

compassionate activism

Session 4 Video Transcription

Sandra: Hey everyone, so thank you for showing up to our session number four of Compassionate Activism. Today we're going to be covering the second half of the third practice. The third practice is the practice of gentle mindfulness which we covered last week and compassionate self-accountability. We didn't get to compassionate self-accountability last week and what we're talking about today and they really go together. They are very hand and in hand so we're going actually do a little bit of review of the mindfulness since we have to know what we are being held accountable to before we actually engage in compassionate self-accountability.

I want to just start out by reviewing a bit from the previous sessions. We had already covered the first practice of humility and curiosity and then the second practice of distinguishing realities and acknowledging external reality and then as I've already said we have covered the third practice, the first half of it of gentle mindfulness. If folks have any questions that they want to be asking about those different practices please, you can just unmute yourself and start talking or you can put them in your chat box and just we'll share them on your behalf. You can also just share if something came up for you about the different practices as you're thinking about and them hopefully implementing them in your just daily life as you are going about. Anybody want questions or share? Looks like Dolores wants to unmute. Okay, I made it for you. There you go.

Dolores: Great, thank you so much. I definitely have been thinking a lot about the distinguishing realities and sometimes when I'm- in the past couple of weeks when I was doing this work I've been thinking about certain situations where traditionally I would habitually I should say, hold resentment and I have just been kind of really letting that go and being like, I wish it had gone this way and it didn't. Then thinking about ways to move forward from that. I think that's definitely part of incorporating.

I missed the last sessions so I haven't caught up yet but I think for me that's kind of practicing the gentle mindfulness of treating myself well in the ways of I'm reflecting on the situation and so I think it's really been helping me kind of move forward in the way that I'm doing this work just within the past couple of weeks because I haven't been focusing or putting energy towards why didn't I do it. Instead I've been putting my energy towards okay, here is some steps to move forward.

Sandra: What has been the impact on you and your ability to- as you move around the world like this? What's the difference?

Dolores: I've definitely been feeling- there is this specific instance that I'm thinking of in my car that happened yesterday and I just remember thinking like not as

stressed, let me just let go of this right now and I've been able to use it as a way to separate my work and my life, like my paid work which is a huge chunk of who I am and my identity but I've been able to focus on that during work hours. Yesterday when I was off the clock I was like I'm not going to think about this now. I'm going to let that go and I'm going to think about something else and so it allowed me to separate myself a little bit and decrease my stress level when I wasn't working and still say it's important but I don't want to focus on that right now.

Sandra: Right and you actually have control over that like what you feed in to your thoughts is what creates your experience every single day.

Dolores: Yeah, thank you for letting me share.

Sandra: Yeah, it's really powerful. Just the really critical thing that you were sharing is being able to distinguish the realities and for folks who weren't able to review the session too, just kind of briefly- the first practice of humility and curiosity really opens us up in thinking maybe the way that we've been relating to reality and what's been going on is not everything and so getting curious about what else might be happening. Then that really leads us into a second practice of distinguishing realities which as we talked about, there is actually three realities happening all at the same time.

The three realities being my internal reality which is just our emotional experience, our feelings, how we are interpreting what's going on which are very, very real. Then the second reality is external reality which is like what was actually being said and done and the energies that are being created. Then the third reality is the other person's internal reality which is as powerful and as real and as legitimate as our own reality except what happens in the most of the time is that we think our reality is everything. We start confusing what happened with this is how the other person should also be experiencing what happened just because I experienced this in that way.

Being able to distinguish them is actually bringing mindfulness. When you start distinguishing these realities, acknowledging them for what they are as distinct and just noticing, that actually is bringing mindfulness. You are getting in touch with the present moment of the external reality as well as your- starting to get a sense of your own. Then that obviously will then lead you into being able to get more in touch bring mindfulness to your external experience of your feelings and your needs that are underlying that kind of initial reaction. I just want to kind of show how that all flows into one another.

There are these lines that I'm noticing for today because when the sunset is happening, they are creating these line marks. I have those tiger thing going on, is that bothering anybody? Do I need to move or is that distracting? People are like looks pretty, I like it. I'm just noticing this tiger situation. I tried changing the blinds, that didn't do anything, just washed me out. Were there other questions that came about as I was talking just then?

Josette: We had a question from Marina. Marina, I don't know if you want to ask a question or clarify what the wording in there is, is the quality in the body supposed to keep shifting when doing mindfulness? I don't know if you want to add to that.

Marina: It was just when I tried to focus on what that quality was, it kept shifting and I didn't know if that's supposed to happen.

Sandra: By shifting can you tell me a little bit more about that?

Marina: If you were to put words to it, the words would describe it would change because it was more like from anger to kind of fear to more like what the physical quality itself is changing to.

Sandra: Right, that makes sense because our initial reaction that we are in touch with is really just that. It's the initial reaction. It's a tip of the iceberg. There is so much underneath that because we are not often times just reacting to a situation at hand, we are bring stuff from our past so there is usually behind our reaction there is just fear and behind that it's pain. Often times what we're most in tune is how we deal with our fear which is usually by getting stress, by lashing out, by silencing ourselves, by trying to make things go away, by judging, by getting critical, doing- all that stuff we are resisting reality. It's a very multi layered thing, our resistance to reality is very multi layered. You have to all the time have to dig deeper and keep getting repressant and as you get- as you bring mindfulness and you get touched with one layer, it actually may shift and reveal another layer.

Marina: Okay, thank you.

Sandra: Yeah, because at the heart of it there is some original pain that happened to us that created fear and now we are afraid of what happened in the past is going to show up again in the present, which may or may not happen but it's sometimes not really relevant to the current situation at hand. I read somewhere that fear, unless there's an imminent physical danger that fear is not really appropriate.

Marina: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sandra: It's not necessary for that present situation, it's really something that we are afraid of happening that came in the past that hurt us. Yeah, keep kind of digging down till you get in touch with what that fear is and the pain. We will talk more about that in a minute but yeah. It [inaudible 00:10:05] kept shifting and it would move around in your body because you store different feelings in different part of your body.

Marina: Thank you.

Sandra: I'm going to try this blind situation, Josette had a great idea, maybe if I turn it up. Oh, you are so right, brilliant Josette. Thank you. Any other questions?

Josette: No more questions from the chat as far as I can see.

Sandra: Okay, great. I want us- let me share my screen. I want us as always to think about a situation and because this is a very application oriented online seminar and so as always, choose a recently- a situation that happened to you and make it really specific. Specific to that moment in time. Maybe it's something that's representative of a pattern that you've seen but really I want you to focus on that situation that you still just really remember. It's not something that's extremely overwhelmingly powerful for you it's- I just want something that's

somewhat emotionally charged. Maybe in a level of four. Not going for the ten because as I said before we only have two hours together today so try and do something that's not- that's a little bit more manageable.

Looks like Abby wanted an example of a situation that would work but everything depends upon you. I can get you an example from my life that happened recently but- what's emotionally charged for me is not necessary what's emotionally charged for you. For example earlier this week I was texting with somebody who I know through work and we were going to get lunch together at some point at a council and so we did that. Hadn't met this person before and we started talking. He started texting me and getting really friendly and it was really funny at first, telling me about how impressed he had been with the compassion activism workshop actually. But then he started crossing some lines in his texting and he got a little bit too familiar, a little bit too forward, a little bit too quickly and I have not met this person.

There was a bit of an emotional charge. I was like what are you doing and this was also a self-identifying feminist who's engaged in this work because I know him through work and I was like really? Are we really doing this? Are you- we haven't even met and your texts are already becoming very flirtatious in a way that is very- and I felt was inappropriate given that we haven't even met each other. There is obviously like a history of feminist men who sometimes think that because they claim to be feminists, that kind of gives them a pass. They're not actually doing anything wrong when they're being inappropriate and I also reckon- there is like all of that. There is like no [inaudible 00:13:41] to this. That was kind all of that was- could have happened and it happened for a little bit for like a couple- like a minute probably.

