

Speaker 1: All right, so welcome everybody! This is our second session for the compassion activism online seminar and I'm very excited. We had a lot of wonderful energy and questions and just engagement on the first session so I'm really excited to see what happened over this past week as you thought about what we discussed and then really delve into what I think is one of the most powerful ... I mean they're all powerful practices. This is the foundation for everything else. This practice that we're going to talk today which is the second one of distinguishing realities and acknowledging external realities. Really is what's going to allow you to do everything else. This is where people get tripped up in our everyday life. Usually because we don't know about what does it mean to distinguish realities.

I'm really excited for today. First, I just want to go over things from session 1. We have talked about the [inaudible 00:01:00] model for compassion activism which looked at how to ... It's 100% acknowledging of current reality and 100% committed to a vision. A more loving, more just vision of the world. We need to do this work in community, and in every moment. That's the three components of the model. In terms of our ability to be able to live from that model. To do our activism from that model. There are these 5 practices that we discussed. The first one being of the practice of humility and curiosity. The second one the practice of distinguishing realities acknowledging external reality. The third, practice of gentle mindfulness and compassion and self accountability. The fourth, practice of compassionate truth telling and consciousness raising inquiry. The fifth, practice of shared envisioning and non cooperation.

That was just a quick overview of the different practices. Just so you've got a sense of the bigger picture. Then we went much more into what does it mean to have a practice of humility and curiosity, which is really ... Allows us to come in thinking that there might be something that we don't know completely everything about. Which then means that there's something new for us. Which then allows us to have a different potential outcome to the situation. Usually [when 00:02:35] we walk into emotionally charged situations, we assume what everything is going to be about. What we're thinking may or may not be right, but if we go in thinking we know everything about everybody then there's no room for anything to be different. Usually what we expect it's going to be about is not that helpful. We're left stuck in it. By the nature of emotionally charged situations.

That was a very very very quick summary what session 1 was about. We wanted to just take any questions that people had in order to deepen your understanding. Anything that came up over the period, over last week.

Speaker 2: Yeah [you 00:03:18] have questions posed by [inaudible 00:03:18].

Speaker 1: You sound fuzzy.

Speaker 2: Am I fuzzy? Oh no. Okay I will fix that.

Speaker 1: You're good now.

Speaker 2: Oh, I'll be closer. In the meantime we have [inaudible 00:03:37] with a question.

I don't ... Oh she might be muted.

Speaker 1: You want to read it Josette?

Speaker 2: Yeah. The question was, "You had asked us what to do. Asked us what do you not know for sure about the other person in the situation. This sort of stunt [me 00:04:00] would be great if you could give us examples of the same."

Speaker 1: Yeah. When looking at the practice of humility and curiosity, the first part is that ... Often times we think we know what the other person is thinking and why they're doing what they're doing. It's possible what we think maybe what's going on for them might be where their coming from but we don't really know until we ask. Until we ask, then it's actually just an assumption. When you come from a place of humility and curiosity, you recognize that you don't know for sure because you're not a mind reader. You don't know. You see themn as a [place 00:04:45] from a humility, and then you get curious. "Okay, so if I don't know where they're coming from in that specific situation then ..." You can ask a question for them. Which will then also lead into the next practices which is more concretely how do you ask questions. We actually have the fourth practice about conscienceless raising inquiry.

First you've got to acknowledge the fact that, hey, what you're thinking may or may not be right about that person but until you ask you don't know for sure. Until then it's just an assumption. When you treat an assumption as truth, then that's problematic. Because it's actually not the truth. You don't know yet.

Any other questions

Speaker 2: We had one from Ally. Ally if you want to ... You can unmute yourself and ask a question, or I can read it as well. It's up to you.

Speaker 3: Hi. My name is actually Alice not Ally. I don't know what it's saying that. I had a question about transitioning from curiosity to humility when in a charged situation. What techniques are best used in that zone.

Speaker 1: I would go first from humility to curiosity. I wouldn't go from curiosity to humility first. That's a harder jump to make. If you first recognize that maybe I don't know everything about what that other person is experiencing, where they're coming from. But even I'm experiencing where I'm coming from. We are usually operating the tip of the iceberg. We're running around in our lives. We're doing our things. Stuff happens. How much are you actually connected to even your own experiences. Through your own feelings. Your own needs. Your own body. When you're just going about your normal daily life. You're not usually. Yet we're the ones who ha ... Are the experts of our own lives. We're the ones who know the most about our own experiences. You can imagine if you on a normal basis, as you're just going about your business. You're not actually that in touch with what's going on with you in reality. Imagining, okay. If that's how aware you are with going on with yourself, imagine how much you actually know about somebody else? It's way smaller than what you know about your own experience right? I think acknowledging that when we assume things about other people, that it actually is an assumption.

