

# About Rita Marie Johnson



Educator, author, speaker, and award-winning innovator Rita Marie Johnson has been sharing her message and her method worldwide for over a decade. The “Connection Practice” she pioneered, now used by individuals, schools and businesses, brought her the 2005 *Ashoka Changemakers Innovation Award*, chosen from 79 projects in 32 countries. Since 2010, Johnson has taught the Connection Practice Foundations Course at the United Nations University for Peace, a graduate school for international leaders. Johnson is currently CEO of Rasur Foundation International (RFI) and Rasur Foundation of Costa Rica.

Beginning with her 1993 move to Costa Rica, Johnson sought a method of social and emotional learning that could be used reliably and efficiently in all arenas of life. Ten years of research led her to realize that empathy is attained through a conscious connection to feelings and needs, and insight is accessed through heart-brain coherence. She discovered a synergy between empathy and insight that maximizes our social and emotional intelligence, builds resilience and enhances performance. This epiphany resulted in the Connection Practice, which she says, “inspires and accelerates my progress every day.”

In 2004, Johnson began offering this methodology in Costa Rican public schools. Now close to 1500 teachers have been trained, impacting nearly 40,000 students. Annual evaluations revealed that bullying, intolerance, conflicts, violence and misconduct reports had decreased. Johnson initiated a bill in 2006 to establish a Ministry for Peace in Costa Rica, which was embraced by President Oscar Arias, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. The bill passed in 2009.

In addition to presenting seminars in the USA, Canada, Japan, Europe and Central America, Johnson was a keynote speaker at the Department of Peace Conference in Washington DC in 2009, a Global Summit for Ministries and Departments for Peace in 2009 and a Rotary International Conference in 2013.

Through trainers certified by RFI (Dallas, TX), the Connection Practice is spreading rapidly in schools, businesses and faith-based communities in the United States. In 2012, the first US school pilot project in Houston was deemed a success (as shown in the short video at this link: [http://youtu.be/0Au8zQd\\_ULI](http://youtu.be/0Au8zQd_ULI)). St. Rita School in Fort Worth was the next success and now other schools are implementing the curriculum.

Johnson’s previous writings include *The Return of Rasur: The story that holds an answer to education in our time* and the musical entitled *Rasur*, decreed an event of national interest by the President of Costa Rica. These works were inspired by the epic poem *Rasur* by Costa Rican, Roberto Brenes Mesén, which tells of a teacher who helps children and adults discover their connection to themselves, each other and nature.

To learn more, visit [www.rasurinternational.org](http://www.rasurinternational.org) and [www.academyforpeacecr.org](http://www.academyforpeacecr.org) or write [info@rasurinternational.org](mailto:info@rasurinternational.org).