

Episode 52:

Validation & Vulnerability

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 of you who have already joined us on the podcasts, and for those for 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 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 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.

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 and 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 other in your life to do the same.

Come and experience connection. Go to www.connexionsclassroom.com, and hit the "Go to Academy" button and sign up. I look forward to meeting you and connecting.

[00:02:48]

Good morning and welcome to ConneXions Classroom Podcast for the week of March 28, 2015. So glad you're joining us this morning. We're going to be talking today on the podcast about validation—the power of [validation](#)—and [vulnerability](#). I have a handful of questions from our listeners that I'm going to answer, so glad you're with us and let's jump right in.

The first question is *why is seeking validation so difficult?* The second part to that question is *how do I overcome the obstacles that make it difficult?* So, why is seeking validation so difficult?

Let's discuss what validation is. When I am validating or seeking validation, one is I'm looking to do for another versus I'm wanting to receive from another. So, when I seek for validation, I am saying I am “in need” of some connection, some safety, some ability for someone to see me, that they will acknowledge the situation I'm in, or acknowledge how I'm feeling in the situation. Any kind of awareness that I am physically present, emotionally present—it allows me to feel like I have some kind of connection with that person when I am validated by them.

They are in the act of validating and I am the in the act of seeking that person's validation. So, why is seeking validation so difficult? Part of the reasons it's difficult is because I feel **vulnerable**—and it's typically when I feel vulnerable, which is a lot of the times during the course of the day, that I am more in need of validation than other times. So, when I feel like I'm afraid, or I feel not so sure of what I'm saying or doing, or I'm in a new situation, or things are difficult, or someone does something or says something and I feel awkward, or unaware or unsure of the outcome, or what I'm supposed to do. Or maybe I'm physically hurt or maybe I get emotionally hurt.

Those are some really big areas of why I would feel vulnerable. And when I am vulnerable which again is a lot of times during the day, I feel vulnerable in different capacities. And when I feel vulnerable, I will always seek for validation. I may not do it overtly, I may not even be conscious that I'm actually looking for validation. However, I will be searching for someone to acknowledge what I'm feeling, to acknowledge that I'm present, to acknowledge that I'm struggling, to acknowledge that maybe I feel fear, or confusion, or grief, or sadness. Or maybe to acknowledge that I'm cheerful, or joyful, or happy, or I feel elated. Someone who recognizes that I'm in this very risky spot where I don't feel steady or stable, and I'm looking for someone to validate me.

And so that's why it's difficult. Because the human species does not like acknowledging they're vulnerable. Now, that goes right into this concept of control. The reason why so many of us

show up as controlling or we act like we're controllers (there's a podcast on controlling behaviors, I encourage you to listen to that if you don't know what that means)—

The reason so many of us show up in controlling ways is because we're afraid to be vulnerable. However, the human condition *is* that we **are** in a state of being out of control. The only things that we can control are our thoughts, our feelings, and our choices. Thoughts, feelings, choices—that's it. Thoughts, feelings, our behaviors, our choices. Everything else we're out of control with. We're out of control with our heartbeat, whether our body gets sick or not. There's not a whole lot that we can control.

And so, because that is The Truth, we also live in a state of vulnerability because we are out of control with so many things in our life, we are vulnerable to, like I said, illness, or another person's behaviors, or another person's perceptions, or I'm vulnerable to my own fears, or my own insecurities, I'm vulnerable to whether people like me or not, and so my whole goal is to learn to eradicate shame and as I do so, I won't feel as vulnerable in my life because I won't take so many things personal.

And as I learn to not take life, and people, and my thoughts, and the experiences that express themselves in my life, personal—as I learn not to do that—I won't feel so vulnerable. I still will **be** vulnerable as far as I don't have control over my experiences, but I won't **feel** vulnerable because I'll feel connected to whatever happens, I'll accept. Or I'll feel stable as far as I am willing to acknowledge that this experience is playing itself out and I will surrender to its outcomes. And as I learn how to do that and become really skilled at going into that position, I won't—again—feel so vulnerable.

Now, will I still need to be validated? Yes, I will need to be validated. However, I won't feel *needy* of the validation. I might be able to validate myself and that could be substantial, that could be something that is adequate for me. Can I live a life where I am the only one that validates me? Yeah, I guess I could do that, but I really need other people around me and I need other people to acknowledge me just so I can be connected socially. But I won't feel needy.