What often happens is that we take things from the past, and we make it true for the present and the future. Say somebody has a tendency, has a pattern of not doing something because they forget or whatever. Just random example. In the past that they forgot to do it, and that's what happened. We often just assume that that's what's going to happen in the future. It's possible that that's true, but when you go in with the assumption, without asking, maybe they didn't do it because ... There is actually a valid reason to not doing, maybe something bad would have happened if they had done it. They were trying to actually protect you from something. Or maybe something that was really important in their day and took priority. There's all sorts of reasons why something could happen and we don't know until we ask.

That would be ... Just acknowledging that as a real possibility, is what can lead to going from humility to curiosity.

Another question?

Speaker 2: Next up we have Jen. Jen if you would like to chime in?

Speaker 4: Hi, thanks. I was wondering about last week when we were talking about acknowledging versus accepting. I was just wondering what the actual difference is. Does acknowledging means that I would just smile and say nothing if I heard something offensive? Does acknowledging mean that I would say well I see that is your point but I think this and that. How do you do that? Because for me my instant reaction is to say something. I tend to react right away. I'm just wondering how to go about that. How do I stay in control in the situation without offending people or stuff like that.

- Speaker 1: Right. We're actually going to be talking about what is that distinction between acknowledging, accepting, and treating something like it's acceptable. We're going to talk about that later today. Let's just put that question on pause for now.
- Speaker 4: Awesome, thanks.
- Speaker 1: So I see ... I see Abby's question. I just want to share that. Unless Abby wants to share it verbally herself.
- Speaker 5: Sure Hi. I'm Abby. My question is about ... I think for [those 00:10:32] of us, many of us have experienced negative things in the past and may have protective mechanisms of recognizing red flags or something in people. I'm trying to reconcile that with what you're saying about trying not to make assumptions about people. Find a balance. Seeing potentially harmful situations for what they are based on what we've experienced in the past, versus not making assumptions that someone is actually doing what we had experienced in the past. I was hoping you could talk more about that.
- Speaker 1: Yeah. I'm not saying that we shouldn't learn from the past. Definitely not saying that. That's why I wanted to make sure we talked about your question because I think this is really critical distinction to really understand. Is that I'm not saying ... What you think might be happening. What your speculating might be the cause. It may or may not be true, I don't know. The thing about [systemic 00:11:35] oppression is that it's status quo. The reasons why people, we have statistically certain things happening ... At a really high level. Very pervasive in nature. There's a reason for that. These are things, these are lies, these are behaviors that are normalized. These are things that are just ... We're taught to do is even good.
- What happens is that our anti oppression [analysis 00:12:04] really helps us pull out this stuff that we instinctually feel like is harmful and marginalizing and oppressive. But the rest of society is just fine. It's just okay. What I'm saying is not that that's not true in that specific situation with that specific person. I'm just saying that you don't know for sure yet. It might be, it probably is. It's part of the situation. Until you engage in conversation around it you don't know for sure. There are lots of reasons why people do stuff.

That's part of what we're going to talk about today. Is how we all have a different experience about things. How we view something. What meaning we give to stuff. It varies across the board. There's actually a bazillion different reasons that could be out there for a single thing. For somebody to do something. The reason that we speculate, may or may not be true. It might be. It also might not be. The problem comes in when we treat that speculation as fact. If you treat it as a speculation and we just checked in and was like "So I was thinking that maybe ... Is this what was going on for you? Is that where you learned it? Where did you hear about this first?" Where did you hear that X people are just like freaks or whatever. Or like going to hell or whatever random ... Erasing, marginalizing, demonizing thing that people say. Micro aggressions right?

We have a sense of where stuff comes from because it is ... Status quo is systemic oppression. At the same time you don't know for sure that person specific situation and we'll talk about later is bringing in that ... You have to ... It's weird. You have to give up for a second. Your anti oppression analysis, so you can check into see what's going on with them, but you bring it in when you ask questions to help them unpack what's going on with it. When we talk about consciousness raising inquiry. It's like you hold the thing that your speculating lightly as possibilities for what's going on with them, but you don't treat it like it's fact. That's exactly what's going on for them. That's the distinction.

Somebody else had a question about being naturally whole. Wanted to see how this tied into non-cis gender lives. Folks who are trans. Gender non-conforming. True [spirit 00:14:51]. I said I would talk about this. I'm just saying that I believe that we are all naturally whole. As life happens to us we start learning from society that how we are is not acceptable. For various reasons. If we don't fit in to what they think is the perfect ideal. That definitely ... One of them is the gender binary. I think people are naturally whole and however they are and ... We know how people are naturally when they most light up. When they glow. You know when you meet people and they just have this beaming glowing energy? You know they're being who they truly are. There's this level of ... Authenticity. I think it's really hard for a lot of folks to get to that point letting all that authenticity shine. [However 00:15:50] they may look. It usually involves a lot of healing practice. Some people engage as spiritual practice.

