

Compassionate Connection Therapy

○ Welcome to Your Reflection Space

This space was created with care — for anyone moving through something tender, uncertain, or quietly important. Whether you're processing pain, seeking clarity, rebuilding trust, or simply needing a moment to breathe, you're welcome here. You don't need to arrive with answers or be in a particular emotional state. You're invited just as you are.

These worksheets offer gentle tools for reflection: soft places to land, explore, and reconnect with yourself. They're designed to meet you where you are, without pressure, urgency, or expectation. You can move through them slowly, skip parts, return later, or simply sit with the questions. Your pace matters. Your wellbeing matters.

The mission behind these resources is simple: to make emotional support more accessible at a time when many people are carrying more than they can say. These worksheets are offered freely, with no hidden agenda — just the hope that they might help you feel a little more understood, a little less alone, and a little more connected to your own voice.

If this mission resonates, you're welcome to share these resources. Print them, post them, pass them along. Your share might be the moment someone realises they deserve gentleness too.

These worksheets are here to support your healing — not to rush it. You don't need to complete every section. You don't need to "get it right." Take what feels supportive. Leave what doesn't. Let this be a companion, not a task.

You're not alone in this. Even if we've never met, these resources are offered with quiet solidarity — holding space for you, believing in your capacity to heal, and honouring the courage it takes to turn inward.

● A Gentle Note on Safety

These worksheets are designed for personal reflection. They are not a substitute for therapy or professional support.

If you're currently in therapy, you may wish to share this resource with your therapist before exploring. If you're not in therapy, please take care to reflect in a space that feels emotionally and physically safe.

You might choose to explore alongside someone you trust — a friend, partner, or support person. If that isn't available right now, this worksheet can still be a quiet companion. Go gently. In your own time. In your own way.

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Where to Find the Worksheets

If this resource feels meaningful, please share it. Healing is communal — and your share might be someone's first step toward feeling less alone.

You can find these worksheets freely across platforms:

Website: <https://CompassionateConnectionTherapy.co.uk>

Facebook: Compassionate Connection Therapy

TikTok: @rosa.tomassi.bella

Instagram: @connectiontherapyrhyl

Together, we can make emotional support tools free, gentle, and accessible.

A Note on Contact

These worksheets are shared freely, but individual support cannot be offered through messages or comments. If you need support, please reach out to a therapist or someone you trust. These tools are here to guide gentle exploration — not to replace professional care. Thank you for understanding, and for sharing with kindness.

If You're in Crisis

These worksheets are not for emergencies. If you feel overwhelmed or unsafe, please reach out:

- **Samaritans** — 116 123 (free, 24/7)
- **NHS 111** — urgent mental health advice
- **999** — if you or someone else is at immediate risk

You deserve support, safety, and care.

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Free & Low-Cost Support in the UK

If you'd like additional support, the organisations below offer free or low-cost help across the UK. You don't need a diagnosis, a referral, or the "right" words — just reach out in whatever way feels manageable. Many offer phone, text, email, or online support.

- **Cruse Bereavement Support** Free support for anyone grieving, at any stage. Helpline: 0808 808 1677 Website: <https://www.cruse.org.uk>
- **Sudden Bereavement UK** Support for sudden or unexpected loss. Website: <https://www.sudden.org>
- **One in Four** Specialist support for survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Website: <https://www.oneinfour.org.uk>
- **Rape Crisis England & Wales** Free, confidential support for anyone affected by sexual violence. Helpline: 0808 500 2222 Website: <https://www.rapecrisis.org.uk>
- **NAPAC (National Association for People Abused in Childhood)** Support for adult survivors of childhood abuse. Helpline: 0808 801 0331 Website: <https://napac.org.uk>
- **Mind** Information, guidance, and local low-cost services. Website: <https://www.mind.org.uk>
- **SANEline** Emotional support for anyone struggling with mental health. Helpline: 0300 304 7000 Website: <https://www.sane.org.uk>
- **Shout 24/7** free text support for anyone in distress. Text: SHOUT to 85258 Website: <https://giveusashout.org>
- **Refuge** Support for women and children experiencing domestic abuse. Helpline: 0808 2000 247 Website: <https://www.refuge.org.uk>
- **Men's Advice Line** Support for men experiencing domestic abuse. Helpline: 0808 801 0327 Website: <https://mensadviceline.org.uk>
- **Switchboard LGBT+ Helpline** Support for LGBTQ+ people, family, and friends. Helpline: 0300 330 0630 Website: <https://switchboard.lgbt>
- **Galop** Support for LGBTQ+ people facing abuse or violence. Website: <https://galop.org.uk>
- **Beat Eating Disorders** Support for anyone affected by eating difficulties. Website: <https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk>
- **Citizens Advice** Free guidance on benefits, debt, housing, employment, and legal issues. Website: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk>
- **Shelter** Support with housing, homelessness, and unsafe living situations. Helpline: 0808 800 4444 Website: <https://www.shelter.org.uk>
- **The Mix** Support for anyone under 25 — mental health, relationships, money, housing. Helpline: 0808 808 4994 Website: <https://www.themix.org.uk>
- **Hub of Hope** A national database of local mental health support. Website: <https://hubofhope.co.uk>