I was like oh. When I was in that emotionally charged place, it was mild but it was there and I was like, "Well, I could just like ignore him." I feel like that's actually what a lot of people would do, just not respond. That wasn't what I wanted to do and so I distinguished- because that could have been what was going on for him at the same time might have been something different. At the same time I felt like it's important to me to share what I believe, what I'm feeling that my truth in that moment was that something inappropriate was happening. I wanted to say that. What I did instead was I looked at his situation, I said well he's sending these texts. I think the wording of it is inappropriate and I also know that in text, energy is really hard, tone is really hard to convey and I don't know what his intentions are behind it.

There could be a feeling of entitlement, there could be just trying to be funny, it could be a way of trying to get closer, making more connection because at first I was bantering with him back and forth those because at that point it felt more appropriate but then when it kept on going and getting a little bit more intense I was like oh. I sent him a text back and was like hey, think these texts are getting a little bit too forward and a little too- what did I say? It's feeling a little inappropriate given that we haven't met yet. I'm going to ask you to stop and I'll text you later about scheduling lunch. His response was like, "I'm so sorry. I didn't realize that. Now looking back definitely inappropriate, we haven't met yet so you don't know how I am." I was like thank you for taking responsibility for that, now there is no weirdness.

I gave him the opportunity to respond right to what my truth wasn't sure what his reality was and I was able to speak my truth and do what I needed to feel

good about myself. In that moment of being checking in with myself, was I feeling- that was mindfulness I was bring to the situation. I was in checking in with myself, I'm feeling okay, so maybe it was inappropriate. I don't want to continue this conversation in this way and then I thought okay, what do I need to do to take care of this need? I still want to maintain this relationship because I'm just getting to know this person, by all accounts there is lots of greatness, lots of wonderful things about him and I know that texts are a difficult form of communication to convey nuance and energy so the way I convey my feelings, my reality to him while creating space for him to share his reality- because also what I didn't say was when I sent that to him, sent that text to him I also put some smiley face or something or an LOL.

I did something to convey to him that I was still open to his conversation and I intentionally did that as an invitation to him to continue this conversation with me but redirecting it. That's what is one example of just kind of walking through the different steps, different practices that we've heard. Any other questions that came up in the chat while I was talking Josette?

Josette: I didn't see any questions but I did text you about going out to face during the story.

Sandra: I thought I was in face during the story. You can talk and interrupt me when I'm-

Josette: Okay.

Sandra: Thank you.

Josette: I texted, I didn't know if that went through, I didn't hear your phone buzz. I actually have a question come in just now from Adventurous42. I don't know if you want to ask it? I can- let's see, read it really quick. Sandra, I always love it when someone accepts how I'm seeing something regarding- if they take responsibility I'm happy when they acknowledge and have respect my point of view where I'm coming from but when they deny I get so frustrated. What would you do slash what have you done?

Sandra: Right. I believe when I'm sharing my truth, when I'm sharing my reality that is my responsibility for myself. How they receive it is how they receive it and I can't control how they receive it. I can only invite them to receive my reality as my reality. A lot of people don't understand that there are these three realities. They think- so what happens is that when my reality is different from their reality and when I say that- I told them, I was like hey, this text is really inappropriate. If he was like- the text obviously didn't feel inappropriate to him. That's why he sent it. Had he had come back at me and was like well I didn't mean to be inappropriate so it's not inappropriate, he's still operating under the assumption there is one reality. He thinks there can- he thinks that they're mutually exclusive.

One thing that you can do is just be like yes, I get that that was not how you experienced it and I experienced it differently and here's why. Then you can ask also- so you experience it as being okay and totally appropriate, why that is? Maybe he could've been like I was just trying to be funny, like I would say this normally in person but I would be normally able to read your energy, read your response, your reaction to it so I forgot that in text. He could have said

something like that, I don't know. There is a logic for everybody. My reaction makes sense to me. I'm not going to respond the same way to that text versus somebody else. There is no one way to respond in this world. It's all shaped by our past and our personalities and then what choice- what we choose to do with that initial emotional reaction.

The most you can do I think and it's respect, so inviting the other person to consider your perspective as being your perspective and then acknowledging that their perspective is their perspective, I think that's incredibly humanizing actually. It sounds like something small but it's just how we show respect for everybody's agency and autonomy actually. What I find is when you are explicit about that, that they have their perspective and that's valid for them and that I have my perspective and that's valid for me, they're just not the same and that's okay, you could have a conversation there. Not always but you're much more likely to than if you go in and try to just change their perspective to be your perspective because that's the same thing they are trying to do with you. You're doing this, this, again. Does that make sense?

Josette: We have another question from cbfigures. They write, I struggle with this so much. I'm an empath. I take on energy and emotions, I constantly have to tell myself, "I'm not responsible for other people's behaviors" but I firmly believe that you are responsible for the energy you bring to the space. How can I separate and not take on when other people are being rude or dismissive? How can I respect my own reality?

Sandra: If and there are definitely folks where it's easier for them to have boundaries with other people's emotional energies and there is other folks where it much more seeps in and it start to mix with your own energies. That's definitely, definitely very true and it's staying grounded in your own reality is starting to distinguish, it's starting to one, just knowing that you are an empath and that you are going to more be naturally inclined to absorb other people's energies is incredibly useful. Know that walking it and then so that you can question is where the practice humility and curiosity comes in. You question what you're if it doesn't seem to make sense for you particularly and you know somebody else is really like manifesting that energy.

You are like what's going on and you're checking with yourself. You taking on that energy is still your reality but you're trying to unpack where it's coming from so you start questioning not your experience. That's not what I'm saying, I'm not saying question your experience, no but I'm saying is what's the source of your experience? That's what mindfulness will bring, help you get in touch with where is it coming from right and then if you do second practice of starting to distinguish the realities and maybe look at especially acknowledging external reality so what happened? What was said, what was done? What's the energy in the space independent of what you are bringing to it, what is just the exchange?

You let go of the story of the make believe of assumptions about what's happening. All you know is something was said, something was done and there is some sort of energy happening and knowing that your energy, knowing that these three things like your ability to receive them and accurately perceive them, is not always 100%. It's often times flawed. It's often times interfered with by how, one of the things from the past or your personality you bring to the situation to just- like I said just be cautious about what you're perceiving

and know that and just check in. Not saying you're wrong, I'm just saying check in.

When you can kind of be like so it seems like this other person is really saying and doing some stuff that I'm absorbing, just identifying not as yours and being okay so I'm feeling that and it's not coming me, what is coming from me. How are you reacting to that person's energies, their negative energies? Are you noticing it and just letting it pass, letting it go like a day dream? Or are you reacting it to a way where you are trying to fight it, resist it, its presence in your body and actually but what you're doing, you're struggling to get somebody else's energy. You are actually holding on so you are gripped by it. That's what happens so just kind of noticing with mindfulness and noticing that's their energy, letting it go.

What I'm saying don't resist the fact that's it's there because it's already there. You can't do anything about the fact that it's there. If you keep resisting its existence it's going to stay with you and it's going have you in the grips of it but if you just kind of say that's what I got and let it go, because it's not yours to begin with. Then we are going to talk about compassionate self-accountability. Is there something else that you need to do to help you let that go but that's what I would recommend. Anything else just Josette?

Josette: I don't see any further questions. Feel free to go ahead and jump in anyone and star six to unmute phone voting and I think you are on the phone.

Sandra: Someone said it's hard to stay reflective if your feelings are being hurt. Yes, so there is all that. It's so hard. That's why this is a practice. We are going to suck at this in the beginning and that's okay, like you are not able to run a marathon just because you can walk. You can try to run a marathon, it's going to be really painful and really hard and you are going to suffer later on after you're done. It's a practice. This is why I said choose something that's easier. Don't go for the biggest trauma in your life to begin with. Do something that's a little bit easier and practice. Practice distinguishing right and take that pause. This pause that we create, so when we notice that you get stressed frustrated, angry, sad anything, any of those feelings, these are all incredibly, incredibly, incredibly powerful. Incredibly powerful signs, red flags for us saying that somethings going on.

Now maybe about the past and maybe about the present situation, I don't know. You don't know either actually until you check in. Like I said initial reaction is just that. It's a moment and you take that initial reaction and be like, hey what's going on and take that pause. As I said in the other session, bathroom breaks are great even in a business meeting, you can take a bathroom break. Just go, take that pause and check in and what this means is that you are treating your feelings like they matter, because they do matter, taking them seriously and just check in.