I don't think that's any different for folks who live outside of the "ideal social norm." I just kind of wanted to touch base with that question that we had.

It is 3:18 so I want to move on to talking about the practice number 2. Unless Josette you saw another urgent question there?

Speaker 2: Not an urgent one. There was a followup question, but I actually think we'll get to that sometime in the next few slides or next few meetings. I think that we can move on now and this one will come up again.

Speaker 1:

Okay great. The next thing I want to talk about is this is always an application based program. I want you to think about a specific situation and if you want it to be the same as from session 1, but I also encourage you to do different ones because I'm sure unfortunately we have lots of situations that are emotionally charged for us. If you want to pick a recent one. The main thing I ask is that it's only somewhat emotionally charged for you. Not extremely charged. This is just something we're practicing. There's a learning curve to all of this. We're not going to be very good at this at the beginning and that's perfectly okay. We're going to struggle. I want us to pick something that's a little bit easier to manage. Obviously the more emotionally charged means there's more pain, more baggage, more trauma. We would need to heal and release in order to get to a place where we can just be in the situation. Without it being so loaded for us.

Pick something that's just somewhat emotionally charged for you. Make sure it's a specific situation in mind. It's not a general pattern. It's just one moment. One moment in time with a specific person. You have a pretty good memory of what had happened. People got one? I'm going to assume. This one nodding their heads. Okay. I can see you so ... That's the nice thing about having videos, I can see folks actually.

The first I want to talk about is the practice of distinguishing realities and acknowledging external reality. We've set this scene with humility and curiosity. We've gotten to the place, we're like okay. I have some thoughts and speculations about what might be going on in this situation with the other person. With myself. But I don't know exactly. Here's how we can start to crack open what's actually happening. When we have an emotionally charged situation what do we normally do? We normally begin ... Because the emotional charge is so big, we usually go to start blaming the other person. Judging them. Wanting to change them. Make it different somehow. You should have known better. You shouldn't do this. I can't believe you. And, or we may also turn it upon ourselves. I can't believe you so weak. I can't believe you let that happen. Why are you always doing this. Why are you ... We judge and shame and minimize and try and change ourselves as well. The question we can ... How many people, I just want to see a show in the chat. How many people can see themselves normally doing this, in these emotionally charged situations?

Anybody not get what I'm saying?

All right. Everybody says yeah. We definitely do this often. Myself. Frequently. Perfect. Yes times 2. All the time. Right.

This is actually where we spend most of our time then. We spend most of our time in what I would call make believe. Make believe is that which is not real. They're things that we create. To help you better understand what I mean about all this stuff. You shouldn't be. How dare you. It could be different. I wish it was blah blah blah. I'm going to give you another example to help you understand why it's really just make believe. How it really impacts your ability to actually [address 00:20:49] a situation.

Say for example you're outside and it's cold. What do we normally do when it's cold? We get a jacket. Then we get warmer. Do we do this? Do we go, "Oh my god I can't believe the weather. Damn the wind gods. I hate the temperature. I hate global warming. I hate everybody. Why is my body so weak. Why can't you just toughen up?" We don't do that most of the time do we? We don't go "Ahh you should be different temperature. How dare you not be different." Sorry, we kind of do that in Canada. Okay well ...

Most of the time we have a physical thing like that happening. We don't go into this whole judgement of the wind and the clouds and the sun and the seasons. We have a preference. We're like, "I wish it was warmer." Most of the time it's, "Hey it's cold. Let me get a jacket." This ability to see reality as it is. Be like "It's cold, what can I do?" What we normally do is we spend all this time in make believe land. Where we say it should be different. We're so attached to it being something we want it to be. We can't actually see it for what it is at that time. We pour all our mental energy and all this time into make believe, then our ability to actually impact and change reality goes away. You can't change reality by focusing on make believe.

What gets really confusing is that we often act as if there's one shared reality that we're all apart of. The reality, well obviously the reality is the reality. The reality is there's three realities. I think it's easier to think about, that there being three realities as opposed to one reality. It's when we confuse the three that things get really jumbled together. What I mean that there are three realities. One, there's our internal reality. Two, the other person's internal reality. Three, there's this external reality. Most people think that we live, that we have a shared external reality which consists of our internal realities.

For example, when you're talking about ... Someone says a sexist joke. You found it really offensive. They're like, "Well I didn't mean for it to be offensive. I don't think it's offensive. I'm not hurt by it. Why are you hurt by it." They're acting as if their reality should be our reality. We do the same to them. We're like "It is offensive. It's sexist. You should get that." Do you see how we are actually trying to also impose our reality upon them. Just like they're trying to impose their reality on us. But they're just two different realities. My internal experience in this conversation with you, I'm having an entirely different experience than every single one of you. You're understanding of what is happening in this conversation is very much informed by your own filters that come from your past. Your personality. Fears and traumas. The information that you have. Things that you've been exposed to. Critical thinking. All this stuff informed what meaning we give to what is happening. What do we hear and not hear? What do we take in and not take in?

