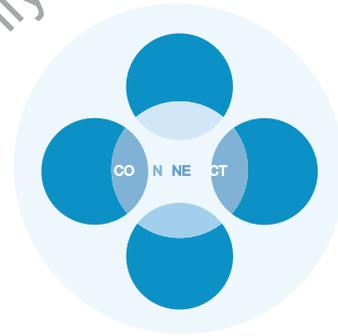


THE CONNECTION PARADIGM

BUILDING CONNECTION COMPETENCE
IN OURSELVES & OTHERS



LORA PEPPARD, PHD, DNP, PMHNP -BC
APNA IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT



Learning Outcome:

Identify multiple ways we as nurses can foster connection with others, self, and spirit.

I have nothing to disclose.

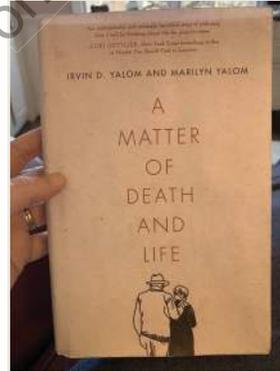


Objectives

1. Why is connection important?
2. How was the paradigm developed?
3. What is the Connection Paradigm?
4. What are the simple truths of connection?
5. How can I bring connection to life and become more connection competent?

Connection is personal.

When was the last time you paid attention to your ability to connect with others, self, or spirit?



Why is connection important?

- Fundamental to physical health, mental health, & well-being
- Protective against serious illness and disease
- Promotes a longer, healthier life
- Professional identity & responsibility
 - Full potential
 - Standard
 - Ripple effect

Mattering

The belief that we're a significant part of the world around us that comes from *feeling valued* and *adding value*.

- Zach Mercurio

Cardiac Outcomes

- Social isolation and loneliness (perception of social isolation) linked to 29% increase in risk for heart attack and/or death from heart disease
- Loneliness is a mortality risk factor!
- Improves our ability to manage stress
- Improves healthy eating habits and physical activity
- Improves quality of sleep

Mattering

The belief that we're a significant part of the world around us that comes from *feeling valued* and *adding value*.

- Zach Mercurio

Professional Identity

Hildegard Peplau

- Theory of interpersonal relations
- Human connectedness is essential to health
- 1st goal : Establish the relationship and build trust.
- Compassionate, respectful, nonjudgmental

AACN Core Competencies

- Establish/foster caring relationships (2.1)
 - Demonstrate empathy, compassion, respect
- Caring relationship:
 - Essence of what it is to be human
 - Profound effect on well-being, recovery, healing

PMH Scope & Standards

- Standards 5G & 7 Competencies
- Shall use the **therapeutic relationship** as the basis
- Develop, enhance, understand, and support it to promote well-being & growth
- Demonstrate a commitment to practicing self-care, managing stress, and connecting with self and others.

NURSE - PATIENT RELATIONSHIP

PERSON - CENTERED CARE

THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP



Professional Identity

Hildegard Peplau

- Theory of interpersonal **relations**
- Human **connectedness** is essential to health
- 1st goal : Establish the **relationship** and build **trust** .
- **Compassionate** , **respectful** , **nonjudgmental**

AACN Core Competencies

- Establish/foster **caring relationships** (2.1)
 - Demonstrate **empathy** , **compassion** , **respect**
- Caring** relationship:
 - Essence of what it is to be human
 - Profound effect on **well-being** , **recovery** , **healing**

PMH Scope & Standards

- Standards 5G & 7 Competencies
- Shall use the **therapeutic relationship** as the basis
- Develop, enhance, understand, and support it to promote **well-being** & growth
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NURSE - PATIENT RELATIONSHIP

PERSON - CENTERED CARE

THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP



Systematic Approach

- Survey to all APNA members
- Review of existing literature
- Formal review: APNA chapter meetings or invited presentations
- 2 formal reviews: APNA Chapter & Council leaders
- Formal review: APNA Board of Directors
- Final synthesis of content

Please rate your ability to connect with:

	1 - Very Weak	2 - Weak	3 - Average	4 - Strong	5 - Very Strong
Others	<input type="radio"/>				
Your senses	<input type="radio"/>				
Your spirituality	<input type="radio"/>				
Yourself	<input type="radio"/>				

