

CONNECTION PRACTICE PLANNER

The aim of this Planner is to help you identify easy ways to begin to integrate Freestyle Friendly Focusing into your daily routines. This Planner is just a starting point – once you get the hang of Friendly Focusing and realise for yourself how simple and flexible it is you probably won't want to this Planner.

The following steps are simple – but, like many everyday things, it actually takes quite a few words to clearly describe each step.

1. Identify your main activities in a typical day (or you could do this for a specific day). Typical activities include: waking, washing, getting ready to leave the house, eating breakfast, travelling, work activities, other meals, watching TV, listening to music, doing chores, spending time with family or friends etc...
2. Note these activities in **Column 1** of the 24 hour grid overleaf. Just spend a minute or so doing this. There is no need to be very detailed.
3. Then, for some or all of these activities, identify moments or periods of time associated with these activities when you typically can disengage your attention from what is happening around you and think about other things.

Typical situations are when you are waiting for something. Examples include waiting: in queues, during advert breaks, at red traffic lights, while a passenger, for a kettle to boil or microwave to ping, for a photocopier to finish, for a lift to arrive, for a phone or computer to start up etc.

Other typical situations are when you are doing something very familiar that you body will just get on with and needing minimal guidance. In these activities it is easy to go into your thoughts perhaps planning something, replaying past events, daydreaming etc. For example: showering, brushing teeth, eating, drinking, walking, drying hands, doing housework, washing up, weeding a garden, many keep-fit activities.

Overall the aim is to find those activities where you often go into 'autopilot'. It doesn't matter whether this is for a few moments or for a few minutes: the aim here is to identify definite and familiar times when your attention tends wander off.

Again, don't spend too long on this, just note the first examples that come to mind. The main thing is to choose ones that stand out as times you can definitely disengage – however briefly. Also consider which ones happen as part of, or during, an activity you do pretty much every day.

4. Now in **Column 2** make a note of the situations you have identified where you tend to disengage and drift into your thoughts, imagination or daydreams.
5. These times in your daily routines when you tend to disengage from what is happening here and now are the ideal times to use to do the Connection Practice. It is important, however, to start small and to focus on what feels manageable and comfortable. Making Friendly Focusing yet another burdensome activity to shoe-horn into an already overstuffed life rarely make for a good start nor is it a foundation for lasting change.

So, keeping kindness and friendliness towards yourself at the forefront, reflect on the possible situations identified where you tend to disengage and choose a few that would seem particularly easy times to practice Friendly Focusing with a chosen focusing anchor.

Put a tick against these ones in **Column 3**.

6. Now reflect again on the ones you have chosen and ticked in Column 3 and chose the one that seems one in which taking a few moments to do the Connection Practice would seem particularly easy and straightforward. It can work out well to choose ones where there is a really definite physical sensation available – such as the feel of water when having a shower or the contact between your feet and the ground if you are walking or travelling. It can also be good to choose ones where you are not having to simultaneously interact with other people – that can be hard to start with. Note that this is absolutely not about duration – it may be the situation is very brief and this is fine – such as the feel of warm air under a hand dryer or the first 3 rings of a phone before you answer.

Put a tick against this one in **Column 4**. Note that when it comes to actually doing the Connection Practice at your chosen time, just see how it goes. It probably will work out to be very easy but if not just swap for another one from the list or that you come up with. You will also now have more of an idea of what is most helpful for you.

7. Almost there... Now think about the next time you will be doing the particular activity identified in **Column 4**. What would make it seem almost ridiculously effortless and easy to start to do the Connection Practice. How little can you do? Then consider doing even less... Perhaps you chose doing some of the Connection Practice when having a morning shower - notice what happens when you consider have the intention to practice Friendly Focusing just for the time it takes to first wet your hair. If that seems too long then maybe just practice for the moments when you first step under the water. Or if you are considering using the final part of the walk to the building in which you work, perhaps consider practicing at first for just 10 paces starting at a particular landmark.

What we are aiming for is to scale back your Connection Practice to the point where the intention to practice it seems so easy and straightforward you can't find any significant resistance to doing it. And if you do find resistance – then do even less.

Why this is so important is that most of us have an ingrained idea in the mind that quantity matters more than quality. We find it really helpful to make sure that, right from the start, we can discover for ourselves that a few moments of quality Friendly Focusing practice are profoundly transformative.

8. Finally, use the box with the words: “*My intention is to do a tiny and trivial amount of the Connection Practice by...*” to briefly describe when and where you intend to experiment with some Friendly Focusing and to briefly describe what you will use as a Focusing Anchor for that practice.

As you get familiar with using the Connection Practice in such moments, you will discover how simple it is to start to thread little moments of Friendly Focusing through your daily routines. In time you may find these moments here and there start adding up to quite a bit of practice time. But if you notice any of these practice times start to become burdensome or you feel some resistance to doing them – often indicated by thoughts and feelings that you ‘should’, ‘ought to’ or ‘have to’ do them – then explore how you respond to doing less for a while. This can help clarify whether the burdensome quality is arising from actual practical difficulties of sustaining a particular way of doing the Connection Practice in which case explore practicing in a different way. Sometimes we can find the burdensome quality is mainly arising from thoughts or images while we are practicing: in which case consider continuing with your routine and explore how it is to do it with these particular thoughts and images as companions – however unwelcome they may be.

For more information on Friendly Focusing go to www.friendlyfocusing.com

FREESTYLE FRIENDLY FOCUSING EASY & EFFORTLESS PRACTICE PLANNER

Hour	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
	Daily Activities – Jot down the main ones in the spaces against the 24 hour clock times.	Times of Drift & Disengagement – Jot down the main ones in the spaces against the daily activity.	Easy Ones From Column 2 for Friendly Focusing – Just Tick	Easiest One From Column 3 for Friendly Focusing Practice – Just Tick
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06.00				
07.00				
08.00				
09.00				
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My intention is to do a tiny and trivial amount of the Connection Practice by...

[Complete this box with a brief note of where, when and what you intend to do.]