There's no right or wrong to that, it's just that we take in what we take in. The problem is when we start confusing our internal reality with other people's internal realities, as if this is actually a shared experience. Theoretically this thing, this iPhone exists. This iPhone exists. I have no direct access to experiencing this iPhone actually. Everything I experience with this iPhone is through my senses, is through my body, is through my mind. I don't have an experience that's independent out here, that's not through this filter. What happens is that when we start thinking that we can, we get into trouble. But if we would just be like, "Hey. I have my experience. You have your experience. What is it? Let's share." Then we actually start to have communication. [inaudible 00:26:18] who was like two shifts [passing 00:26:19] in the middle of the night. That's when most ... Lot of miscommunications, most of our communications actually, are this. Because we are constantly doing this unless we intentionally try to meet each other's reality by saying, "Hey, this is what's true for me. What's true for you?" You can accept the fact that they're different. There's no right or wrong to it. It's just they're different. They both exist. One does not cancel out the other one.

I'm going to pause right here and take any questions around this. That was very existential, that I just talked about. Josette do you have any questions that you want to point out.

Speaker 2: Yes, we have a question from Brittany [Ria 00:27:07]. Brittany if you want to ask your question? Your more than welcome.

Speaker 6: Can you hear me? Can you hear me okay?

Speaker 1: Yes.

Speaker 2: Yes.

- Speaker 6: Okay good. I was just wondering in terms of your own internal reality. Can you actually take that too seriously?
- Speaker 1: Too seriously? Tell me more, what do you mean?
- Speaker 6: Say you experience something. Other people are providing their perspective of it. You're certain it is one particular way. I feel like at times I dismiss everyone else's experiences on something because I only see my own. For me I feel like I'm taking it too seriously. I was wondering if other people experienced that too.
- Speaker 1: I think that's what's happening for most people when they're going [around 00:28:00] the world. Their reality is so real for them. It is real, I'm not saying it's not real. This is all we have is your own internal experience. It's just that that doesn't mean that ... When it feels ... Because it's what we know we kind of push out the possibility of other people having other realities. But just as real as our internal reality is to us, they have their own very real internal reality. Often times in these emotionally charged conversations, what's happening is that the pain that we feel is pushing out the possibility that they have a different reality. For them to be told that they've done something harmful, is also really painful for them. So they're pushing back on our reality at this. We end up doing this. We just try to push our realities to each other.
- Speaker 6: So then how do you stop that? How do you compromise that?
- Speaker 1: This goes to practice number 4. I'll tell you a sneak preview. It's that ... If you have a cup of water. You have a cup of water right? It's full. If you keep trying to pour water into it it's going to overflow. That's basically where we're both just trying to push our own realities onto each other. What if instead we temporarily, just for a second, poured that water out. That way we can receive another person's water. The idea is that ... If you learn about good listening skills. Like empathetic, how to be emotionally supportive, it's like ... You focus on them. You get into their emotional reality. You just receive what they're saying. You don't try to judge it, shame it, change it, minimize it, critique it, you don't do any of that. You just receive it. You set aside for the moment your own thoughts. Your own dialogue around it. You just receive. It's actually the same dynamic. It's the very same dynamic when it's you are trying to listen to somebody who's also done something hurtful to you. It's just a lot harder to do that.
- Speaker 6: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Speaker 1: The technique is the same. We'll talk more about how to deal with why it's harder in the third practice.

Speaker 6: Thank you so much.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Another question Josette?

Speaker 2: Yes. It wasn't a question, it was a comment that I thought was a really good one. I think that within their, there is a question and I lost it ... Oh no. Oh yes, but Alea. Alea mentioned it's also hard to trust your reality especially when people make you feel like you're being too sensitive. I saw a question or felt a question in that in my life, and I'm sure other people have it. Is that how do you trust your reality when other people make you feel like you're being too sensitive.

Speaker 1: Our reality ... Our internal reality, our connection to it, is often times this big. It's the tip of the iceberg is what we're experiencing. That flash, that stress, that frustration, that anger. That's what we normally get in touch with. Most of the time we're actually repressing, distracting anyways. By keeping busy through food, through addictions. A lot of times just business. I think cell phones and all that texting, gaming, and social media is not helpful for this. So just knowing that our internal reality, our connection to that needs to be deepened most of the time to figure out actually what is going on underneath that. That more surface, that surface reaction that we had. When other people say oh you're being too sensitive, oh it's not that big of a deal. They don't know. They're assuming they know your reality. They assume that what's true for them is true for you. That's not helpful either because they can't read your mind, they're not in your body.