It's not even about self-reflection directly, like that feels really hard for folks I think. What I'm do saying is get in touch with where you are now, which is self-reflection but like it's coming from- I'm saying it from a different angle. You are not trying to get somewhere else you are just trying to go deeper into what's already happening. You are not trying to change anything, you are not trying to judge anything. Reason why self-reflection feels hard for folks is because it's all wrapped up with a lot of self-policing and self-whipping. That's

why it feels hard but know if you are just trying to get deeper within where you are, as you keep doing this you are going to feel relieved.

I know it sound weird but when you get in touch with your pain and fear- I'm not talking about stuff that's like you are still dealing, it's raw like you're having flashbacks or panic attacks. That's a different situation which I'm not referencing that level of severity of trauma but more on the day to day basis. You're actually are going to feel relieved because you know what you are dealing with. Otherwise you are like in the toxic swirl so I'm going to stop there because we are about to go into that but anything else?

Okay so let me share my screen. Today, we are talking about the second half of the practice primarily but obviously the two, gentle mindfulness and compassionate self-accountability go hand in hand. I'm going to do a quick review of gentle mindfulness. It's important to distinguish mindfulness from what we normally do which is be caught up in our toxic swirl. The toxic- well, the swirling can be toxic, usually is but sometimes it's just swirling and you know it's swirling because it's not actually about what's going on in your internal reality right now. It's resisting external reality usually and resisting your internal reality. You are not dealing with what is, you are focused on how you want it to be different. How you want to- you are shaming it, you are judging it, either another person or yourself and you are very attached to it being not what it is right now. Which is what I like to call make believe because it's literally like make believe.

It isn't what reality is, you are making up what you think it should be and you are being like that should be real. You should know better, you shouldn't have done. I can't believe you would think this way. I can't believe you said that, I can't believe I did that. Why am I so [inaudible 00:31:52] weak? Why am I- those are all make- it's sort of make believe. Does that make sense to people? Where they caught up in the toxic swirling. In the chat box I look to you.

All right, I'm getting yeses. The other thing is just swirling. Sometimes it doesn't look like toxic swirling at least in the obvious sense, because I think all swirling is not helpful swirling. What we do- sometimes we do perfectionist swirling or we do like intellectual swirling or justification. It's the same thing. We're resisting what reality is because we want it desperately to be different which is understandable, but when it shows up as us refusing to be present to what reality is, what's going on right now ,it's just not very helpful, it's not very useful, it's not very workable. If we intellectualize stuff- we're thinking about how we're thinking about how it should be and it doesn't necessarily feel necessarily toxin, we are still not necessarily experiencing life.

We're thinking about how we are experiencing as opposed to actually just experiencing and so when we bring in mindfulness what's different is that we stop thinking about what's going on and we are just experiencing what is going on and that means that we are acknowledging it for what it is, accepting it. Not in the sense that it's acceptable, like we love that this [inaudible 00:33:49] micro aggression. It's not this thing where it is acceptable. We are saying that micro aggression happened. It just happened, we are acknowledging that. We are not saying it shouldn't have happened in the sense that we are denying that it happened. We obviously want it to not have happened but we acknowledge that it did happen and we focus okay it happened. Now what do I want to do?

There is no right or wrong to reality. We have preferences obviously but it is what it is. The sky is blue, this chair is hard. It has an impact that we like, prefer and don't but there is no actually wrong or right about it. It just is, like I'm short, that's not- can't do anything about that one. The mindfulness brings you back in touch with your internal reality and also noting what is going on external reality. Mind you, you don't know the other person's reality so if their reality is still not available to you, not yet. Not until you ask and they share. I'm going to stop there for a second just so I can take any questions about that review. The review of the swirling, toxic swirling particularly versus mindfulness and how you experience that. I think people said they're trying and they are practicing and so I love to hear how did it go, what went well, where did we get stuck.

This course is led and is as powerful as you show up for it to be. I know that's scary to talk- I personally do not like to talk in groups very much. I know it's hard to say, it's hard to know because I'm always in front nowadays. Yeah, I get you. I get it. You can still share. Chat box if you don't want to say anything. Just write it down and Josette will say it for you.

Josette: Yes, we've got a question. It is, so you know this is about family member but still stuck in old patterns. How to separate the old from the present? I guess when you know that the situation you're experiencing is about a family member and you're still stuck in old patterns. How do you separate those old ones from the present moment?

Sandra: We are driven in most part by inertia. We are creatures of habit, we do things mainly because we've been doing them for a long time so it's not- if somebody does something, the likelihood that's its related, it's just that them acting out that same pattern, it's high, it's probable. It's also possible they're doing something different, maybe trying to be different or maybe accidentally they just happen to be in a good mood and they don't mean the same thing that they did before.

It's important not to erase how they had been but not limit them to how they had been in the past. Because everyday we are creating ourselves and every moment we are creating ourselves. We have the ability to change and grow. If we didn't we wouldn't be taking- if we didn't believe that was possible, we wouldn't be here taking this program. People have- everyone has the ability to change and grow and become more of who they truly are. Just that most people don't have the skills or support to do so which is how we as when we model that for ourselves, we make that possible for them. They can see it happening with us. In the immediate way, I think the practice of humility and curiosity and what's going on? Is that what you meant? What did you mean about that? Tell me more, I shared another session those can be the most powerful words you ever say to somebody. What did you mean by that?

Tell me more and then you find out actually where are they coming from. You can just do that and that happened recently to somebody with me. Somebody was a habit of always wanting- not always- somebody who likes to do things their way and is not very flexible, wants to do things when they want to do it. That's the story that I have about this person. It's not always true, it's just sometimes true. Which in my mind I can make into always. No one is always something and so I asked this person to do something. They said they'd do it later and I'm like again? I mean it's a small thing. It's going to be on me to do it

because I want it done now but it's your responsibility in the first place. This all happened in my head.

Then I did the practice again. I said okay. Do I know why I said that he doesn't want to do it now, he wants to do it later? I don't know? What do I need? I want it done, I wanted it done yesterday. It's not done. I need somehow- I could have just done it myself but I would have felt like that would have been me silencing myself and me just taking that on already which I have a pattern of doing. That's a pattern that I've been breaking. I've been trying to invite people more to support me and this is something that this person had already agreed to do. I just- [inaudible 00:40:21] I am too so I am back. I am back and was like, "Actually I would really prefer if you did it right now because of XYZ. Can you do it now?"

Person came back, was like, "Oh, I was going to do it later because I was about to make lunch for me, but yeah I'll do it now if you need it now. Didn't realize that." Thank you, I appreciate. Yeah, people have patterns but they are not trapped just like you are not trapped by your habits and patterns. Just kind of remembering that and that people want to- people who love you want you to be happy but sometimes they need your help in doing- in knowing what makes you happy, that's the other thing. What else we got?

Josette: We have a question from Akeelah. That was like in third [inaudible 00:41:18] by others. The question goes, sometimes it's even hard to articulate what reality I'm experiencing and articulating it. Sometimes it takes time to realize what is happening. How do I get out of this paralyzing flash foggy state so I can address the present more appropriately?

Sandra: Mindfulness. It all goes back to this. This is where I want you to- what does mindfulness do? It ask you to stop focusing on the swirl. The swirl is you trying to figure out, overanalyze, predict, assume and treat all of that as truth. When you treat all that truth you are like focusing on all these things that's not your internal reality. Your internal reality is your feelings, it's your needs and the thing is we've been taught to ignore and repress our feelings and needs and to care about what everybody else is doing and what everybody else is thinking, to make everyone else more important than ourselves but like I said that all we have is our internal reality. That's it, we don't have access to this external reality out here. We don't have access to it. Everything is filtered through our senses and often [inaudible 00:42:56] by our past and our personalities.

What I'm trying to get- give you these skills how to free the pain from the past and not feel trapped by your personality so that you can choose to show up in whatever way you want to. You got to do that healing work first. You got to get in touch and so it's just like you have those thoughts, you have that swirl. Give it up like it's a day dream. Just let it go and so that you can sit in what's coming up for you. Because whenever you swirl, that means- it's actually really useful when you are swirling sometimes because it's telling you there is something underneath it that you are trying to avoid.