So, there's a lot of really core principles I just taught there in that little segment about the power of vulnerability, the power of validation, why we feel vulnerable because we feel out of control, what we can control and what we can't, and how shame plays into all of that.

So, seeking validation is difficult because for the majority of us, we don't like to be vulnerable even though it is a state of our being. And so, until we learn that vulnerability is an okay place to go, and that it's human, and that it is a situation that will continue to be a part of the human

experience, I will find validation difficult to seek after because I don't want to acknowledge my vulnerability.

The second part to that question is *how do I overcome the obstacles that make it difficult?* I just answered that. I overcome them addressing my shame and coming into the Truth that my shame is not the Reality of who I am. And if you don't know what shame means, please go and listen to the other podcasts on faulty core beliefs. They're called "The Faulties" and on shame, the destructive power of shame, and it will explain in great detail what shame is.

So, I overcome the obstacles that make seeking validation difficult by 1) healing my shame, and then 2) coming to the Truth and recognizing the Truth that vulnerability is a state of the human experience and I must accept and acknowledge that and stop trying to control that. As I do that, I will not feel like I'm afraid to seek for validation.

Another question. *What is the best way to rebuild trust and safety in a relationship?* This ties right into vulnerability and validation, believe it or not. *What is the best way to rebuild trust in a relationship?*

Well, the first thing that needs to happen is that I need to [feel safe](#). So, I can't just go to trust; I have to feel like I'm safe in the relationship. Again, there's another podcast on the power of an emotionally honest relationship, and so I would encourage you to go listen to that one. Let me just address this on the periphery of how do you create safety?

Well, you have to have first be able to be emotionally honest with yourself and the other person. You also have to be willing to be rigorously responsible for, again, your own choices, your own feelings, your own thoughts, so that when the person you're interacting with thinks of you they know that you're consistent, they know that you're stable, they know what to expect from you, they know your temperament, they know that you will always be honest with them, they are aware that you will be culpable for your own decisions and how those decisions are affecting you and anyone else. And so, they feel safe in the dynamic with you.

So, before trust can be established, you must be in a dynamic where there is safety. Safety needs to go on for an extended period of time, and that's up to you. I mean, you might need a month of safety, you might need a year of safety depending on what's gone on in the dynamic. If trust has been obliterated or there's been a lot of lying going on, you might need months, and months, and months of consistent, safe behavior before you can rebuild trust.

Trust is something that will just come in the relationship. You won't have to say *okay, now today I'm going to start trusting you*. You will just start feeling comfortable because there has been so

much consistency around the way that they empathize or the way that they're vulnerable. So, instead of them not feeling their emotions, they're willing to be vulnerable and show that they're human, and that they make mistakes, and that they need help, and that they are susceptible to situations, and that they're tender-hearted, and that they can cry, or they can acknowledge that someone is hurting. Those are all indicators of emotional safety.

You probably heard me say just a minute ago that there's vulnerability and validation in there. So, when they show up vulnerable, they also accept validation from the people that are around them. They also recognize when someone else is vulnerable, and they give validation. And so, as that happens, then you as the person on the other side of the dynamic start feeling safe with them and so therefore you begin to trust them.

Now, I would encourage you that as you work in this relationship, that you really pay attention to the consistency of the person, because you don't want to just handover your trust to someone that has not proven that they're trustworthy. So, again, depending on the dynamic, depending on how well you've known them, depending on the level of dishonesty that's been in the relationship, and how long it's gone on, and what they were dishonest about, and how they treated you, and the kind of abuse that went on if that has happened, you need to make sure that you have a considerable amount of time where you can start relaxing with them, and feel comfortable with them, and not have to wonder, like, *huh, is this really real or is that something that's in compliance?* That's how you rebuild trust in a relationship.