Please respond to the following questions:

	1 - Not at all	2	3 - Neutral	4	5 - Very
How important is enhancing your ability to connect in these four dimensions at this particular time in your life?	<input type="radio"/>				
How confident are you in your ability to connect?	<input type="radio"/>				
How ready are you to enhance your ability to connect?	<input type="radio"/>				

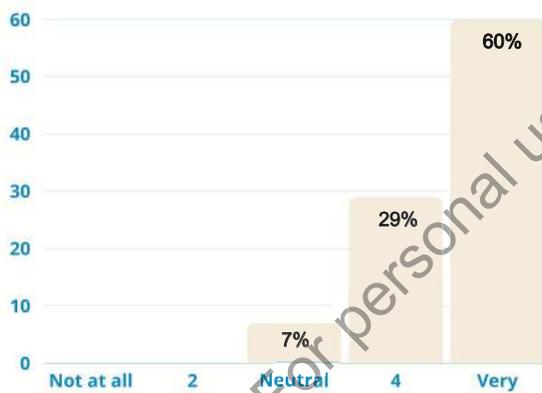


Rate your ability to connect

Across all domains, **over 25%** of psychiatric-mental health nurse respondents do NOT report a strong ability to connect.

% reporting their ability to connect in each area is Strong or Very Strong

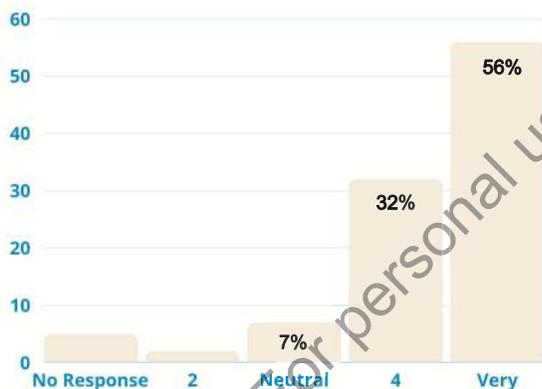
N=180



How important to you is enhancing your ability to connect?

89% of psychiatric -mental health nurse respondents report enhancing their ability to connect is important or very important to them.

N=180



How ready are you to enhance your ability to connect?

88% of psychiatric -mental health nurse respondents are ready or very ready to enhance their ability to connect.

N=180



N=180

What informed your ratings?

“Connection and learning to connect authentically is one of my annual goals for 2024...I am looking to grow in this area.”

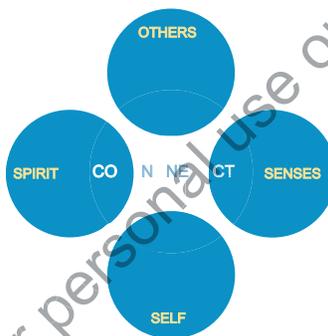
7 Core Components

- 1 Domains of Connection: Others, Self, Spirit, Senses
- 2 Practices to Cultivate
- 3 Relationships among the domains
- 4 Fruits of Connection (intermediary outcomes)
- 5 Long Term Outcomes
- 6 Well-being as the ultimate health outcome
- 7 Attributes of a Therapeutic Self

CONNECTION PARADIGM

A synthesized way of understanding and operationalizing connection through seven core components.

1 Domains of Connection





- Cope more effectively
- Make healthier choices
- Extend life expectancy
- Improve quality of sleep

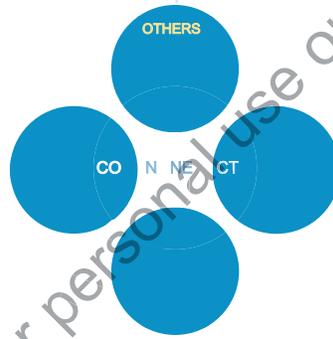
- Improve happiness, health, well-being
- Sharpen memory
- Sense of belonging and feeling seen
- Improved trust



Top 5 Regrets of the Dying

1. I wish I had been more true to myself.
2. I wish I hadn't worked so hard.
3. I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings.
4. I wish I had stayed in touch with friends.
5. I wish that I had let myself be happier.

(Ware, 2019)



Human connection is essential for healing.



Chopin Nocturne
vs
Mary Had a Little Lamb

Don't ever lose the ability to connect with others. Sharpen your connection competence at every opportunity life throws your way.