What you are trying to avoid is your internal reality, your pain and your fear. You just got to take that moment to breathe and pause. Then do that check in so do folks want me to do that check in because this is- well, yeah we are going to do it anyways. We are going to do it anyways. Let me look at my PowerPoint. We are going to practice checking in with our bodies to create the physical

spaciousness so that we can check in with our emotional state. Anything else before I move on?

Josette: There were no more questions just folks kind of speaking through their experiences with the topic at hand.

Sandra: Great. There is some traffic, do people hear that? No? Okay, just making sure. I want to talk about compassionate self-accountability. They feed hand to hand because the thing is as I mentioned the last session, mindfulness is great in the sense that it's getting a lot of visibility. People are talking about it, people are writing about it, people are talking about practicing it in the United States and that's wonderful because I think mindfulness is a wonderful tool for healing. It teaches us how to treat our feelings, our reality like they matter because they do.

As I said before we've been taught to not treat our feelings and our needs matter, like we don't matter. I don't want to just stop there and then I think is the problem, one of the problems with how mindfulness is talked about in this country is that we stop at just having it be something we do to calm our bodies down, to not be so stressed, to not be so upset, to not be angry and I say no. There is a reason why you feel that way. Use mindfulness, people are using it for physical mindfulness like getting in touch with their physical bodies is what we often do in yoga. I think that why it's partly why it's so popular it's because it's one of the few places in our society where we are encouraged to be in touch with our physical bodies.

Don't stop there, don't stop there. If we just use it to self-soothe what are we pacifying for? What is this mindfulness and service stuff if it's just to help us continue to suffer and not deal with the actual source that if it continues to allow us to be oppressed, marginalized and exploited. Then no, that's not what this is here for. Mindfulness is not here for that, at least that's not how I use it and that's not how it's used in Buddhism which is where it comes from.

Really it's about helping us to get in touch with our feelings and the underlying need so that we can engage in compassionate self-accountability. What this means is that- as I said before systemic oppression teaches us that our internal reality doesn't exist. It erases it. It makes it not matter. For people with marginalized experiences obviously, that's self-evident but even for people with privileged at least in these instances. They have been brainwashed and they have been fed all these lies about what is true, what is happening. They've been told that they deserve the privileges they have and other people don't deserve it. They've been taught that why people with marginalized identities are telling lies. They just have a chip on their shoulder, just playing the victim card.

They also can sense there's something wrong that. They've been taught to ignore that and they've also been taught to ignore the pain of being disconnected from other people. I ask you to think about who does somebody need to be to bend over backwards to justify the murder of a young child? What do you need to be- how much have you cut yourself off from your feelings because of these lies you have been told? The racism like supremacy that just because it's a black child that was killed that you're justifying their murder. All of that is true for internal reality. All of that- we were told to cut off ourselves from regardless of privilege or marginalized identities. What compassionate

self-accountability helps you get in touch with is that yes this is our experience.

This is something happened to me and this is what came up. Now what do I want to do about it? It's taking the yes end approach and so folks know the yes end approach. We live in like a yes or no black and white binary world that says only one can exist and as we've been talking about there is more than one reality. There is always generally more than one or two options even and so what this is talking about is saying yes to reality. Yes, I acknowledge that reality happened and I'm choosing how I'm going to respond to it and we choose a response through the words and actions and energies we create.

Josette: Sandra, can you move the screen up so that those can see the last bit of the last PowerPoint? Just kind of scroll.

Sandra: Yeah.

Josette: Thanks.

Sandra: Thanks. I had to make it full screen so I can't see anything that's happening right now so you let me know if something is happening. Like I said our realities consist of just the words, actions and energies that we create. This is the end part because we still have choice. People often get confused that they if they fear, feel and acknowledge the feeling then they're going to have to react in a certain way. People don't want to be in touch with their nagger because they are afraid they are going to lash out and hurt somebody. That's a valid concern, I don't want people lashing out and hurting people in anger.

At the same time you can feel the fear, feel the pain and anger and make- and choose to respond, choose to manifest, choose to express in many different ways. You can- when people most often think about is they repress it, that's one option. They can lash out that's another option. They can also say, "This hurt me. I'm angry about this. Can we talk about it?" I'll be like, "I need you to hear this. This has really upset me." There is all these ways that you can actually express your emotions in very responsible ways. That's neither repressing yourself or enabling coddling the other person. You can feel like- you feeling is one action, you taking the response is a totally different action. I'm going to talk about in a second just how you go about doing that but I want to stop and take questions for the moment.

Dolores: [inaudible 00:52:41] earlier by someone name Aliyah that I though was a perfect for this section. They said I feel like it so hard to balance armoring your own reality while still remaining self-reflective so that you are able to catch yourself when you are misunderstanding things slash thinking things that aren't true.

Sandra: [inaudible 00:53:02] at the same time then. Do one at a time. Usually I say life is very like circular. It's not- it's kind of like a DNA, it's like that. However this is somewhat linear. I would say you really need to go through this process, definitely practice one to three in order. You'll get faster at it so you just do it in one fell swoop like I do but in the beginning do it in order. If you jump- like so if you try to like understand where they are coming from when you are more emotionally charged, that's not going to really work out.

If you are emotionally charged around something you have responsibility to take care of yourself but if you are trying to get in touch with their reality when you are in your toxic swirl then you- yeah, it's confusing. You're swirling. You are trying to access somebody else's reality. Oh no, cant. At the same thing for you accessing your own reality, if you are caught up in this swirl and your try to get in touch with your feelings, whoa that's a lot. No, you are like trying to access your feelings through your swirl. That's not going to work out for you. That's why people can talk endlessly about the same things over and over again and they get to no resolution whatsoever, because they are spending all their time in make believe world.

They are distracting themselves. That distraction can be in other forms too. It can be through addictions are a great way to distract yourself. Maybe people do that. It's effective. It's harmful obviously in the long run but it's effective in the short term. Food, TV, social media, cell phones, games, books. When we use them to run away from a reality on a regular basis that's you trying to get away. I would say that's swirl too in a sense. You got to give up that swirl and just set it aside. I'm not saying- it's not something you give up once and for the rest of your life it never comes back you, no you can just give it up for that second. Give it up for that second so then you can stop and breathe for a second and get in touch.

You do this regularly anyways. You do this when you are in the zone. Say you're in work and you are like in the group or maybe you are exercising and you are in the zone. That's how you normally talk about being in the present moment. That you are in the zone and like the whole world falls away and you are just there. The make believe world fell away. You are always just there but you are living in your make believe world. When you are in the zone you are present. You are really present, when you are having fun dancing maybe. I'm a big on dancing so for me I get in the zone and I'm just there, I'm not paying attention to anything else but how I'm feeling experiencing my body grooving to the music.

We all have lots of moments that we've been present we just didn't identify it as such. You found something really funny or just laughing a lot, you're playing with the kid and enjoying ourselves and not thinking about anything else. We're not having sex and we are just totally there and it's marvelous, same thing. That's being present in the present moment, which is inner body's experiencing as opposed to thinking about our experiences. Is that clear?

Dolores: We had another question that goes, can you suggest responses for the case when you expressed to someone else that you were hurt by what happened and asked to talk about it and they respond with a hard no?

Sandra: You could ask them, "Oh, you don't want to talk about it? Tell me more. How come?" When somebody says something to you you don't like and you don't understand why they said that, you don't understand why they said no, what's the logical thing, what's the appropriate response to when you don't understand why somebody said no? You ask them why they said no. Usually when we are so emotionally charged and we're like oh my God, I can't- it goes there. Understandable, it's just not very affective in that moment. If you're having a still emotionally charged reaction and you still want to create a space where like they would want to talk, you want to invite them to talk, I say be transparent.

I mean like, "You know what? I have a lot of feelings about this right now and I want to hear why you said no. Can you tell me?" You don't have to pretend that you kind of peaceful. I'm not saying that. What I'm saying is that say yes to your reality, I feel worked up, Say yes to their reality, they said no and I'm going to invite you to tell me more about what's going on with you because I don't know why you would say no. They might say no to that and you have to be like I want to know why you don't want to talk about it. What's going on? And he still might say no, they might say yes, I don't know. They say no and be like well do you not want to have any conversation whatsoever? Do you want not resolve this? Because that's what it sounds like to me.