At the same time you need to take time for yourself to figure out what's actually going on underneath it. It could be that it's actually something from the past that is being reminded. What your reacting to is not the current situation, but some pain, some pattern, some trauma from the past. It's not actually what was said and done in front of you at this current moment. That's possible. It could also be there's a miscommunication about the current situation that you need to get clarity about. It could also be there's a violation happening here. There's some harm. There's some legit harm happening here. Your emotional system is saying, "Warning, warning."

Your ability to know that and make those extinctions is related to how connected you can be to your actual experience, which is what practice number 3 is about. Just knowing that your internal reality is ... Is simply that. It's not the same as external reality. Which I'm going to talk about. The external reality of the current situation. Your internal reality are two different things. They may be related. They're connected somehow. It may be very light. It may be the external reality is actually just reminding you of something from the past and it's really not about what's going on in the current moment. That's possible.

It could also be something really is going on in the current moment they're trying to warn you about. That's possible too. Any other questions?

Speaker 2: Yeah. I have one last question that came in privately. The person asked, what about when others try to play victim. Do you just dismiss it or point it out?

Speaker 1: This is more in practice number 4 of consciousness raising inquiry. In layman's speak, what that means is you can ask. Ask and explore where they're coming from. What's going on for them. Because you don't know. It's possible they could be playing the victim. It's possible that something has happened. Like the boy who cried wolf. Five times, was just having fun. The sixth time there was actually a wolf. You don't know actually. This is where the practice of humility and curiosity is super important for you to realize that. Now is there a possibility, if there's a pattern that it might be just crying wolf? Yeah possibly. It's very very possible then, but ask then. If you don't know and you want to know, ask.

Most of the time we spend speculating, wondering, saying "Oh we should know better, they ..." But like, that's all make believe again. That's all make believe. Yes we would love for it to be different. It's not. You don't know something. You want to know it. Ask.

I want to go on and talk about external reality now. External reality is where we think we normally exist in which is not true. People are generally in agreement that we just exist in our internal realities. External reality, what is it? External reality consists of words, actions, and energy. External reality is ... Think about your situation. What external reality is, what were the words that were said? What were the actions that were done? And ... Usually what we're actually responding to are not even the words and the actions, but it's actually the energy. The energy of that conversation.

Now what's really important to understand about this is that because of our filters that we have, that are driven from our past. Often times from pain and fear and trauma. We actually have a very hard time receiving accurately those words actions and energies. In the same time. As we do this work and moments of great clarity, we're actually really able to be attuned to what is happening. Sometimes we're on point. Sometimes we're totally off. So that's why it's very important to check in. Because when we remember certain things we actually project a lot of our own assumptions, a lot of these make believes on to it. We actually don't even focus on their words, their actions, and their energy. I just want to put out there that it's very very possible that your memory of it or even your reception of it in that moment wasn't 100% accurate. I'm not saying your 100% wrong either. I'm just saying that our filters tend to get in the way.

The more emotionally charged something is. The more filters we have getting in the way because we have more of the past impacting our experience of the present moment. Often times when you're calmer, you're more peaceful, your ability to receive what is going on as it is, goes up. I want to stop also there just to take questions, because that was also lot of existential stuff.

Speaker 2: [crosstalk 00:38:22]

I don't have any queued up questions, so if anyone has any feel free to ask it now in the text and then I'll call on people to talk via voice. If there are people who are only on phone who want to ask questions, I saw there are some people. Unmuting is star 6 and I guess you can just jump in since we don't know if you have a question or not.

Speaker 1: So it seems like [many 00:38:57] people really got that.

Speaker 2: We have two questions that came in from [Praktisha 00:39:10]. Ask my earlier question? Yes you may. Present that now.

Speaker 7: Yes. I wanted to know if when you asked questions, if the other person reacts by making fun of you, or refuses to introspect, because these kind of questions make the other person introspect about their internal reality. How do you react to that?

Speaker 1: Yeah so if someone starts making fun ... If you ask them a question about what they did and they start making fun of you, then a natural question then is, why are you making fun of me trying to understand what's going on with you? Focus in on where they are in that moment. If you want them to be actually somewhere else, and they're not, that's also you being attached to them being different, you're trying to change them. That's kind of make believe world again. There's something wrong with make believe world. It's just not very helpful if you stay there. We all do make believe world all the time. It's just not very helpful, is what I would say. It's not getting you the results that you want. Instead look, go, "Oh hey what's going on right now? Well this person is refusing to engage in this conversation with me, why are they refusing?" Ask them. Oh, well I want to talk to you about this, but it seems like you don't want to. Is that true? Do you not want to talk about this? How come?

You focus in on where they are. The actual reality if what's happening. Versus your desire for it to be different.

Speaker 7: Okay. I mean these conversations actually usually happen on messaging and I guess that's a bad idea [crosstalk 00:41:06].

