

A vibrant illustration of several hands in various colors (purple, green, yellow, orange, light blue, lavender) reaching out and connecting. The hands are stylized with simple black outlines for fingers and palms. The background is white, and the hands are set against a backdrop of thick, flowing, curved bands in the same color palette, creating a sense of movement and connection.

The Art of Connection

A Curiosity for the New Year

By Gretel Bakker

As one year ends and another begins, we find ourselves in a unique space of possibility—a pause between the past and the future. This transitional moment invites questions rather than answers: *What have I learned? What am I ready to explore?* It's not just a time for reflection but a chance to approach the year ahead with curiosity and openness. At the heart of this exploration lies the art of connection—a practice that inspires wonder about ourselves, others, and the world around us.



The Heart of Connection: An Invitation to Wonder

The art of connection asks us to step beyond certainty and lean into the unknown. It encourages us to ask questions about the relationships we hold and the patterns we carry: *What assumptions do I bring into this moment? What might I discover if I let them go?*

Connection invites vulnerability, courage, and empathy. It challenges us to wonder: *What would happen if I truly listened? If I allowed myself to be seen?* As we prepare for the year ahead, connection becomes both a guide and a practice—a way to navigate life’s complexity while embracing its infinite possibilities.

A Dance of Energies: Strengths and Possibilities

Connection is not static; it’s alive, animated by two vital energies:



Inherent Strengths:

What are the gifts, talents, and wisdom I already carry?



Emergent Potential:

What might be waiting to unfold if I dare to step outside my comfort zone?

These energies spark curiosity about who we are and who we are becoming. They remind us that we are dynamic beings, shaped not only by our individual journeys but also by the shared spaces of trust, collaboration, and mutuality. *What could I become if I leaned into connection? What might I discover about others in the process?*

From Resistance to Resonance: Asking New Questions

As I reflect on the patterns that have shaped my life, I notice how some were designed to protect me—barriers that shielded my vulnerability. But I wonder: *Are those patterns still serving me? Or are they keeping me from the connections I seek?*

Resistance often shows up in judgement, defensiveness, or fear. But within resistance lies a question: *What would happen if I paused to understand it?* By exploring the roots of our resistance, we can transform it into resonance—a harmony that deepens understanding and fosters growth.

Imagine if we all asked:

What am I missing in this moment of reactivity?

What might happen if I replaced defensiveness with curiosity?

What possibilities could emerge if I softened my rigidity?

How might confidence grow if I stepped through fear?

Each of these questions leads us closer to connection.

A Practice of Curious Connection

The art of connection is not a destination but a practice—a series of deliberate, curious steps. Here's how we might begin:



Notice Resistance

What am I resisting, and why? What story am I telling myself in this moment?



Explore Vulnerability

What might my resistance be protecting? What do I need right now?



Respond with Compassion

How can I meet myself—and others—with kindness and openness?

For example, if I feel frustrated with someone's behaviour, I can ask: *What's behind my reaction? What story am I creating about them?* Perhaps I'm afraid of being overlooked. By naming that fear, I can approach the situation with curiosity rather than judgement, opening the door for collaboration and understanding.



Cultivating Cultures of Curiosity

When we practise connection with curiosity, the ripple effects are profound. Imagine workplaces where leaders ask thoughtful questions instead of making assumptions, families that explore differences with openness, and communities that approach divides with mutual respect.

Curiosity creates spaces where trust and collaboration thrive—spaces where we ask not, ‘*Who’s right?*’ but rather, ‘*What can we learn together?*’

An Invitation for the Year Ahead

As we step into the new year, let’s approach it not with rigid resolutions but with open questions:

What am I ready to learn about myself?

What patterns am I curious to explore and release?

What relationships can I deepen with intention?

What possibilities will I discover if I stay open?

The year ahead is an unwritten story, and curiosity is the pen. Together, we can create a tapestry of growth, understanding, and shared humanity—one woven with the threads of connection and wonder.

Here’s to a year of exploration, transformation, and curiosity. Let’s ask the questions that lead us closer to one another. Let’s embrace the art of connection with open hearts and open minds.



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