Next question. This person is starting to feel stuck on how to maintain safety and boundaries with unhealthy individuals while also validating and showing empathy. Vulnerability for them seems linked to trust of the other person, which is true. However, when individuals are unsafe or unhealthy, I'm not sure how to protect myself and remain emotionally safe while still being vulnerable enough to really hear and empathize with their emotions. They're wondering if that has something to do with being centered. So, the question is *what would it mean, or what would it look like, or feel like to be centered while you're associating with unsafe people?*

Great question. Here's this person trying to be vulnerable, can you hear that? *How can I be vulnerable, and validate, and empathize when I'm around people who are not safe?* So, we just talked about what safety and looks like. And this person has acknowledged that people that they're interacting with—their neighbors, their coworkers, their family members, their friends, whoever it may be—they're not safe, and so how do I stay in a position to risk and be vulnerable as I interact with them? And here's what you do.

It's very important that you establish really good boundaries—we have a podcast that talks all about boundaries—because you are going to need to have boundaries arounds you as you stay

vulnerable with these people. Now, *vulnerable* does not mean that you disclose everything about your life. Vulnerable with boundaries means that you know what to share, how much to share, why you're sharing, and your boundaries are keeping you safe.

For example, if I have someone in my life who gossips, that would mean that they're not emotionally safe. So I'm not going to share with them how I had a really scary dream last night and I woke up crying because I was so afraid. That would be a very vulnerable thing to share with someone and because this person doesn't know how to be empathic, or validating, or I can't trust that they won't go share it with all these people, I need to put a boundary around myself that when I interact with Jean, I don't share things that are of a significant vulnerable nature—something that could be used to harm me.

But I might share how my dog peed on the carpet the other day and how that was really frustrating for me. It's still a vulnerable situation but it's not something that is emotionally vulnerable to me. It put me out when the dog peed on the carpet and it was kind of a bother. However, it wasn't emotionally vulnerable.

So, that's how you stay safe when you're associating with people who are unsafe. It's how you stay empathic, it's how you stay vulnerable when people are not conscious about their level of unsafety. And I say unconscious because so many people do not know that they're not safe and they don't understand why you're not sharing with them, because they want you to share and they don't get why they're not getting the whole scoop from you, and sometimes they feel kind of threatened like, “You told So-and-so more than you told me.” It's like, I guess you could say that I don't really safe with you.

But usually, people can tell that you're not really willing to share a lot of emotional things, and usually when someone is shut down emotionally, they really aren't interested in you sharing a bunch of emotional things or being that vulnerable with them

Next question. *How do I get a child to open up, and share, and be willing to be vulnerable? My child's a stuffer like me.*

So, the fact that this person said, “My child is a stuffer like I am,” my first thought is that you are teaching your child to stuff, because children naturally don't stuff—they have to be taught to not speak, or to not feel, or to ignore what they think and feel. Children are naturally quite open but they will be taught through modeling or some kind of of fear experience to not speak. So, how do I get my child to open up, and share, and be willing to be vulnerable?

The best thing you can do for your child is for you to learn how to do it yourself. When you are willing to be vulnerable, and model vulnerability, and show your children, or show your child that it can be safe, and you can have boundaries, and you can be responsible for yourself, and you don't have to share everything that's going on in your life, and that you can be selective, and that it can be a positive experience, and it can be positive not only for you but for the person you're sharing with, and all these positive around being vulnerable, they will begin to be vulnerable. They just will.

Now, if you have children that are teenagers and you have not taught them how to do that for whatever reason—you didn't know how, or you had bad experiences with being vulnerability or whatever—chances are that they're probably not going to just all of a sudden change because you start changing, because they've had 12, 14, 16 years of doing it one way and now they have pretty much a mind of their own and you modeling for them, though it will feel good to them, they more than likely will not just change their behavior because you're modeling. But if you can start them when they're little, 4, 5, 6, right in there, if you can start them that young, I mean, don't *not* model for them at any age—model at whatever age your kids are—but just don't have the expectation that they're going to change because they probably won't the older that they get.

Now, as you keep modeling for them, like I said, they're going to feel that. It's going to feel good to them, they're going to want to engage in that again. And through their teenage or young adulthood years, they are more likely to become a validator, and be willing to be vulnerable, and open up, and be emotionally honest more so than if you don't model that for them

It is not a popular thing to do in our world, to be vulnerable. A lot of people are really afraid to be vulnerable because people can be really aggressive or inadvertently harm them, and so it's not something as you get older that just comes natural. And the Truth is, is that as you keep practicing it and you put yourself around people who know how to be vulnerable and how to validate, it will feel so natural and so normal to you that you will want to continue to put people around you that know how to do this. It is unbelievable how hungry we become for people to be vulnerable with us and for people to validate us. And you will start seeking out people who actually know how to do that.