Speaker 1: Yeah. It's harder. It's harder. I would say most any kind of ... Challenging conversations are usually best, minimally with telephone. Ideally in person. There's video Skypeing now. You can still do that if you're not physically together. [inaudible 00:41:29] minimally telephone. Because this is where the energy comes into play. Energy is a huge part of how we communicate and that's what makes messaging, e-mails and text really difficult unless you use a lot of emojis. I use a lot of winky faces and gifs actually. Just to make sure they understand what my energy is.

Speaker 7: Right. [crosstalk 00:41:52] Makes sense.

Speaker 1: Why I'm asking somebody to do something for me. When I'm inviting them to do something for me, I will always ... Or I'll do like ... Actually no. That's not what I'm talking about. What I'm talking about. When they've done something I've not really appreciated them doing, and I want them to do something different, I will ask them via text, and put a funny gif. I'll do a funny gif or a winky smile. This is something I do with my partner. They know that I'm not angry, pissed about that and so mad at them. It's like no ... I didn't appreciate it when that happened and you did that. I would really love if you did this winky.

Speaker 7: That works?

Speaker 1: It works. It works. The winky face is critical for romantic relationships I would say. To be quite [honest 00:42:42].[crosstalk 00:42:44]

Add the winky face. Just watch the response, I swear. It's positive most of the time. Just saying.

Speaker 7: Thank you so much.

Speaker 2: I don't know if we have time for another question, one came in privately. The person asked, "How do I separate my own depression/PTSD from other internal reality and from external reality. Or is that something we'll get to later in the presentation?"

Speaker 1: We're going to focus on external reality for today. In the next session we're going to be focusing on our own internal reality. Because yeah. I mean right now I'm just saying these are three different realities that exist. Now we need to start separating them out from each other. That's really what the rest of the course is about. Separating out these three realities. Once you can name them as [just 00:43:40] distinct from each other, you can figure out ... Then you actually are meeting. When you're sharing the different realities you actually end up meeting each other in the middle through communication. Then you can choose what you want to create in that space instead.

That's actually the course. The model in a nut shell.

Speaker 2: We had one more question come in privately, if we have time for it. I don't know if we should move on, [but 00:44:17] ...[crosstalk 00:44:18]

Speaker 1: We can take one more question I think.

Speaker 2: Okay cool. This person asked, it disappeared sorry. "How to know when it's time to remove yourself from a person who's hurting you or has negative energy. Such as a friend with borderline personality disorder."

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah that would be for practice number 3, where we actually look at mindfulness and where we're getting in touch with ourselves and what is the impact of that person on our experience. Then compassionate self accountability. We feel like they are toxic. They are impacting us negatively. What do we want to do about that. That would be really practice number 3.

Generally, people who are trying to coerce you and shame you and police you. You can tell them that what they're doing is such and that it's harmful to you and invite them to stop. If there's something they want to communicate to you they can just ask. They don't have to push you. Coerce you. Spread that toxicity to you. If they keep saying no, that's not somebody who's obviously ... Cares about their impact on you. Is that a relationship you want to stay in, is the question.

We're going to take a quick 5 minute bathroom break. If you need to stretch, move around. This is also like a moment, check in with your [body 00:46:00]. See anything is coming up for you. In five minutes we'll be coming back.

All right, I'm going to stretch.

All right folks come back. I don't know if you can hear me. If you put me on mute.

All right. I want to just check in with ... Not check in. I wanted to talk a bit about family and loved ones. Because that's something that a bunch of folks had mentioned in the group chat. Just generally I feel like ... This is more difficult. It is more difficult to tell how we're feeling often times to people we really care about, than strangers. For strangers we can often ask them. Be like "Hey, can you do this for me? I need this." Most people I think would have an easier time saying that, asking for something. Telling somebody, a stranger what they want than their loved ones. When their loved ones has often times ... Wants to do things for us. Wants to make sure that we have our needs met. Cares about us. This irony of it. Irony that the very people that it's most difficult to do it with is also the people who are the most invested in our relationships.

I think that's not a coincidence. I think it's because they are so invested that we're so invested in these relationships. Because remember, we often conflate. We often confuse their reality with our reality. How many times when you've been ... If you have a romantic partner, at one point, or currently. Or even a family member, a parent, caretaker. You're like, "You should know what I need though. You shouldn't need me to tell you. You should just know to do these things. Or like they ... I [mean 00:48:20] there's very common stuff that happens. You get mad when they don't do this thing that you haven't asked for. You think that we love somebody, we feel like we're fusing with them. We become less distinct and become more and more conjoined. In a sense we also feel like, they can read our minds, they should just no. Because our realities have come together. Because you love each other so much. The connection is so strong.

That's not true. They're still two entirely different people. Just as a stranger can not read your mind. Someone who loves you can not read your mind. They're probably better at guessing. They know your habits. They know what you like. They're probably better at guessing, but if they also have a lot of baggage, they may be also making more difficult for them to be with you in that present moment. They may be looking at you, the person you were five years ago, ten years ago. Why is it hard to talk to our parents sometimes. They treat us like we're this rebellious teenager that we were twenty years ago as opposed to the adult that we are now. It's both. It's both that they can do. They have more information about us. They know more what we might want, but they also have more baggage with us ... That gets in the way of them being able to receive what we have to say.

