

Compassion
Cultivation
Training

Fundamental Questions about our deep longings and values:

- What am I trying to find in my life?
- How do I want to develop as a human being?
- What do I want to offer back to life?

Setting Daily Intentions:

- Sets a path and tone for our day
- Connects us with our deepest longings and values
- Helps align our thoughts and actions with our values
- Setting intentions is active, not passive
- At the end of our day, intentions help us to evaluate our progress
- They are an opportunity for gratitude as we look back on our day

Set
Your
Intention
for this Workshop

“The Well Exercise”

Recall a time you experienced compassion.

What did it look like?

What did it feel like?

How did it affect you?

What compassion is NOT:

- Not pity
- Not personal distress
- Not feeling sorry for others
- Not heroism
- Not self-sacrifice
- Not a lessening of our love for our family

COMPASSION

Compassion is recognizing
and relieving suffering.

Elements of Compassion

- Awareness and Recognition of suffering.
- Feeling of concern for and connection to the one who is suffering.
- Desire to relieve that suffering.
- Belief that you can make a difference.
- Willingness to respond or take action
- Sense of satisfaction/Warm glow.

Self-Compassion

What does it feel like?

Brief Meditation

Discovering your ideal
compassionate inner guide

Myths about Self-Compassion:

- Self-compassion is WEAK
- Self-compassion is SELF-PITY
- Self-compassion leads to SELF-INDELGENCE
- Self-compassion is letting yourself OFF-the-HOOK
- Self-compassion PREVENTS HARSH CRITICISM which is needed to motivate ourselves.

Fears of Compassion

- “It is not just the absence of compassion that is important but also the fear of compassion. This means that people may actively resist engaging in compassionate experiences or behavior.”

(Gilbert, McEwan, Matos & Rivers, 2011)

Research on Compassion

Over 200 Studies show it has a positive affect.
Self-compassion is strongly linked to:

- Wellbeing
- Increased resilience and coping
- Increased motivation and flexibility
- Better health
- Improved interpersonal relationships.

Max Plank Institute Study – 2013

Research on the neurological affect of
empathy vs compassion
in people's response to suffering.

Group Exercise

Fears and Myths about Self-Compassion

Some surprising qualities of compassion:

- It's *Boundless*. By giving more of it, we create more of it.
- It's *Empowering*. Engendering the wish for something better for others is a powerful affirmation of their worth.
- The fact that someone is a stranger or a foe, does not preclude the *possibility of caring* for his or her pain and sorrow.
- To relate to someone on the basis of *common humanity*, profoundly affects how you see and treat that person.
- In practicing compassion we shift the focus away from self to others which can *free us from excessive self-concern*.

Cultivating Compassion Towards Others

- Picturing the object of compassion.
- Thinking of a scenario of suffering and difficulty experienced by that person.
- Wishing the person to be free of pain and sorrow;
and
- Feeling this wish with all one's heart and fusing one's mind with it.

Meditations

Based on our Common Humanity. All beings want the same things.

Compassion Meditation is based on the Intention to be rid of our own pain and suffering, as well as a loving concern that others also be rid of their suffering.

Loving-Kindness Meditation is based on the intention that we experience peace, joy, and happiness and that other beings also experience those same positive states.

Loving-Kindness and Compassion Meditation

- Begin with ourselves. Our wish for happiness and freedom from suffering.
- Then, focus on a loved one. We wish this person joy, peace, and happiness (loving kindness) and freedom from suffering (compassion)
- In ever-expanding circles of attention, we wish joy, peace, and happiness for a “neutral” person then to a “difficult” person and finally moving toward the largest circle – wishing joy, peace, and happiness for all beings.

Loving Kindness
and
Compassion Meditation

There is more to Loving-Kindness and Compassion
Meditation than Wishing.

It is a Quiet Practice with Powerful Results.

It overcomes the Negative Bias of the human brain.

“Just like Me”

- A key insight in Buddhism is our Common Humanity.
- What facilitates the arising of empathic concern for another is a sense of connection - in fact, a kind of identification - we feel with the other.
- Compassion meditation uses phrases such as “Just like me . . . others too wish to attain happiness and overcome suffering”.
- Perceived similarity between us and another person influences our concern and compassion for that person.

Meditation

Embracing Common Humanity

Priming Our Heart for an Active Compassion

- A final practice is called *active compassion meditation*. We are priming ourselves to actually act on our compassionate concern.
- It is an adaptation of a Tibetan practice called *TONGLEN* which means “giving and receiving”.
- Tonglen is synchronized with breathing. As we breathe in, we imagine taking away pain and suffering. As we breath out, we imagine sending out peace and good fortune.

Meditation

Priming Our Heart (Tonglen)

There is no charm equal to tenderness of heart. (Jane Austen – 1817)

I learned that courage was not the absence of fear but the triumph over it.
(Nelson Mandela)

What wisdom can you find that is greater than kindness?
(Jean Rousseau – 1778)

What is that one thing, which when you possess it, you have all other virtues?
It is compassion. (Buddha)