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You are welcome to share this resource with others for support, as long as:

- You credit **Rosa Tomassi-Bella and Compassionate Connection Therapy**
- You do **not** alter the content in any way
- You do **not** use it for commercial purposes or financial gain

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■ Safe and Balanced Connection in Relationships

A guide to exploring closeness, autonomy, and mutual needs with warmth and respect

■ Introduction

Relationships are living, breathing systems — always shifting, always responding to the needs, histories, and emotional landscapes of the people within them. Many of us grow up believing we must choose between closeness and independence, but healthy connection rarely asks us to sacrifice one for the other. Instead, it invites us to find a rhythm that honours both.

This worksheet is here to support you in exploring that rhythm. You deserve relationships where you can show up fully — where your needs are not treated as burdens, and where your autonomy is not mistaken for disinterest. You deserve space to breathe, space to rest, and space to be held. This resource offers gentle prompts, grounding practices, and compassionate reflections to help you understand your patterns and needs at your own pace.

There is no “right” way to connect. There is only what feels safe, respectful, and nourishing for you. Take your time. Move slowly. Let this be a soft place to land.

■ How to Use This Worksheet

This worksheet is designed to be flexible and accessible. You can move through it in order, dip into sections that feel relevant, or return to it whenever you need grounding or clarity.

Each section includes:

- A gentle guide** — a warm introduction to the theme
- Six or more open questions** — spacious prompts for deeper reflection
- Six or more sentence starters** — softer alternatives for moments when open questions feel overwhelming
- One mindfulness or grounding practice** — each one unique
- One sciency bit** — warm, accessible psychology connected to the theme

A note about sentence starters

Open questions can sometimes feel too big, especially when emotions are tender or unclear. Sentence starters offer a gentler way in — both options are equally valid. You can use whichever feels safer, softer, or more accessible in the moment.

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5. Which patterns feel grounding, and which feel draining?

6. How do my patterns shift depending on stress, energy, or context?

Sentence Starters

- When I feel close, I often...

- When I feel distant, I tend to...

- I feel most connected when...

- I notice I pull away when...

- A pattern I'm curious about is...

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- A pattern that feels protective is...

• Mindfulness / Grounding Practice

“Name the Rhythm” — simple awareness Sit comfortably and take a slow breath. Bring to mind a recent moment of connection. Notice: did you move closer, stay steady, or step back? No judgement — just awareness. Then bring to mind a moment when you needed space. Notice the rhythm of your responses. If comfortable, place a hand on your chest or shoulder, offering yourself warmth as you observe your patterns.

Sciency Bit

Our connection patterns often reflect a blend of **attachment learning**, **nervous system responses**, and **behavioural habits**. Early relationships teach us how safe it feels to reach out or retreat. Over time, these patterns become familiar pathways — not fixed traits, but tendencies shaped by experience.

Neuropsychology adds that closeness can release oxytocin, increasing warmth and openness, while uncertainty can activate protective responses like withdrawal or seeking reassurance. These are not flaws — they are adaptive strategies the body uses to maintain safety. Understanding them helps us respond with compassion rather than self-criticism.