The same thing goes for us with them. The very dynamic that we don't like that they have with us, we do to them. We often spent a lot ... I come from a family of immigrants, so my cousins are often like, "What doesn't our mother just get that this is blank. Not appropriate or you just don't do this." I'm always like, in Korea it's a different context. It is appropriate to do that in Korea. [inaudible 00:50:17] is like, you want her to get that it's not right for you. She needs you to get that that was right for her.

It doesn't mean that either one of you are necessarily wrong about wanting these two different things. That's what I mean, you have a different reality. It's when we start conflating the two, making them seem, acting as if they're the same. They should be the same reality, that we get into these problems. If we're like "Your reality doesn't make sense." In this cultural context, yeah don't do this. In my cultural context, totally makes sense. This was the best thing to do.

I'm going to, I think ... Do we have any other last minute questions about naming of external reality?

Speaker 2: Nope.

Speaker 1: I want people to go to break [out 00:51:18] rooms. I want you to ... This is where we're going to practice about making, starting to really [carve 00:51:25] out our internal reality and external reality. External reality, remember, is the words that were said, and the actions that were done. And the energy. I want you to not talk about the energy because that's often times where our filters get the most mixed up in. We just want to focus on the words and actions. Actually no. I'm skipping ahead. Sorry, I'm skipping into the next slide.

What this is actually just looking at is your normal reaction. What do you normally think and talk about. This is going to include all the make believe. All the assumptions. That you know where they're coming from. Why they're doing what. It's actually not focusing on just the actions and words. You're going to include them in it, but it's just like, when you're normally describing a story to somebody else, "Hey do you know what that person did? They did blah blah blah blah." That conversation. Then when your with your partner, start to parse out, "Well what did you make up? What were assumptions that you made? What are speculations that you had that you treated as truth, in it." Do we have any questions about that?

I'm going to copy and paste this and put this in the chat.

Okay. The example I want to give is. We were at ... I was at this bachata brunch place. Bachata is a type of Dominican music and dance form. It's become quite popular in D.C., but it's happening in very kind of odd, weird appropriative ways too. I was at this one place, and they were playing only these mixed versions of pop songs to a bachata beat. What happened was that, because they were only playing ... They weren't playing any Dominican music. They were only playing these pop songs that are mixed to the beat. I had a friend there that was talking about how disrespectful it was. How she was just getting more and more pissed. I was like, I agree. Do you want to ask the DJ to play some Dominican music now? She was like, "Oh?" She was like, do you want me to come? I was like, sure, yeah come. I guess she thought I needed moral support for this.

I went and I asked. He was like "Oh, okay." Then he played three songs in a row that are Dominican. She was like, "I would never have thought of asking him. I was just sitting there being pissed about it." I was like, yeah. I saw that. That's why I asked.

Sometimes it can be that simple. Obviously, often times emotionally charged situations, we're dealing with other stuff. It's not that simple. But if we can learn to heal that emotional charge, it can be as simple as just making a request.

I want folks to get into their groups again and ... I want people to get into their groups again, and I want you to think about ... No let's not do this. I want you to work on acknowledging their reality as way as accepting their reality. Not acceptable, but you're just accepting it is what it is. Yeah I accept that they said X. Just say that, "I accept that the fifth grader said that women ... That you should be wearing something different. I would [inaudible 00:55:33] less [on 00:55:33] [dress 00:55:34] like you did." "I acknowledge that's what was said."

Think about what is different for you when you just focus in on that. As opposed to what you wished had been different. As opposed to you when you wish had happen instead of what had actually happen. When you focus on just what actually did happen. As opposed to everything else. What and how is it different for you?

So we're going to do break out rooms.

All righty. I know it's five o'clock right now. Or it's the end of whatever time zone you're in. We're at the end of this session. I want to just very quickly get people's thoughts on it. Then we can close out in the next ten minutes. Next five minutes. All right. As people are doing this I would love it if people could just write on my whiteboard what came up for them. How did they feel as they were doing it? If anybody wants to share something, or ask me a question about their experience, now is the time to do it. I can probably just take one person though.

Speaker 2: If the whiteboard doesn't work there's always chat too.

Speaker 8: Hello? I can't see anything.

Speaker 1: Yep.

Speaker 8: I can't see anything.

Speaker 1: Oh, you can't see anything?

