



# Relational Connecting

This article is provided by David Ferguson of Intimacy Therapy

Relational connecting with those we care about is critical to mental and emotional health, especially during these chaotic times of pandemic and racial tensions. A better understanding of **relational needs** as they are experienced in our close relationships gives insight as to how “positive well-being” is possible in these times. Positive psychology would often highlight key factors in positive well-being such as:



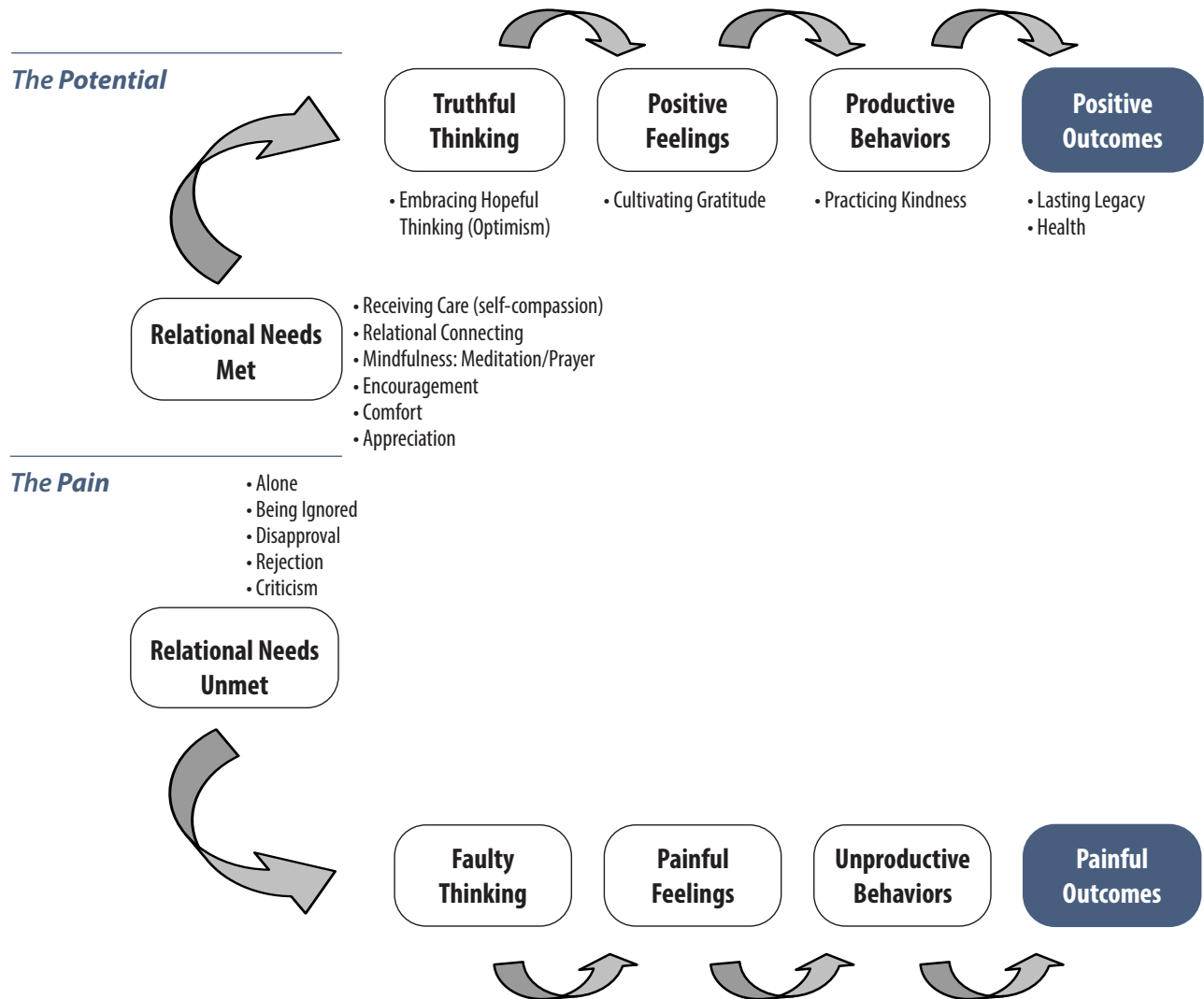
- Relational Connecting
- Hope-filled Thinking
- Cultivating Gratitude
- Practicing Kindness

(Duckworth, A. L., Steen, T. A., & Seligman, M. E. (2005). Positive psychology in clinical practice. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, 1, 629–651.)

“Positive psychology is the scientific study of positive experiences and positive individual traits, and the institutions that facilitate their development. A field concerned with well-being and optimal functioning, positive psychology aims to broaden the focus of clinical psychology beyond suffering and its direct alleviation.”

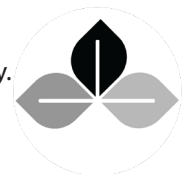


Take a look at the “Pain and Potential” chart below and think about where you have recently found yourself during these stressful times. Have you found yourself with negative, anxious thoughts? Or been easily provoked? Or had emotional outbursts or depressive feelings? Or maybe you’ve been withdrawing, avoiding, or frustrated with others?



**Live more of life at the top of the chart!**

The good news is that life can begin a transition to the top or “potential” part of the chart through deepened connection with family and friends. Two of our relational needs we seem to be “hardwired” to need are for **comfort** and **encouragement**. When these needs are met through caring relationships, hope is fostered, and aloneness reduced.



Click on the icons below to watch videos illustrating these two relational needs.



Since relationships are key to increased hope and well-being, let's try this together:

***Pause and reflect*** on a family member or friend who might need **encouragement** or **comfort**. Next, actually "experience" a Bible verse:

*"...fervently love one another from the heart" (1 Peter 1:21–22).  
"...freely you have received, therefore freely give" (Matthew 10:8).*

**Text or call with a message with one of the following:**



**Encouragement**—*"You were on my mind, and I wanted to reach out to give a word of encouragement. You've got this! As your diligence and creativity kick in, you'll make it!"*



**Comfort**—*"In all you are going through, please know of my sadness for you. You're a great friend, and I regret you're hurting."*

Also, be ready to receive! In all likelihood, you will receive **appreciation** or **encouragement** in return!

Hope-filled living is contagious.