Brief Self-Connection Exercise

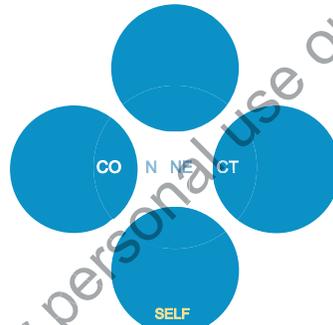
At any moment in time, pause and ask yourself:

"Am I feeling connected right now?"

1. Am I focused on this?
2. Is it meaningful to me?
3. Is it consistent with my goals and values?

(Klussman, 2019)

Self connection fuels human connection.



Practices for Building Self-Connection

1. Solitude
2. Reflection
3. Seeking feedback
4. Paying attention to thoughts, feelings, and actions
5. Mindfulness
6. Physical activity
7. Journaling

(Klussman et al., 2022a; Klussman et al., 2022b)



- Behaviors aligned with values
- Cope more effectively
- Lower risk of physical & mental health disorders

- Greater sense of control
- Greater self-awareness & acceptance
- Reduced anxiety and depression
- Improved relationships

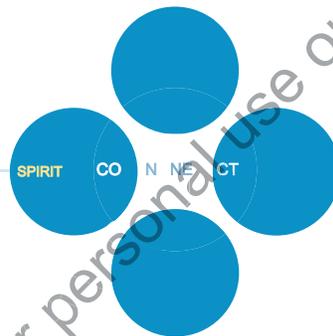


- Meaning and purpose
- Positive sense of self
- Improve quality of life
- Improve mental health & well-being
- Hope, Peace, Comfort
- Forgiveness

Spiritual Care

- Assessment of spiritual well-being/distress
- Encourage examination of spiritual beliefs.
- Support in making decisions consistent with these beliefs.
- Encourage spiritual reflections that assist in discovery of meaning and reconnect with inner resources.

Spiritual connection promotes the ability to establish meaning in one's life.



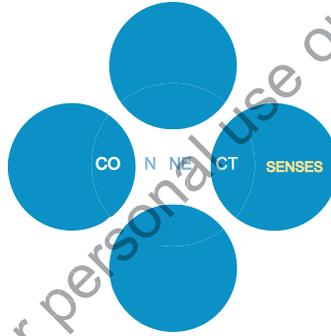
*When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

- Horatio G. Spafford

"Spirituality is the essence of who we are."
- Barbara Warren, PhD, RN, PMHCN-BC, FNP, FAAN

Senses facilitate connection.

Senses can be engaged as tools to promote healing and well-being in self and others.

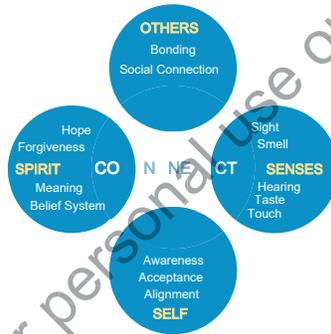


- Reduced anxiety and depression
- Feel calm
- Increased concentration
- Improved communication
- Reduced pain
- Cognitive growth
- Language development
- More fully present

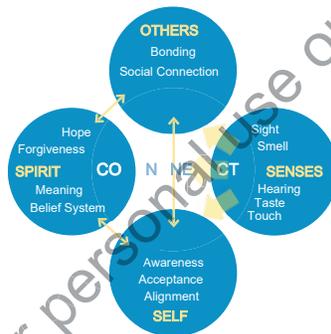


How are you being received?