If they say no I do want to resolve it then okay. "How can we talk about this then?" If there is somebody like I don't intend to hurt you, I didn't intend like a lot of folks do, it's like, "Well, I gather you didn't intend to and yet it still happened so I want to make sure that it doesn't happen again. Can you talk about it?" Some people still might say no and that's because of their own pain and their own fears and you've got to get that. It's just a conversation but they're scared of something. They're scared as you're. They just don't necessarily show it in that way. A lot of people show that their fear through anger. When they get afraid, they lash out. A lot of people go silent. Most of us don't know how to invite people and be okay with a yes, no counter offer as a response.

They're as lost as you are. Yeah I get that. Even if you don't feel like that, you feel like they're all-powerful. You feel like they got all the power in this situation, that's your reality of them, that's your experience with them. That's not their experience in themselves I bet you. I bet you it's not. If they still refuse at the end of the day to engage in conversation, that's- you say yes to that. Yes, okay, you don't want to talk about it, I still do and so if and when you're ready come talk to me. I want to have that conversation and then you go about your business. You go about your business and you know that you spoke your own truth, you took care of yourself. The rest you have to work out between the two of you and maybe it won't get worked out. You took care of yourself and that's the most important thing.

Usually what happens in this situation, is that you don't take care of yourself and you walk away. We confuse the two, we think that not engaging anymore is causing us the pain. No, what causes us- I mean we have some disappointment with that, yeah. Maybe some grief even but the pain, that comes from us not taking care of ourselves. When we don't take of ourselves, yeah we feel pain and yell. That's why we have got to talk about compassionate self-accountability.

We have got to take care of ourselves and it doesn't really- it's nice when the other person responds the way we want them to but it's not about that. It's secondary. What it's about is about us and our internal reality, are we taking care of ourselves? Any questions on that [inaudible 01:02:43] right there?

Josette: We had a few questions come in. Not necessarily about the last part that you mentioned but the person asks, but I found difficulty to create conversation with the person- when that person is my supervisor or if in the work setting, how to deal with the reality where there is a hierarchy in decision making process. Is it possible to ask- to say let's talk in this setting? When I tried to do

that, the person reacted it's funny and so it's just- I don't know if you want to give a little more context to that question?

Sandra: Yeah, I can just respond. It gets a little trickier when you have power dynamic but the same rules apply too, because they are just a human being trying to do a good job or maybe they are not trying to do a good job, I don't know. I'm going to benefit of doubt and assume they are trying to do a good job. Once again like all people, they're not mind readers and managing well is- people are usually accidental managers, meaning that they are good at their programmatic work and then they got promoted and people assume because they are good at doing some programmatic work that now they are good at supervising other people.

When those are two entirely different skill-sets and personalities and so that's why most people are terrible managers and then the organization usually doesn't give them enough time to actually manage properly. If they don't have actually capacity to do good managing, supervision. That's just kind of that reality that's very common, I don't know in this situation if that would be. You kind of got to look it from their perspective too. I say this because unfortunately most managing positions- management generally, the pain of a bad supervisor is on the person being managed.

The responsibility, the power to manage well is the manager. You have pain and responsibility for two different people. That's why most management relationships are terrible. What I would do is have- build it up through informal conversations first and you share from your intention and the impact like, I want- I have this project and I want to do a good job and I'm feeling like I'm really struggling in XYZ place. I need X, Y, Z from you. Can you help me out or what do you think of this?

You're inviting the manager to talk about it with you. I talked- I had a manager who- it is fascinating when we talk about certain things, she's a wonderful, generous, compassionate, super-intelligent person and what we know is the social justice organization and then we would talk sometimes about my work and all of a sudden she would go, she would just stop listening to me and she would just go and she would- there's no space I felt for me to have a conversation with her. I talked to her a couple of times about our conversation communication patterns.

I asked her what was going on with her. I took responsibility for my reactions. I said when this happens, when you talk for a long period, I feel shut down. I took responsibility for me shutting down and not even telling you about it. I'm going to tell you the next time it happens and so that we can try to shift the conversation. I expected her and hoped that she would take responsibility for her side, for her the way she would just go on for like five, ten minutes straight and the impact it had on me and she didn't. She just didn't, she said that she couldn't see a way of getting around that. That was just how she talked.

There wasn't really a willingness to have that conversation and so- we had it a couple times- we had probably like three, four times. For me what I did was I said, "I tried." There's generally you refusal so let me figure some other situation out. I said yes to okay she refuses despite multiple conversations where I have taken responsibility and expressed my needs and my reality and I inquired into hers and I know- I understand her reality and she's not willing to

change or consider, she's not even willing to consider changing anything in her behavior to make this work.

I said yes to that reality, I acknowledged it and I chose my next step which was to get a new manager and I got a promotion along the way. That's what I did. I could have sat there and swirled more being like how could she? Why can't I? Blah, blah, blah. No, that would be make believe world again and so I was like okay, I've seen this, all right. Here's what I'm going to do to change it now. I switched it up at work and that's a whole another conversation about how I made me that happened but it was interesting because I later- that manager left the organization and I got my old manager back again and now she's all concerned that I'm going to be unhappy again and we have some more conversations about it and she said, "Sandra, there are nights that I stay up thinking that I'll never be as good of a manager as that other person and that I'm always failing you."

I said "You know what, here's what we can do, here's where I'm coming from back a year ago when you were supervising me. Here's what I've learned along the way. Here's where I want it to be different between the two of us. How are you willing to be different?" She tried, it wasn't easy for her. In the end, I left anyways because that was my path. That's how I handled that. Not all managers are so bring understanding, compassionate to how they supervise but I think people most part want to do a good job. They just need some help knowing what that means, they are not mind readers right?

If you just have a really toxic or abusive or controlling manager, that's a different story. That's a different story. That would require going above them, I would say to involving somebody else and then engaging that conversation with that person and try to work something out but yeah. Any other questions?

Josette: Yes, we had another question from Loraine. Loraine wrote, even here there or in between options, example do you want to talk about it later? Sorry, she was offering questions to ask someone else for those situation. Next question from Caleb reads, what happens after you find or discover what your fear is or where it is coming from? Even though you know the source, how do you overcome it?

Sandra: We're going to talk about that after the break. That's the compassionate self-accountability piece. I have a how to, like a five-step process. [inaudible 01:11:45] feminism, we like lists. If not we can take a five-minute break here. Yeah? That sound good? All right. It's like folks are coming back. [inaudible 01:12:07] you got a question you want to share? Wondering how to do not to seem angry. Well, if you're are angry you're angry. There's nothing wrong with being angry. Remember, there's no right or wrong to this. It is what it is.

What you choose to do with your anger is up to you now. You say yes I feel angry and what is underneath that anger? What's going on? Is it coming from my past? Am I being reminded of that? Is there a collective trauma at play? Is there something violating happening right now? It's really unpacking it for yourself, getting in touch with it. Then- because anger when it sits at that surface level and it's just that initial reaction and that's it, yeah holding on to that is really toxic and to keep showing up is pervasive in your life. Yeah, that's really harmful to you actually. It's not really helping you to deal with whatever is making you angry.

There's a reason why you feel angry. Except sometimes it's not about what's happening in front of you. Sometimes, often times, it's about what happened in the past or collective trauma. Individual trauma, collective trauma and that's all real. Just because it's not about what's going on right now in front of you doesn't make it less real. Sometimes it's about what's happening in front of you. It's just about getting in touch with that.

Anger is incredibly important and it's useful to us when we use it to figure out why we're angry and then doing something about it. If we just hold onto it and we just let it swirl, we're just in this toxic swirl of anger, that's not really that helpful. When you speak from there it's not going to be very useful either. If you speak from what's behind the anger, that's driving it and you talk about that, that's a conversation you could have. That's something you can work with. I don't think people should try to not be angry. I don't think you should try to not be angry.

If you have anger, say yes to it. Say "Yes I feel anger and I'm choosing to do X with it now." That's your responsibility to choose what to do with it. The fact that it came up, that just happened. If you spend your time trying to make anger go away and not deal with it, ignore it, resist it, minimize it, blame somebody else or yourself or whatever instead of being just like hey I feel anger. Okay, got it. What do I want to do now? If instead we're like we're resisting it, yeah you're in make believe world. You're like I don't want to be angry, what are you angry?

