected and alone.

So, we need to become curious, not only for ourselves, but for other people, to know what our interpretations are, and to know what other people mean by what they say.

I’m going to share a few more of these with you and I want you just to *think*. If you were to say the following: *I can do whatever I want*, what does that become? What does that mean, “I can do whatever I want?” If you were to say that, what might you mean by that?

Here’s another one. *I can’t stand this anymore.* What does that mean? *I can’t stand this anymore.* If I heard you say that, I would come to you and say, “Wow, that sounds like you feel pretty overwhelmed. You feel pretty desperate, that you can’t stand this anymore. What’s behind that? What does that mean to you?” And I’m going to be listening for what the Truth is behind that. I’m going to be listening for the emotions of what’s behind that.

[00:31:13] Steps to Understand Meaning

So, here I’m going to give you a few steps of what you can go through to understand your own meaning and to understand someone else’s meaning.

To continue to understand what people say—and more importantly, what they mean—you must become curious. So, that’s what we’ve been talking about this whole time. Ask questions. Ask people, “Help me understand what do you mean by *I can’t stand this anymore?* What do you mean by that?”

“Help me understand, when you say, *I’m a loser*, what does that mean?”

“Help me understand when you say, *No one respects me*—I want to know what that means.”

The second step is, identify the person’s feelings and inside those feelings the actual things that are triggering them. so, when I hear, *I can’t stand this anymore*, or *I’m a loser*, or *no one respects me*, I’m going to 1) get curious, and then I’m going to 2) try to identify the person’s feelings and also their triggers. Like, what is triggering them?

So, if the boss walked into your office and said, “I had expectations and you aren’t showing up the way that I expected.” Okay, that makes sense, what’s triggering them? The boss coming into their

office and saying, “Hey, you're not showing up the way that you should.” That’s what the person heard. And so, all of a sudden they feel inadequate, they feel overwhelmed.

Step three, I'm going to validate them. I'm going to hear that emotion and I'm going to understand that trigger, and I'm going to validate them. Remember, validation is not about agreeing with the behavior or agreeing with their conclusion; it’s about understanding their emotion and how they got there.

So, the first thing I do is I get curious, I ask them to help me understand. And then the second thing is, I identify their feelings and their triggers. And then, the third step is, I validate those feelings and triggers. Again, you don't have to agree with them, you don't have to agree with their assessment of *I'm inadequate*, and *I'm alone*, and *I'm overwhelmed*, and *I'm bad and unworthy*. You don't have to agree with that, you just need to understand why *they are feeling* that way. And you can, you can understand that. It’s very reasonable why somebody would feel that way.

Number four, you then support them to identify their false beliefs—identify their distorted thoughts. So, if they are in a state of, I feel neglected, and alone, I feel frustrated and overwhelmed, I feel bad and unworthy—if you can identify that their experience is now being deciphered or interpreted as *my husband is thoughtless* and all of a sudden I end up being neglected and alone, you can hear there’s distortion in there. And so, they need help. They need help, if they're willing—you need to ask them and make sure they're okay with this—but if they say they’d like some help then help them find their distorted thoughts and their false beliefs.

Step number five: once you do that, then you can invite them back into the Truth by supporting them to reinterpret their distorted thoughts back into the Reality. And this is where you teach them how to do Truth Declarations. There’s a podcast in the 70’s, I think it’s like 72 or 73, that is all about Truth Declarations. There are also two podcasts about this process, it’s called the RAISE process—this process that I just talked about, there’s two podcasts called RAISE where I went through that five-step process.

The first one is get curious,

Second step is identify their feelings and triggers.

Third step is validate them.

Fourth step is to support them to identify their distortions and false beliefs.

And then, the fifth step is to reframe back into the Truth.

Those are called Truth Declarations.

That is each of our responsibility, not only to ourselves, but also to our relationships. Especially our relationships where we want intimacy, we want closeness. Because oftentimes, when I'm in distortion and I am in my false beliefs and I'm truly believing what it is that I'm hearing as though it is the Truth, I don't know how to interpret anything differently, so I need some help. Only then will I truly be able to understand another person in the way they truly need to be understood—if I'm

willing to get curious to identify my own feelings and my own triggers. Or, if I'm supporting someone else, to identify theirs. To validate myself or someone else. To then support myself to identify what my distortions are and what my false beliefs are (or someone else's distortions). And then, to reframe them back into Truth. Sometimes, I can do that on my own, sometimes I need additional help. But that is the process for truly understanding what another person means. And not only another person, but truly understanding what *you* mean. It is our responsibility as a human being to understand that for ourselves, and it is our gift that we give to another, to understand that in someone else.

Stay connected and we will talk soon.

[ENDS]