

Radical Openness Handout 21.1

Enhancing Social Connectedness, Using Flexible Mind ALLOWS

- A** **Assess** your commitment to improve the relationship
- L** **Look** for concrete evidence that mistrust is justified
- L** **Loosen** your grip on past hurts and fears
- O** **Out** yourself by revealing inner feelings
- W** **Welcome** feedback and continue to dialogue

A *Assess whether you are committed to improving the relationship and are willing to let go of mistrust.*

Practice self-enquiry—ask yourself the following questions.

- Am I finding it hard to think about this relationship, question my point of view, or engage in self-enquiry about my feelings when it comes to this relationship? If yes or maybe, then what might this mean?
- Is there a part of me that believes it is important for the other person to acknowledge (or apologize) for a past grievance, and that is blocking my willingness to improve the relationship?
- What have I found useful or rewarding in the past about this relationship? What do I want from this other person?
- Would an improved relationship help me obtain an important goal or help me live by my values?
- What are the pros and cons of trusting this person? What are the pros and cons of mistrusting this person?

L *Look for concrete evidence that mistrust is justified.*

- **Look for Fixed Mind or Fatalistic Mind biases**—for example, quick dismissal of the importance of the relationship or decisions about possible trustworthiness (Fixed Mind) or feelings of hopelessness or thoughts saying, *Why bother trying? Nothing will ever improve our closeness or the relationship* (Fatalistic Mind).
- **Remember that old hurts and current mood can color how we perceive another person.** We tend to pay attention most to those things that confirm our beliefs, and ignore or dismiss information to the contrary (that is, our perceptions are subject to confirmation bias).
- **Open yourself up to the possibility of misperceiving the other person's intentions, beliefs, feelings, or thoughts.** Use self-enquiry by asking...
 - Is there an alternative explanation for their behavior? How might they describe their behavior?

- Do I find myself wanting to automatically explain or defend myself? If yes or maybe, then is it possible that I am not open to being truly fair-minded?
- Do I believe the other person must apologize or make amends before I would be willing to consider how I have contributed to the conflict?
- How open do I want to be in this situation with the person I will be interacting with? What might be holding me back?
- What is the worst thing that could happen if I expressed myself more openly?
- Am I discounting or minimizing positive things about the person or situation in order to punish them? Is it possible that I am not really giving them a chance? What am I afraid might happen if I were to momentarily drop my perspective?
- Do I believe that further self-examination or work on the relationship is unnecessary because I have already done everything possible?
- If someone else were watching the person's behavior, would he or she see it differently than me? If yes or maybe, then what might this mean?

L Loosen your grip on past hurts and fears.

- ✓ Ask: Even if it is true that the person has harmed me in the past, would it be helpful to repair the relationship?
- Just because you distrust someone, this does not automatically mean that they distrust you. He or she may not even know that you feel dislike or distrust; they may feel neutral, and/or they may even like you.
- Practice giving them the benefit of the doubt, and assume the person is doing the best they can to cope with life. Consider the possibility that the distrusted person *may* have benign or neutral intentions but is perhaps not very good at showing this.
- Remember times you thought negatively about someone and later realized you had misjudged the person.
- Remind yourself “Just because I think it, doesn’t mean it’s TRUE.” You might think you are seven feet tall, but this doesn’t make it so.
- Accept the fact that you can never truly know what another person is thinking.
- Use Flexible Mind Has HEART and forgiveness practices (see lesson 29) to let go of past hurts before interacting with the person. Remember, letting go of distrust does not mean agreement.

O Out yourself by revealing inner feelings.

- Outing yourself means taking responsibility for your perceptions by revealing your inner experience to another person.
- Outing yourself enhances relationships because it models humility and willingness to learn from what the world has to offer.
- Use words to describe what you are feeling to the other person; allow your facial expression to go with the feelings.

- Remember, open expression of emotion is contagious and enhances relationships.
- Use “I” statements when revealing inner experience, to signal that you are taking responsibility for your emotions, thoughts, and beliefs rather than blaming the other person. Instead of saying, “You make me annoyed when you...,” practice saying, “I feel annoyed when you...”
- Use the Awareness Continuum to describe your inner experience and perceptions of the other person. Begin by saying, “I am aware of imagining...” when talking about someone else’s inner experience. This signals you are not assuming you know with certainty what the person’s inner thoughts, emotions, or motivations are.
- Admit to the other person how your actions may have contributed to a damaged relationship or misunderstanding.
- Practice curiosity instead of assuming you already know who another person is. Listen with an open mind to find out who they see themselves to be, and then reflect back what you hear.
- You may need to take the lead in revealing personal information, and keep revealing on multiple occasions, if you want to improve the relationship. This may be particularly important for relationships that have been difficult. Consistency in open-minded and expressive behavior is essential rather than quick decisions to give up because an expected positive response did not occur immediately.
- Use Match + 1 skills when forming new relationships or wanting to improve a relationship. Match + 1 enhances mutual self-disclosure and provides a means for estimating the overall level of intimacy in a relationship.