That's you teach your children, is you model it, you become it. When I grew up, I'd hear the axiom "Do as I say, not as I do," right? Well, people don't do what you say, they're going to do what you do. And so I would encourage you again to learn how to be vulnerable and learn how to validate. It is a healing skill.

Last question. *How does validation change when you take it to a social media platform? Can there ever be too much validation or validation for unhealthy behaviors? I think people turn to*

social media these days to be validated even when they should be held accountable instead. How does the new social dynamic change the nature of validation?

That's a great question. So, how does validation change when you take it to social media platforms? Well, there are millions of people on social media platforms and the only person that knows why they're doing the things they're doing is the individual.

So, if I get on a social media platform, I am responsible to be accountable to my level of vulnerability. If I get on a worldwide social media site and I start sharing my most vulnerable, private pieces of information, that is really indicative of me who has no boundaries, or me who is asking for someone to see me, like please see me, I'm starving for someone to see me. Or maybe I get on, I start acting really shocking, you know, use outrageous language or start behaving in ways that are really inappropriate, I'm saying *please see me* and I'm wanting someone to validate me.

The other question is can there be too much validation? Well, no, there really is no such thing as too much validation. However, validation does not mean you agree with the behavior, so when you validate, you're saying to the person, "I can see you. It sounds like you are hurting, or you're uncomfortable, or this was really difficult for you," or "Wow, I can't believe that you're struggling, or I'm so sorry that you're struggling." I mean, any kind of language that indicates that you see the person and you're acknowledging their behavior, you're acknowledging their feelings, but it doesn't necessarily mean I agree with them. So, it's like wow, you're really courageous to say that. You might think they're also really foolish to say that on social media, but you're indicating that that took a lot of courage to say that. Or maybe you say, "I'm wondering if you're feeling afraid as to why you said that."

So, any kind of statement or curious question that allows the person to realize that you are paying attention and that you see that they're there. So, you can't ever do that too much to a person. You're not responsible because your validation of what it's doing to them—like if I validate them too much, then they're going to be really self-centered. They are responsible for what they do with the validation, not you. Your job is to acknowledge them.

The next part of the question is, is validation for unhealthy behaviors—can there be too much validation even for unhealthy behaviors? I think I already answered that, that no, just because somebody's behaving in an inappropriate way or an unhealthy way does not mean that you don't validate them because you're not agreeing with the behaviors. You're validating that that person is feeling something, experiencing something and you want them to know that you see it, that you're aware of it.

And so, how does the social dynamic change the nature of validation? It really doesn't have to change it other than it's much more powerful to have someone standing in front of you or to have a voice on the phone so you can hear them live validate you. It doesn't have the same potency when somebody does it over social media. I mean, it still feels good and it still has some power. However, you don't get the other person and you getting together, that non-verbal interaction, you don't get any of that. And so, it is much more powerful to have someone in person or a voice on the phone—that's the next ideal—rather than be on social media.

And I think this person has a point that social media for a lot of people has turned into *I'm really insecure and so please friend me, please acknowledge me, please give me attention, please say I'm important, please read my posts, please read my blogs, and that way I'll feel like I have some value.* Nobody knows if that's what's going on with the person but there's a lot of people on there that it sure appears that that's what they're trying to do, is to have someone acknowledge their value or their worth because they have a lot of shame.

Alright, so those are the questions I have for this morning, and again, if you have any questions of your own, feel free to get onto www.ConneXionsClassroom.com and goto the Podcast section of the website. There's a place right there that says, "Ask your questions." And so, put a question down and I will be more than happy to answer it on upcoming podcasts.

Have a great morning and the rest of your week, and we will connect with each other in a little while. Take care. Bye bye.

-

Thank you so much for listening to ConneXions Classroom Podcast. If this episode has been insightful or meaningful to you, don't forget to leave a comment on this episode's podcast page or like, share and tweet about it on social media.

Emotional honesty and personal responsibility are the only ways to create true connection inside your relationships and we need your help to share this vital message. Please sign up to be a part of our social media team. Go to www.connexionsclassroom.com/smteam and find out there how you can be a part of connecting.