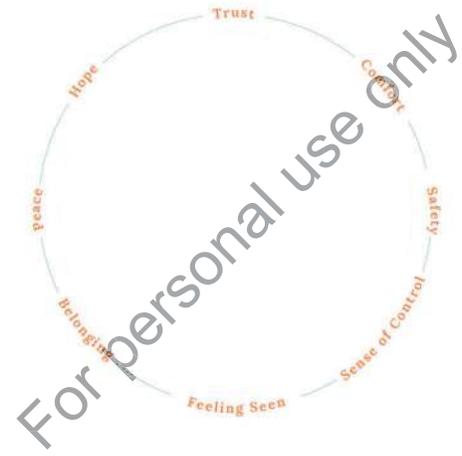
2 Practices to Cultivate



3 Relationships among the Domains



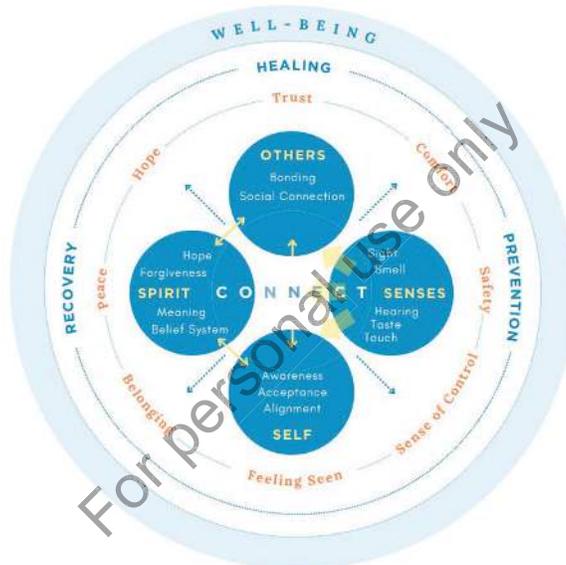
4 Fruits of Connection



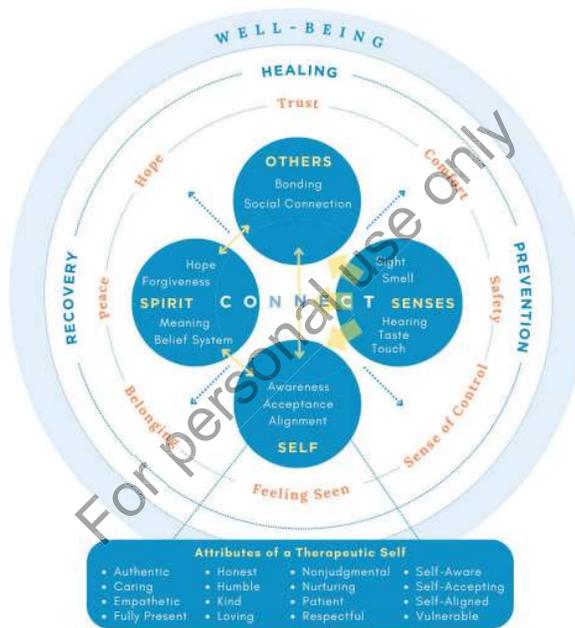
5 Long Term Outcomes



6 Well-being



7 Attributes of a Therapeutic Self



Attributes of a Therapeutic Self

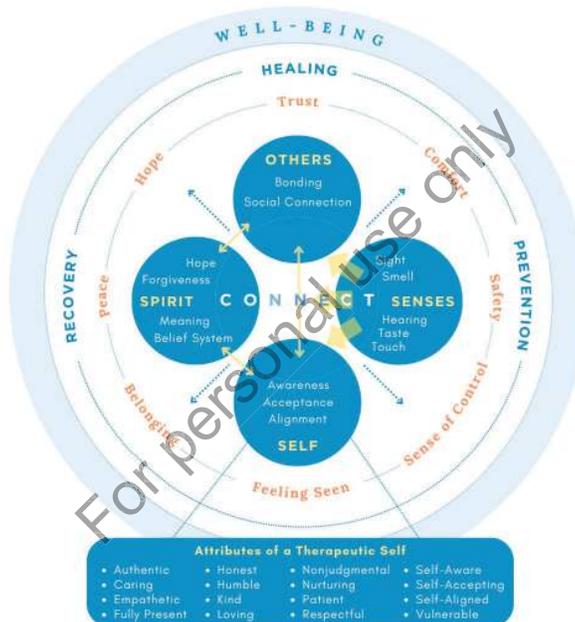
- Are these a priority in your life?
- Have you spent time with each one individually?
- Which come easily to you?
- Which can you improve?

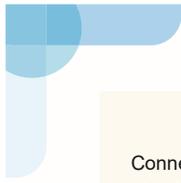
Could you teach someone how to improve their ability in each of these attributes?