■ SECTION TWO

Exploring “Too Much” and “Not Enough” Feelings

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Gentle Guide

Many people worry about being “too much” or “not enough” in relationships. These fears often come from past experiences, not from who you truly are. These feelings are signals, not verdicts. This section helps you notice these feelings with gentleness, so you can understand what they’re pointing to.

Open Questions

1. What signs tell me I’m worrying about being “too much”?
2. What signs tell me I’m worrying about being “not enough”?
3. What emotions show up with these worries?
4. What do these feelings seem to be protecting me from?
5. When did I first learn these ideas about myself?

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6. What might these feelings be trying to communicate?

Sentence Starters

- When I fear I'm "too much," I notice...
- When I fear I'm "not enough," I tend to...
- A thought that often appears is...
- My body feels...
- These feelings might be trying to tell me...

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- What I need in those moments is...

• Mindfulness / Grounding Practice

“Hand on Heart, Hand on Belly” — grounding self-reassurance Place one hand on your chest and one on your belly. Breathe slowly into both hands. Quietly acknowledge: “This is a moment of worry. I’m allowed to feel this.” Let your hands offer gentle pressure, reminding your body that you are safe.

Sciency Bit

From a cognitive psychology perspective, “too much” and “not enough” fears often stem from **core beliefs** formed through repeated relational experiences. These beliefs influence how we interpret neutral events — for example, a delayed message may trigger fears of being overwhelming or unimportant.

Behavioural psychology shows that these fears can lead to protective behaviours like over-checking, withdrawing, or people-pleasing. These behaviours temporarily reduce anxiety but reinforce the underlying fear. Understanding this cycle helps you respond with curiosity rather than shame.

The body also plays a role. When the nervous system senses uncertainty, it may activate threat responses — racing heart, tension, or numbness — which can amplify self-doubt. Recognising these cues helps you meet them with compassion.

■ SECTION THREE

Identifying Your Core Needs

Gentle Guide

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Needs are not demands — they are signals that help you understand what supports your wellbeing. Everyone has emotional, physical, and practical needs, and they can shift over time. Needs are valid — they are not demands. This section helps you explore what helps you feel grounded, valued, and connected.

Open Questions

1. What helps me feel emotionally safe?
2. What helps me feel physically comfortable and at ease?
3. What practical support helps my daily life run smoothly?
4. Which needs feel essential right now?
5. Which needs feel flexible or context-dependent?

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6. How do I know when a need is unmet?

Sentence Starters

- I feel emotionally safe when...
- I feel valued when...
- I feel connected when...
- I feel physically comfortable when...
- I feel supported day-to-day when...
- A need I'm learning to honour is...

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● Mindfulness / Grounding Practice

“Body Scan for Needs” — gentle interoception Sit or lie comfortably. Slowly scan your body from head to toe. Notice areas of ease, tension, warmth, or heaviness. Ask gently: “What might this part of me need?” Let your body’s sensations guide your understanding of your needs.

Sciency Bit

Health psychology highlights that needs are closely linked to **wellbeing, stress regulation, and relationship satisfaction**. When needs are met, the nervous system tends to settle — breathing steadies, muscles soften, and emotional clarity increases. When needs are unmet, the body may signal distress through tension, irritability, fatigue, or overwhelm.

Social psychology also shows that humans are wired for both **connection** and **autonomy**. Needs for closeness and needs for independence are both normal and healthy. Understanding your needs helps you communicate them clearly and reduces misinterpretation or conflict.

■ SECTION FOUR

Respecting Autonomy — Yours and Theirs

Gentle Guide

Autonomy is the freedom to make choices that honour your values, energy, and identity. In healthy relationships, both people’s autonomy matters. It’s about balancing ‘I’ and ‘we’ so neither person feels controlled, smothered, or abandoned.

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Open Questions

1. What does autonomy look like for me?
2. What does autonomy look like for the other person?
3. When do I feel most like myself in this relationship?
4. When do I feel my independence is respected?
5. When might I unintentionally limit someone else's independence?
6. How can we protect autonomy while staying connected?

Sentence Starters

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- My autonomy looks like...

- Their autonomy looks like...

- I feel most myself when...