Don't try to be not angry, if that's where you are at. You actually hold onto your anger more. You hold onto the anger, the anger is going to hold onto you more the more you try to resist it and so you're like hey, I feel angry. Yeah, I feel it coursing through my body. Okay. Oh, it's about this? What do I want to do about that now?" That's what ends up happening. That's going to take me to the actual steps. Perfect timing. Let me share my screen. All right now.

One is obviously get in touch with your internal reality, your mindfulness and as I said acknowledge it. It is what it is and listen, now a lot of times we're trying to figure it out, we're trying to overanalyze, we're brainstorming. We're just hacking away at it. No, you just got to stop the swirl and listen. Just listen for what's going on and you'll be surprised at what comes up for you. In the visualization exercise I did in the last session we talked about asking that feeling in your body what it needed from you, if it had a message for you. In the beginning it might be hard for you to hear it, but in time you probably will hear it. Because remember reality is just words, actions and energies.

You haven't been listening so you are rusty at it. If you can listen it's going to tell you stuff. You are going to feel stuff. Then once you have something concrete to work with, then you can do something about it or you can do about it then or later. If you have a need and you don't want to deal with it, you don't want to do anything about it, you do the same thing. You get in touch. Well, why are you resistant to that need? What's going on? Because sometimes we do have conflicting needs and we feel like they're conflicting. It usually just means we're not being creative enough. There are other options, there are many options but in that moment we don't see that. That happens and so it's like well, what can you be with? What need is underneath that?

Just like when we're talking about the other person saying "No I don't want to talk about this," and you're like, "Oh, why don't you want to talk about it? What's going on for you that you don't want to talk about it?" Maybe they say no to that and be like, so why don't you want to about why you don't want to talk about it? It's the same thing, you're doing it for yourself this time though. You're just doing it for yourself this time. I want folks to help folks practice with the swirl. I want folks to close their eyes. Close your eyes and just listen. Sorry. Just listen.

Listen to your mind and listen to the swirl. Now it's probably saying all sorts of stuff to you. Maybe it's telling you, you have to, you should have, you're a bad person, you can't or maybe it's like "Oh my God you're not getting this, it's so confusing, why can't you get it yet?" Enough with the swirl. Do people get access to the swirl? You can say in the group chat. Yes. Yes, I heard my swirl. I was ... right. Loud and clear, got it, yes, hearing the swirl. She's nasty. Very not nice most of the time. That was scary, yes. This is where you live most of the time. We're not in touch with that.

It's so funny we live in the swirl but we're so out of touch with our internal reality, we're not even in touch with our swirling internal reality. The first step is just to be aware that's going on. If it's unconscious you can't do anything about it. It's going to drive you but if it becomes conscious you're like "Swirl, hello swirl. You're not very nice. I don't like you as much." I want you to do something else. I want you to close your eyes again. Take a couple of deep breaths and I want you to listen to the sounds around you.

Maybe it's the fridge, maybe it's my voice, maybe it's the traffic. All right, open your eyes again. Did you hear the swirl when you were listening to the reality- external reality? Not at all. No, are birds chirping. You all got present to the sounds around you. You got present to your external reality, so how simple that was. It's not actually that hard, we just make it really hard because we don't let go of the swirl but you just did it and it's about making these moments more frequent and longer. Just because you can't tune everyone for the rest of your life immediately as of now doesn't mean you can't do it. It's just listening.

You listen to the world around you. I want you to think about the situation that you chose in the beginning of this session. All right, so I want people to close their eyes again. Get comfortable. Take a couple deep breaths. Just feel your breath come in and out of your body. Breath come in and out of your body and I want you to just do a scan of your body starting with your feet. Just notice, don't try to change, move up to your legs. Just kind of feel where it's tense, where it's tight, where it's loose. Move up to your chest. Don't try to change anything, your arms, your shoulder. Just bring your attention to rise up through your body, just noting.

Now I want you to think about the situation that was emotionally charged for you. Remember what it's like, that emotional charge coming off for you. Feel where it is, notice where it is showing up in your body. Put your hand to where you feel it. Whether it's your chest, your stomach, your back. Bring some awareness to it, pay gentle attention to it. You are not trying to change it, judge it, make it go away. No, say yes to it., I feel X and that's okay. Just pay attention, what does it feel like? How big is it? How- what does it look like?

Just pay gentle attention to it and listen to it. Listen to it with your body. Breathe into it. Tell it, "Yes, I hear you. What do you need from me?"

It may or may not say anything, that's okay. Just pay attention to it, listen to it. Don't force it to say anything to you. Just listen and pay attention and say, "Yes, I hear you." I want you to thank it, thank it for showing itself to you. Then start breathing again, notice your breath coming in and out, in and out. Start wiggling your feet, your hands and open up your eyes. Maybe nothing happened for you in that exercise. Maybe everything happened for you in that exercise. There is no right and wrong, you are just trying to get in touch with something that was there for you, that's it.

I want to go to a whiteboard, our favorite activity. I'll just have people write down what that was like for you and as well you can do it in the chat. Write down what was that like for you and in the whiteboard if you can put your feelings around it, your reactions to it and then in the group chat if you want to write something more about what it was like for you. If you have any questions particularly.

Josette: For folks who aren't able to use whiteboard, what you do is you enter full screen and at the top there should be a little green bar that says you are viewing Sandra Kim's screen. Next to that there is something that says options and you can hit annotate and then you should get a little toolbar that comes up with the mouse, text, draw, arrow, erases etc. If you are not seeing that let me know in the chat.

Sandra: Anybody want to share what that was like for them?

Susan: I will share. This is Susan. I will share what that was like for me.

Sandra: Great, go for it.

Susan: I chose a different charged situation this time. I chose one that happened today. I've been using one in the previous sessions that happened a couple of months ago. It's very weird what came up for me is I ... I'm not taking good physical care of myself so when I got in touch with what was going on with me all I could think was my outer skin just feels so dirty because I haven't taken a shower in three days. I'm hungry and so I've just asked myself when you said talk to it, ask it what it feels like. I just said to myself why have you not taken a shower for three days and just like it always- it happened last time when you did this. All I could do is cry.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah and that's okay.

Susan: Well, yeah but who wants to live life in this pain.

Sandra: Yeah, it's not fun.

Susan: Yeah, it's not.

Sandra: What can you do for yourself? What do you want to do for yourself that you heard in that moment?

Susan: Well, obviously first is go take a shower but I would like to feel, I would like to understand why I have to tell myself to go take a shower. Why do I have to remind myself to drink water? Why do I have to remind myself to eat? I just want all that to come naturally, I just want to feel worthy. Doing right by myself.

Sandra: Right and so you do that by taking of yourself. You can do both. You can take that shower and you can eat and you can wonder why was that hard before, but as you do it now you are showing that you are taking care of yourself.

Susan: Right, yes. Five minutes or an hour a day of where I feel good is basically I guess enough for now.

Sandra: Yeah, because it's five minutes more that it was yesterday.

Susan: Yeah, that's true.

Sandra: What happens is that when we want everything to be fixed like we had a magic wand and to understand everything and for everything to be easy and of course that's what we prefer. It's the same thing for social justice. We want the world to be free of oppression all at once and it's not- it's like it's not- if it's not all at once everywhere, every moment in every situation like it's not real. That's not how this works. It's just about this one moment. I have a choice in this moment I got in- you got in touch. Your body said I want to take a shower and you can say- you can say, "Why do you exist? You shouldn't exist. You should just be doing it. Why do we even have to go have this conversation?"

Susan: All right.

Sandra: That's make believe, that's swirl again right?

Susan: Okay, thanks. Yeah.

Sandra: It's not useful and you're like okay I want to take a shower. When you want to do something what can you do?

Susan: Well, I can just go do it.

Sandra: Right. It can be that easy.

Susan: It can and it's just ridiculous to think I have to tell-

Sandra: Swirl again. Swirl, swirl.

Susan: Yeah, okay. Thank you. Yeah, you're right.

Sandra: It's okay. We're going to do a quick formula, quick formula that's like I feel X and that's okay. Like I feel it's hard to take a shower and that's okay.

Susan: Okay.

Sandra: If you don't mind I would like for you to say that, close your eyes and say that to yourself five times either out loud or silently.

Susan: Okay, as soon as this is over I'm going to go take a shower-

Sandra: Oh wait, not yet. I want you to say it's hard for me to take a shower and that's okay.