- Authentic
- Caring
- Empathetic
- Fully Present
- Honest
- Humble
- Kind
- Loving
- Nonjudgmental
- Nurturing
- Patient
- Respectful
- Self-Aware
- Self-Accepting
- Self-Aligned
- Vulnerable

Therapeutic: To have a good effect on the body or mind; contribute to a sense of wellbeing

THE CONNECTION PARADIGM





Competence

Connection is a basic human need and a skill we must nurture and maintain.

Evidence

True connection bears fruit.

Humility

Pruning of self is essential for connection.

SIMPLE, QUIET TRUTHS



Humility

- 3 parts: accurate self-perception, modest self-portrayal, other-oriented relational stance
- A type of growth mindset, seeks feedback
- Teachable
- Opposite of pride, a common obstacle

(Makmonado, Vera, & Spangler, 2022; Schaffner, 2020; Worthington, Davis, & Hook 2017)



Forgiveness

- 2 types: Decisional and Emotional
- REACH
 - Recall the wrongdoing in an objective way
 - Empathize by trying to understand
 - Altruism: Offer forgiveness as a gift
 - Commit to forgive
 - Hold on to forgiveness during doubts
- Self-Forgiveness

(Worthington & Wade, 2020; Worthington, 2014)



Hope & Peace

Hope: Belief or expectation that the future can be better and that we have the capacity to pursue that future

- Positive expectancy
- Sustenance
- 3 components: goals, pathways, agency

Peace: A state of tranquility or quiet; freedom from oppressive thoughts or emotions

- A way to embrace the "richness of life" while struggling
- Creates space for healing
- Affective dimension vs Cognitive (meaning)

(Bassett et al., 2008; Snyder, 1994; Underwood, 2013; Murphy et al., 2010; Ernstmeier & Christman, 2021)



Suffering

Connection, even in the midst of suffering, can still promote well-being.

"The calm that I experience day to day in spite of the fires burning around me is markedly different from the anxieties experienced in previous challenging or stress-inducing situations when I felt lonely and unseen and was not intentional about fostering connection in every experience throughout my day."

- Psychiatric-mental health nurse

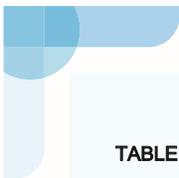
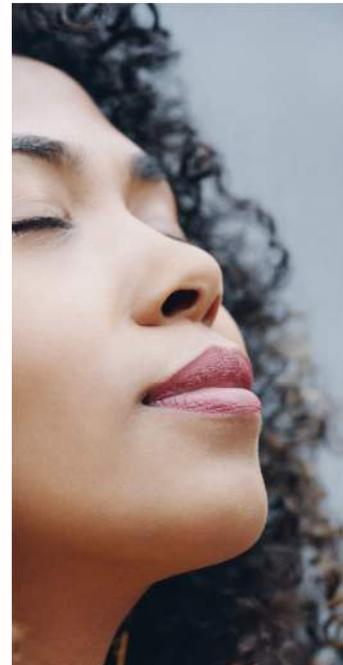
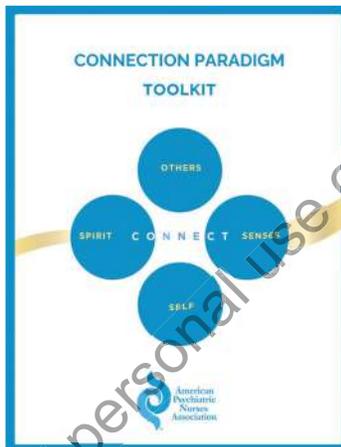


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1. Introduction
2. Orientation to the Connection Paradigm
3. Attributes of a Therapeutic Self
4. Practices that can be Cultivated
5. Fruits of Connection
6. References



HOW TO USE IT

1. Review the whole toolkit.
2. Spend time with each of its individual components.
3. Engage pieces of the toolkit when feeling disconnected or as they seem important to you.
4. Support skill development in students or others.



IV. Fruits of Connection & Well-being

The following table lists the fruits of connection and well-being, which are the outcomes of a strong, healthy relationship. These fruits are the result of the connection and well-being that is cultivated through the relationship.