W Welcome feedback and continue to dialogue.

- Adopt a body stance that signals openness and willingness to hear what the other person has to say. For example, use the Big Three + 1 skills (see lesson 3)—that is, lean back, take a deep breath, closed-mouth smile, and eyebrow wag.
- Let go of rehearsing a response while mindfully listening to the other person. When we fully listen to another, we are more likely to naturally know how to reply, and we are less likely to misinterpret what they are saying.
- Give the other person time to adjust when you disclose something new about yourself.
- Do not give up if the interaction does not go as planned—instead, remain engaged and continue signaling openness. Remember that intimacy and trust take time to develop. Block automatic action urges to walk away or abandon the relationship. Schedule another time to talk.
- Remember that conflict can be intimacy-enhancing. By staying engaged and working to understand the person from their perspective, we get to know the person better—a process that is essential for deepening a bond with another.
- Use stall tactics to slow the pace of highly emotional exchanges. Stall tactics allow individuals to save face by not insisting on an immediate solution when a disagreement has occurred. But make sure you schedule a time to come back to the discussion.
- Use Flexible Mind ADOPTS skills to enhance openness to feedback, and the twelve questions to determine whether to accept or decline the feedback (see lesson 23).

Radical Openness Handout 21.2

Match + 1 Intimacy Rating Scale



Examples of Levels 1-2	Examples of Levels 3-4	Examples of Levels 5-6	Examples of Levels 7-8	Examples of Level 9	Examples of Level 10
Talking about everyday nonemotional events (the weather, traffic conditions, or the taste of a meal) and/or stating opinions about nonemotional topics (the service at a restaurant or the color of a room)	Making nonemotional disclosures about personal goals or values (politics, parenting, philosophy) and/or making emotional or passionate disclosures about nonpersonal topics (world peace) and/or revealing socially acceptable personal preferences ("I love to go mountain biking")	Revealing private feelings or emotional judgments about personal events (One's true feelings about the boss or a coworker) and/or revealing possibly socially unacceptable opinions, judgments, or preferences ("I detest disorganized people")	Revealing personal opinions or thoughts about the relationship ("I really like you") and/or revealing private feelings or judgments about highly emotional personal events (giving details about one's unhappy marriage) and/or engaging in open expression (tears, uninhibited laughter, more eye contact)	Revealing feelings of affection or desire for more intimacy ("I want to spend more time with you") and/or sharing stories of shameful or embarrassing experiences that could be damaging if known publicly and/or being willing to be highly vulnerable (sharing extreme self-doubt or weaknesses)	Expressing love or intense feelings of caring and desire for a committed long-term relationship and being willing to reveal deep-seated vulnerable emotions that one may never have expressed before and to make serious personal sacrifices for the relationship

Radical Openness Handout 21.3

Using Match + 1 to Establish New or Improve Existing Relationships

Match + 1 refers to a simple principle: we must reveal personal information in order to get close to another person.

Step 1. Revealing Personal Information

- Greet the person—for example, “Hi. How are you?”
- Begin Match + 1 by revealing to the other person something about your day, week, or life—for example, “I went on a really nice bike ride today—but PHEW! What a workout!”
- Mindfully listen to how the person responds.
- If you want to get to know the person better, match his or her level of self-disclosure and go one level higher (Match + 1) by revealing more personal details, genuine opinions, and emotions about yourself.
- Keep it up! Don’t stop providing details about your life just because the other person does not immediately respond similarly. Remember that getting to know someone takes time, AND the more you reveal, the more likely a person will reciprocate.
- Match + 1 means revealing personal information about yourself, NOT asking personal questions about another person’s life (though asking questions is okay).

Step 2. Estimating the Level of Intimacy

The second step in Match + 1 is helpful but not essential. This step allows us to nonjudgmentally evaluate what we imagine was the level of intimacy of the interaction.