Susan: Okay, it's hard for me to take a shower and that's okay. It's hard for me to- I want to say it's hard for me to make myself take a shower and that's okay. It's hard for me to-

Sandra: Take a shower.

Susan: That's okay. It's hard for me to take a shower and that's okay. It's hard for me to take a shower and that's okay. Is that five, I don't know?

Sandra: No, you're good.

Susan: Okay.

Sandra: What do you notice coming out for you as you said that?

Susan: I'm a little bit at peacefulness.

Sandra: How is that different from the swirl?

Susan: Well, it's wonderful and it's ultimately what I'm looking for, it's how I want that 24/7.

Sandra: Right and so you got that in that minute that you were saying it's okay. I can feel this way and that's okay. The only thing that's different about you right now is that you changed the way you related to it and before you were resisting. You were like it is ridiculous that I even had to do this. I shouldn't have to, this is stupid of me blah, blah, blah. Instead you are like okay, yes. I struggle to take a shower and that's okay.

Susan: Yes, I agree.

Sandra: Is it easier now to take a shower?

Susan: Yes.

Sandra: Look at that.

Susan: Yes, thank you.

Sandra: Look, you're smiling too.

Susan: Yeah.

Sandra: Right, exactly.

Susan: You're the best Sandra. You're wonderful. I look forward to this class every week. It's helping me a great deal.

Sandra: You're doing the work, you're showing up, you're trying, you're willing. That's the most important to this thing, is just being willing to try this stuff out and you just did it.

Susan: Okay, thank you.

Sandra: Thank you so much for sharing. You should be in chat. You might want to check out the chat. You've got a lot of love in there.

Susan: Thanks.

Sandra: Here's the thing. We spend- and I'm going to talk about you Susan just for a little bit, sorry. As a great example. She had got in touch with that feeling, she got in touch underneath it right? That she felt like she wanted to take a shower and she was struggling to do so. There's no right or wrong to that. She made herself wrong for it. She made herself wrong for it. What happened is that she's putting all her time and energy into being wrong for not taking the shower so she couldn't take the shower. That's a lot harder. You've been making yourself wrong all this time. That's what we all do.

We either make ourselves wrong, somebody else wrong. We do all these things to resist reality instead. When she started being like okay yes, I struggle to take a shower even though I want to. It got a little easier for her. She got a little more peace. Now she's more able to take a shower. All it took was her letting go of the swirl. She knows she was in the swirl, I said she was in the swirl. She let go of it and she used this formula, I feel X and that's okay. Think about all it- somebody mentioned in the chat, the swirl takes up so much energy. Yes it does and think about all that you get done on a daily basis with the swirl holding you like a dog with a bone and you are the bone.

Imagine if you put all that time and energy away from the swirl and into you just accepting your feelings as they are and treating them like they matter and taking care of that. Speaking your truth and living your dreams. Instead of running away from what you are afraid of, you are moving toward what you want to create. How do you think I'm so effective? How do you think I get it done when I get it done? We're a small team right? A lot is possible, I wasn't always like this. Like I said, I have PTSD from various things. There was a time I couldn't get out of bed. I would have to get out of bed by like 02:00pm because I had to go to the bathroom so bad, that was the only thing getting me out of bed.

I have been there. We're going to be doing these quick formulas. Like I said we are just our thoughts. We saw that was just our thoughts. It's that our thoughts often times determine our experience. They shape how we view something and you saw on that wonderful modelling that Susan did, thank you so much for that. There are these two quick formulas. There are two quick formulas is that one, I feel X and it's okay or you can say I feel X and that matters. Sometimes that's all we need to do, we don't actually have to even act on it. We just need to acknowledge it and be like yeah, it hurts. Yeah, I'm afraid.

We should just bring that gentle mindfulness, we just hold it. We hold it like a hurt child. Like that hurt child that we were once were and didn't get that kind of love and care. Well, now's your chance to treat that hurt like it matters because it does. Then if you also feel called to do something about it, you can

say, "Well, when X happens I feel Y because I need Zs", so that's kind of a fuller statement. I'm going to do A or I can invite somebody to do it A. This is a spin-off of non-violent communication people are familiar with NVC. It's a great motto if you're interested in something that's clearly focused on communication, non-violent communication, NVC it's called. This is something that you can use as a formula to put together what your experience is. That can also help you move away from the swirl, because if it doesn't fit into this sentence it's probably swirl.

I want to have folks do this in breakout rooms. I know it's 07:50 but we are probably going to go about 10 minutes over, ten to fifteen minutes over and if you can't, you need to bounce, that's okay. We're just going to be practicing these two formulas so you can do that on your own time but together right now, I'm going to put you all into breakout rooms and you're going to be doing I feel X and that's okay. As you do that let me just-

Josette: We had a quick question about giving an example for the second point. I think it was the I need Z point.

Sandra: Oh, okay. We're going to practice that in a second after this. Let me do this first and then we'll definitely give you an example.

We're back. I want to do a whiteboard again and then have people write down what it was like to do that exercise and what they're trying to just focus on, I feel X and that's okay as opposed to the swirl which normally fills their head. Just write down what is- the feeling for you was and if people also would share in the chat box, that would be great. One more and if you have any questions, please definitely share.

Josette: I'm no longer co-host, can you add me again?

Sandra: Right. There you go.

Josette: Thank you.

Sandra: Somebody says, usually easy for me to say how I feel but very hard for me to say it's okay. I find myself asking is it okay? Right, so one thing is it is okay in the sense like the sky is blue. It's not okay in the sense like I'm [inaudible 01:45:17], I wanted to be really cool so I can be cold all the time, [inaudible 01:45:20]. It's not that kind of It's okay. It's like oh I feel cold, that happens, that's okay. Sometimes it's really hard and we really don't believe it. I remember when I did this exercise, where I said I have the right to be happy and so I said that to myself in the mirror every single day for a few months and when I did I that, I did have the right to be happy.

I would cry because I just felt like it wasn't true and the fact that I still do not believe in that hurt and that's why I cry every single time. It was a new growth I was creating for myself. Because I was- when I would hear, when I would feel myself do things from that belief that I did not have a right to be happy that it was my lot in life to suffer, to sacrifice for other people. Then, when I would feel that way I would just say to myself instead that I have the right to be happy.

For folks when it can really be hard and you say it's possible that I have the right to be happy. If you struggle like, I feel angry and that's okay and that's hard, you can also say "I feel angry and it's possible that it's okay." That's something you can say and it feels like there's still no way I can say that and feel like that's possible maybe like, "I feel angry and it's possible that it's possible that it's okay." It kind of gets to a place where you can just acknowledge what's going on and it is what it is. It just is what it is. I accept that it is what it is, not that it's acceptable but that it is what it is. I acknowledge it. I'm going to go back to the video and where there are things that people you want to flag and share Josette?

Josette: Yes and I actually forgot to take a screenshot of the whiteboard but that's okay, it will be in the video. We had someone who said, [inaudible 01:48:01] I believe said, are you saying that it's okay to own it? Like turning the light on and saying "I'm afraid of the dark and it's okay so I'm turning the lights on?"

Sandra: Well, that would be the next step. If you say yes, I'm afraid of the dark and what I choose to do about that is to turn the lights on, exactly. That's compassionate self-accountability, that's you trying to relieve your suffering. That's you taking action to respond to your need. You're in the dark, you don't want to be in the dark. Okay, what are you going to do? Turn the lights on. The swirl would have been, I'm in the dark, no I'm not in the dark, I'm not really in the dark, no the dark's okay. Damn you for being- for the darkness to exist. How dare you? That would have been the swirl. You see how useful that would've been?

Yeah, we do it all the time for our emotions. It's bizarre when we do it for our physical reality but when we do it for our emotions we think it's totally okay. It is okay in the sense of that's what's going on, it's just not very helpful.

Josette: You had another person, Marina say going against the grain, against years of conditioning and a few people seconded that in terms of what they felt about that activity, felt like it was going against the grain and years of conditioning.