Area	Connection	Well-being
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved physical health Reduced risk of chronic disease Increased longevity Improved mental health Reduced risk of depression Improved cognitive function 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved emotional well-being Increased happiness Improved self-esteem Improved resilience Improved coping skills Improved overall quality of life

- ### II. Attributes of a Therapeutic Self
- Authentic
 - Confident
 - Empathetic
 - Fully Present
 - Non-judgmental
 - Humble
 - Kind
 - Lacking
 - Self-accepting
 - Self-compassionate
 - Self-regulating
 - Self-empowered

How do you know if you are a therapeutic self? The following table lists the attributes of a therapeutic self, which are the qualities that a therapist should possess to be effective in their work.

Attribute	Definition	How to Cultivate	Benefits
Authenticity	Being true to oneself and others, and not trying to be someone else.	Practice self-reflection and self-compassion. Be vulnerable and open to feedback.	Builds trust and rapport with clients. Increases the effectiveness of therapy.
Empathy	Understanding and sharing the feelings of another person.	Practice active listening and reflection. Put yourself in the client's shoes.	Helps clients feel understood and supported. Facilitates emotional healing.
Self-compassion	Being kind and understanding to oneself, especially in times of difficulty.	Practice self-compassion exercises. Treat yourself with the same kindness and care that you would offer a friend.	Reduces self-criticism and increases resilience. Promotes emotional well-being.



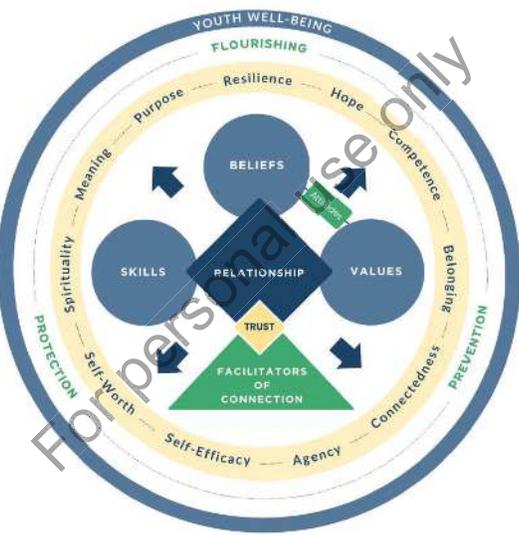
III. Practices that can be Cultivated in Self and Others

The following table lists practices that can be cultivated in self and others, which are the actions and behaviors that can lead to a stronger, healthier relationship.

Practice	Definition	How to Cultivate	Benefits
Active Listening	Listening to the speaker with full attention, without interrupting or judging.	Practice active listening exercises. Focus on the speaker's words and feelings.	Builds understanding and trust. Reduces misunderstandings and conflicts.
Self-Reflection	Thinking about one's own thoughts, feelings, and actions.	Practice journaling or meditation. Reflect on your own behavior and its impact on others.	Increases self-awareness and emotional regulation. Promotes personal growth.
Empathy	Understanding and sharing the feelings of another person.	Practice active listening and reflection. Put yourself in the other person's shoes.	Helps others feel understood and supported. Facilitates emotional healing.

THE HEALTH-PROMOTING RELATIONSHIPS PARADIGM

1. I can influence and impact my life and health.
2. I have something to offer.
3. I matter.



4. I can overcome hard things.
5. I have support.
6. Life is on my side.

What stirs within you?

Self



Others



I Am Well Today

May I pay attention to the stirring deep within,
Silence all distractions, all the noise, and begin,
To connect with intention, to see and be seen,
Engage in ways that matter, practice humility.

For the fruits of a connected self are gateways to much more,
Trust, peace, hope, belonging – how they help us soar,
To the heights of well-being, bringing healing, and recovery,
Comfort, safety, a sense of control - preventing further injury.

Connection is fundamental to a life well lived,
Yet rarely noticed as the free and glorious gift it is,
Quite possibly the most important thing I can do each day,
Do I seek it? Do I offer it? Do I cultivate it in every way?

For when my time has come to lay my head for its final rest,
Will I close my eyes knowing I have done my best,
To connect with others, self, and spirit in purposeful, meaningful ways,
Loved and forgiven, listened closely, fully engaged?

Will I know I lived my days by my values and highest priorities,
Denied my pride and steadied my soul through spirituality,
Pruned the qualities that led me astray, and nurtured those that paved the way,
For myself and others to confidently say "I am seen. I am loved. I am well today."

-Lora E. Peppard

Thank you!

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APNA Immediate Past President