- I feel respected when...

- A boundary that supports my autonomy is...

- A shared value we both hold is...

• Mindfulness / Grounding Practice

“Two Circles, One Breath” — visualising autonomy and connection Close your eyes and imagine two circles: one representing you, one representing the other person. Notice where

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they overlap and where they stand apart. With each breath, allow the circles to shift gently, symbolising how autonomy and connection can move without conflict.

Sciency Bit

Personality psychology and social psychology show that autonomy supports **self-esteem**, **motivation**, and **emotional resilience**. When autonomy is respected, people tend to feel more secure, more generous, and more open to connection. Conversely, when autonomy feels threatened, the nervous system may activate protective responses like withdrawal or defensiveness.

Industrial–organisational psychology also highlights the importance of autonomy in reducing burnout and increasing wellbeing — principles that apply just as much to relationships as to workplaces. Balancing autonomy and connection helps both people feel grounded, respected, and free to show up authentically.

■ SECTION FIVE

Mapping Connection and Independence

Gentle Guide

Connection and independence are not opposites — they are complementary needs that can sit alongside each other. Seeing them visually can help you understand how they coexist in your life. A simple way to do this is by creating a gentle Venn-style map: one circle for your closeness needs, one circle for your independence needs, and an overlap for the places where both can be honoured at the same time. This visual approach can make the balance feel clearer, softer, and easier to work with.

How to Map It

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You can draw this on paper, in a journal, or digitally — whatever feels most accessible.

1. **Draw two overlapping circles.**
 - Label the left circle *Closeness Needs*.
 - Label the right circle *Independence Needs*.
2. **Fill in the left circle.** Write the needs, preferences, or experiences that help you feel connected, supported, or emotionally close.
3. **Fill in the right circle.** Write the needs that help you feel spacious, grounded, autonomous, or able to breathe.
4. **Use the overlap for balance points.** In the middle, write the activities, rhythms, or relational moments that support *both* closeness and independence at the same time.
5. **Reflect gently.** Notice which circle feels fuller, which feels emptier, and what that might mean for your current balance.

This map is not a test — it's a soft way of understanding your inner landscape.

Open Questions

1. What are my core needs for closeness?

2. What are my core needs for independence?

3. Where do these needs overlap?

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4. What activities support both connection and autonomy?

5. What feels balanced right now?

6. What feels out of balance?

Sentence Starters

- A closeness need I have is...
- An independence need I have is...
- An overlap between the two might be...
- A shared activity that supports both is...

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- I feel balanced when...

- I feel unbalanced when...

• Mindfulness / Grounding Practice

“Shared Space, Separate Space” — embodied awareness Sit with your feet on the floor. As you inhale, imagine drawing connection towards you — warmth, presence, shared moments. As you exhale, imagine creating gentle space — breath, autonomy, individuality. Let the breath guide the balance, noticing how both movements can coexist without conflict.

Sciency Bit

Evolutionary psychology suggests that humans thrive when they can access both **social bonding** and **self-directed exploration**. These dual needs support survival, creativity, and emotional wellbeing. Cognitive psychology adds that mapping concepts visually helps the brain integrate complex ideas, reducing overwhelm and increasing clarity by turning abstract feelings into something tangible and manageable.

This balance also supports secure attachment — a state where closeness feels safe and independence feels supported. Over time, practising this balance can strengthen trust, reduce conflict, and create a more flexible, resilient relationship dynamic. When both needs are acknowledged, the nervous system tends to settle, making connection feel less pressured and autonomy feel less risky.

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■ Closing

You are allowed to want closeness. You are allowed to want space. You are allowed to change your mind, to grow, to learn, and to rediscover what supports you best. Your needs, boundaries, and feelings are part of what makes you you — they are not flaws to be fixed.

There is no perfect balance — only the balance that feels right for you in this moment. You do not have to earn the right to take up space in a relationship. Your needs are worthy of respect, from others and from yourself.

As you move forward, may you offer yourself the same gentleness you would offer someone you care about. May you trust your rhythms, honour your boundaries, and allow connection to unfold in ways that feel safe, steady, and true.

If you need a grounding thought: **“I am allowed to be fully myself here.”**