Sandra: We are taught to raise our experiences to minimize our experiences. Just accept them as like it is what it is, it happens. It's happening. Wow, it matters. I'm taking it seriously now. Somebody also wrote, I feel disrespected and that's okay. I want to elaborate a little bit on that. Because I feel disrespected and that's okay. It means that I feel disrespected and that's a feeling that's coming up for me and I acknowledge that that's how I'm feeling. It doesn't mean that I'm okay, I love being disrespected, it's okay that it's happening. It's not saying that. It's saying that I'm experiencing disrespect and I'm not going to ignore it, I'm not going to treat it like it doesn't matter, I'm going to make myself wrong for it. I'm just going to be like I'm feeling disrespected. Okay, what do I want to do about it now?

That's the key. It allows us when we accept and acknowledge that's what we're feeling, we can then be like, okay now what? Now what do I want to do? It gets us out of that swirl. It looks like people really felt that was working for them. We are going to do the next one and we are going to go over by a little bit. Sorry about that but I feel like this is obviously critical. We share the screen so people can do the next thing. Like I said a lot of the times just acknowledging that your emotional reality is something that you do feel something is enough and sometimes you want to do something more.

When you practice this for example- right, so I'm going to give an example. When this person texted me with that inappropriate text I felt kind of perturbed by what was going on. I felt kind of confused because I wanted it to stop and I needed to know what was going on with him. I asked the other person- I didn't actually ask him, but I could so I could ask the other person to tell me. Why did you say that? What did you mean by that? It could be something like that.

A more clear example would be a physical one. As I mentioned it's easier for us to do when it's physical. When it's cold outside, I feel cold because I need a jacket. I'm going to get a jacket and if I don't have one I'm going to ask someone if I can borrow a jacket. That's it, basic. When it comes to our feelings, it can be really hard sometimes. We are going to practice in this situation. Practice just saying it five times to each other and then share what was different about it for you. We are going to ten minutes of this as well so we are going to go a little bit longer. Let's just do five, I'll do five minutes sorry. We'll do five minutes, so we'll come back at 8:15.

Anybody want to share what that was like for them? I already got some empowered, some people thought the I need part was really hard. Yeah, it can be hard. It's okay that it's hard and that you can still say it. At least to yourself, at least you can say it to yourself. If anybody really struggled with it, this is a great time to ask for some support. Anybody wants to do that? Did anybody struggle with doing this exercise? I see a couple of people in the chat saying that they found it harder to do. If you want to have- get some coaching from me right now, do that brave souls.

Akeelah: I don't mind because I really did find it a struggle, because for me it was actually what I said before. I'm trying to almost articulate and maybe it's about practicing more mindfulness to articulate what it is that I needed and what I found out for me that's a bad feeling to even admit but I found out I'm jealous. I'm jealous of a person I really like who's a good friend and I'm jealous of her because she can do something I find very hard. Alexis helped me a little bit to go through that little bit but it's because I understand I need to look at my own capabilities but there was- I'd felt there was something else still underneath that and I didn't get there. I just didn't get there yet.

Sandra: That's possible, I mean trying to make it work within this time frame. We'd have had a little bit more time right?

Akeelah: Yeah, a lot happened.

Sandra: This statement- the way it sounds like, I feel jealous. Okay, I feel jealous and that's okay.

Akeelah: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sandra: Close your eyes and say that to yourself.

Akeelah: Okay, I feel jealous and that's okay. It is weird. Okay, I feel jealous and it's okay. I start to feel a little bit of sadness underneath that.

Sandra: Okay, I feel sadness and that's okay.

Akeelah: Okay, I feel sadness and that's okay.

Sandra: Say it again.

Akeelah: I feel sadness and that's okay.

Sandra: Done?

Akeelah: Yeah and it's interesting- actually what I'm realizing is that as you're expressing the layers, what's underneath you are actually liberating because underneath that now, what I would say is I feel that I neglected myself. I don't think it's okay, I don't think it's okay but I'm going to say it's okay.

Sandra: It's not that it's acceptable, I'm not saying that, it's just it happened. You're acknowledging it's okay. You're acknowledging that- that's what- it's not saying it's acceptable or preferable, remember. It just happened.

Akeelah: Yeah, so maybe what I would want to say, I neglected myself and- okay, I accept that I know this now.

Sandra: You say I struggled to take care of myself and that's okay.

Akeelah: Okay. I struggled to take care of myself and that's okay. That feels totally weird but it's okay. It's okay to feel weird. I feel weird in accepting that I struggled to take care of myself and it's okay. I ignored my talents, my capabilities and that's okay, or noticing that I ignored my own talents and that's okay. Now I want to say and what am I going to do about that? Yes.

Sandra: We have a winner. What do you want to do?

Akeelah: Oh my god, I want to honor my talents. I want to honor my talents and take them seriously and put them out into the world.

Sandra: What is one small simple action that you can do tomorrow to put you down that path?

Akeelah: It's to write my poetry, it's to write poetry again. Tomorrow I will write poetry again.

Sandra: Right, done. Welcome to compassionate activism.

Akeelah: Thank you. I just needed that. I felt I've stepped through the layers and I just needed that exercise. I get it now, I get it now. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Sandra: Thank you so much for showing up for every bit of this wonderful models. Check out the chat box.

Akeelah: Okay.

Sandra: There is a lot of love in there. If you struggled just get pressing, get in touch with your struggle just like Akeelah did right now. She got- it was hard. Okay, that's okay. I feel jealous, that's okay. That feels weird but that's okay too. Then she got to I feel sadness, okay. I feel sadness. Oh, I was ignoring my

talents. I was neglecting my skills. Oh okay, all right, that happened. Oh, now I want to do something about it. Okay, great. You see how that transitioned. She didn't fight the fact that she felt jealous or sad. She did not resist the fact that she had been ignoring her talents. This is why it's called self-accountability. This is why it's called accountability.

There's something that we have not been honoring. When we feel pain, it's because we're doing wrong to ourselves, we're doing something that hurts us. That's why we feel pain. To restore justice internally we need to recognize where we have been not taking care of ourselves and then take the steps to take care of ourselves and it is in the action that we heal. In the acknowledgement we heal and in the action we move forward. That ultimately is going to heal us, because we're actually doing it. We're actually taking care of ourselves. We're taking care of ourselves like we matter because we do matter. We are showing ourselves that no, that systemic approach told us our experiences aren't real, like none of this matters. No, we do. It was incredibly poignant that Black Lives Matter chose the word matter.

Just kind of keep remembering that it's a combination of acknowledgement and then action. It is mindfulness and then accountability. We don't do it- whipping ourselves, making ourselves do something. When Susan wanted to say "I struggle to make myself take a shower," I caught her. It's not about making yourself do anything, that's just whipping. Who do we whip in our society to get them to work, to do something? Where does that come from? It comes from slavery. Let's not do that to ourselves. Got that? That mentality, we have to whip ourselves to make ourselves do stuff, no. We can just invite ourselves to take a shower, invite ourselves to write poetry. Then we can say yes, no counter offer to ourselves.

Just keep saying yes to what you're feeling and what are you going to do next? Yes to what I'm feeling and here's what I'm going to do. It can be as simple as that. When it gets hard be like, "Hey swirl, bye-bye swirl." Yes, here's what I'm feeling and here's what I'm going to do. It's almost 08:30 so I'm not going to have us do a takeaway in a group. I just want you to think about it right now ... and then if you can type it into this chat box so that other people can share it, can read it.

As I'm reading it I heard somebody- how getting curious about your feelings can sermon deeper realizations, it's almost like a letter back to what gave her joy. Right, you are naturally whole. You have the answers, you just have to get out of your own way, meaning get the swirl out of your own way so that you can have access to it again. All it takes is you being curious. Be humble, be curious. Get in touch, your whole world is going to open up because you are just your experiences, you're your internal reality. There's a method to all that I do here. I'm just going to say some of these things that people are saying.

A lot of acceptance and perceptive reality and the internal, when we are in pain there's something we're not doing for ourselves, healing equals mindfulness plus invited action. Hear the message and what I'm feeling and how it's trying to serve me. Inviting ourselves to take action and acknowledging our feelings we honor reality and heal ourselves back into wholeness. Yes, yes, yes, yes. This is excellent and I just appreciate everybody so much for showing up and doing all this amazing work and particularly to Susan and Akeelah for sharing in front of the group, brave, brave souls and so we see what happens

though, when you actually engage and I have coaching sessions [inaudible
02:06:31] up to three. I'm here.

Thank you all and have a goodnight!