- After an interaction with someone you would like to get to know better, use the following questions to encourage self-enquiry.
 - *How much personal information did I reveal?*
 - *What level of intimacy do I believe best describes the interaction I had with this person? Use handout 21.2 (Match + 1 Intimacy Rating Scale).*
 - *Did the person I was interacting with match my level of self-disclosure? What did they specifically do or say that helped me make this determination?*
 - *Is there a chance that I am operating from Fixed Mind or Fatalistic Mind when I evaluate the interaction? If so, what might I do to determine this more fully?*
 - *At what levels of intimacy are most of my other relationships?*
 - *What skills do I need to practice to go higher on the Match + 1 Intimacy Rating Scale in my relationships?*

- **Next, use the Match + 1 Intimacy Rating Scale** to estimate what level of intimacy you experienced with the other person during the interaction. See handout 21.2 (Match + 1 Intimacy Rating Scale).
- **Remember that closeness takes time.** Practice Match + 1 with someone multiple times in order to obtain a better sense of how close the person may want to be with you.
- **Finally, these ratings are NOT truth, only estimates.** So don't give up on a relationship you really want—keep revealing!

Radical Openness Handout 21.4

Main Points for Lesson 21, Part 2

Enhancing Social Connectedness

1. It is not how many friends you have that matters, it is the quality of your social connectedness.
2. You only need one person in your life who is willing to make self-sacrifices to care for you when you are in distress and make you feel socially safe. Higher levels of intimacy increase social safety.
3. Match + 1 represents a core skill needed to form close social bonds—revealing personal feelings to others fosters reciprocal revelations.
4. Intimate relationships mean knowing not only about the things a person is proud of or does well but also about those areas in life they struggle with and about their inner fears or doubts.

Radical Openness Worksheet 21.A

Practicing Flexible Mind ALLOWS

Think of a relationship that you find difficult and would like to improve, and then practice Flexible Mind ALLOWS.
Describe the problematic relationship.

A *Assess whether you are committed to improving the relationship and willing to let go of mistrust.*

Answer the self-enquiry questions under A (“assess”) in handout 21.1 (Enhancing Social Connectedness, Using Flexible Mind ALLOWS), and complete the pros and cons of trusting the person and/or improving the relationship in the following.

Pros of Trusting or Improving	Cons of Trusting or Improving

L *Look for concrete evidence that mistrust is justified.*

Place a checkbox in the boxes below that best describe the skills you used.

Mindfully observed and described my suspicious and mistrustful thoughts. *Describe what you observed.*

- Looked for signs of Fixed Mind or Fatalistic Mind that may have influenced how I evaluated the relationship.
- Remembered that old hurts and current mood might influence my perception of the person or the relationship. Used the self-enquiry questions under the first *L* ("look") in handout 21.1 (Enhancing Social Connectedness, Using Flexible Mind ALLOWS) to understand what might be influencing my perception. *Describe what was learned.*

L Loosen your grip on past hurts and fears.

Place a checkbox in the boxes below that best describe the skills you used.

- Remembered that letting go of distrust does not mean agreement.
- Remembered that the person may not feel the same way that I do about the relationship, and accepted the fact that I can never be certain of what he or she might be thinking or feeling without explicitly being told.
- Practiced trusting (to some degree) how the person described the situation, intentions, or personal experience of the relationship rather than automatically assuming that he or she was being deceptive, manipulative, or wrong.
- Practiced giving the person the benefit of the doubt.
- Remembered times when I thought negatively about someone and later realized that I had misjudged the person.
- Tried to see things from the person's point of view. *Describe what you imagined was the point of view.*

- Reminded myself that just because I think it, doesn't mean it's TRUE.
- Used Flexible Mind Has HEART and forgiveness practices to let go of past hurts or grievances before interacting with the person (see lesson 29).

O Out yourself by revealing inner feelings.

Place a checkbox in the boxes below that best describe the skills you used.

- Used words to describe what I was feeling, and practiced allowing my facial expressions to match my inner feelings.
- Remembered that open expression of emotion is contagious and enhances relationships.

- Used "I" statements or the Awareness Continuum when revealing inner experience.
- Acknowledged to the other person that my actions may have contributed to the misunderstanding or damaged the relationship.
- Continued practicing open expression and personal self-disclosure with the other person, even during times I thought it might not work.
- Used Match + 1 skills.

W Welcome feedback and continue to dialogue.

Place a checkbox in the boxes below that best describe the skills you used.

- Adopted a body stance that signals openness and willingness to hear what the other person has to say.
- Blocked habitual rehearsals of my response when listening to the other person.
- Gave the other person time to reply by not immediately saying something when silence occurred during the interaction.
- Did not give up, even though the interaction did not go as I had anticipated. Instead, I remained engaged in the interaction.
- Reminded myself that conflict can be intimacy-enhancing.
- Used stall tactics to slow the pace of highly emotional exchanges.
- Used Flexible Mind ADOPTS skills to enhance openness to feedback, and the twelve questions to determine whether to accept or decline the feedback (see lesson 23).

Other skills.