Speaker 8: Oh, okay so you can hear me okay. I just had a question about ... I totally get the whole asking for understanding in situations that are really emotionally charged, and really sort of ... I'm sitting with my assumptions and I'm sitting with my ... At least what I perceive to be going on. I have to interrupt that process in order to gain some clarity. That's really hard to do. Particularly if it's been cumulative impact. It's been situation after situation after situation. Also there's power dynamics. I'm thinking of a situation that I had with a supervisor who I felt was saying some really [coded 00:58:17] stuff to me. I asked does this mean that. Does it mean this. Even when I asked very direct questions I was still getting the matrix, [ditching 00:58:27] stuff. Like, "That's not true." I'm wondering what are some strategies to deal with that discomfort that erupts even when you are very direct with ... You're very directly curious about what's going on, but you're not getting the response that is helping clear up of any of that confusion or clarity. It maybe makes you even more confused which is kind of what this exercise made me feel. Does that make sense?

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah.

The thing about this, there's an order to doing this work. There's a reason why it goes 1-5. Most of these aren't actually terribly linear, but I've found that the order that we do this ... That when we ask a question, what emotional state we're in really impacts the ability to have this conversation ourselves. As well as the other person. The reason why I focus first on letting go of the make believe, for a second, and focusing on current reality, before we even start to have a conversation with the other person. Or even before we focus in on ourselves. Is because when we're caught up in make believe, our heads are already filled with what we assume to be true. When we try talking to somebody else from that place, we end up doing this.

That's why energetically, when we put it energetically when we come at somebody like that, it's very hard for them. They're not feeling received. You're not feeling received. There's no reception. There's no receiving happening. When we actually can set aside all of the make belief for a second, then we can get in touch with ourselves first. Which I think we get a responsibility first to ourselves. We often want to focus first on the other person. Change them. That attitude, that energy, is also not terribly productive. If we're coming at them, we want to change them, what does that sound like, you know? Trying to change people, judge them, shame them. All that stuff. All that kind of domination techniques right? That's why the third practice is first checking in with yourself and seeing where you're coming from, what you need. Taking care of yourself. You have the biggest responsibility to you. When you do that [inaudible 01:01:11]

Somebody's breathing heavily.[inaudible 01:01:19]

I'm going to mute you. After you take care of yourself in that moment, which doesn't need to be a long thing. It can be a five second thing honestly. Then you have the option of actually engaging in a conversation with the other person. Whereas not emotionally charged. It comes from a true place of curiosity. It'd be like, "Oh. So then why did you say that? Oh you don't want to have this conversation? How come you don't want to have this conversation. I'm curious?"

People's ability to respond to that type of energy is very different when you haven't done all this work. When you come from like, "You're wrong as a human being, for having said this." I want to know why[crosstalk 01:02:04]

Speaker 8: You were saying that, but that's not what's being communicated through your feelings.

Speaker 1: Well if you're energetically there ... No matter what you say. You can say the same thing, but if your energy is different. If your energy is such that it's making them wrong as a human being for having said that. First is, "Oh, what's going on for you that you would say something like that? I'm really curious?" Those are two very different energies. You can say the same thing and you probably are going to get a pretty different response.

Speaker 8: Yeah I understand that. Okay.[crosstalk 01:02:38]

I'm just saying. It's just hard when there's other stuff behind it.

Speaker 1: Of course.

Speaker 8: When there's other experiences that sort have colored that situation. If it's not the first time, I feel pretty confident in handling situations like that. If it's a power dynamic then on top of conversations not being had. Then you've got that one lucky number 15 moment where you're like, okay now, now I'm curious, but I'm curious with a little bit of resentment.

Speaker 1: Right. That's because there's an order to this. You can't just to having that conversation. You have to do the checking in, taking care of yourself first. The very, very [trouble 01:03:33]. [inaudible 01:03:33]. Is when the past comes and lives in your present. You can't actually be with the present. You have to heal the past in that moment. You don't have to heal all your past and every moment for the rest of your life, that's not what I'm saying. I'm saying in this current moment, that is coming up for you, you could heal it by getting in touch with it, and taking care of it. Give it what it needs in that moment.

You keep doing that. You're going to build your capacity then to engage in a conversation with other people. Should you choose to do so. You somewhat have to. Your responsibility is to ourselves, first and foremost. We don't have a responsibility to educate other folks. It's nice. If we want to and want people to have the option of knowing how to do that skillfully.

Speaker 8: I think people should know how you feel. You're not going to get anywhere with them. I'm not saying [inaudible 01:04:33] how you get out of my black stuff but, what you said really [threw 01:04:37] me man.

Speaker 1: Right. Right. As I was saying, there's an order to this. If you jump energetically, you're not there. Therefore the conversation is not going to go very well probably.

Speaker 8: Okay, okay. Did I miss the order? I'm just sorry, I'm a little like ...

Speaker 1: Well the order of the five practices.

Speaker 8: Okay I see what you mean.

Speaker 1: Yeah the order of the five practices. Having a conversation with somebody else is number 4. Out of 5.

Speaker 8: Okay

Speaker 1: Okay. Josette do you want to take a quick thing, quick picture of this. I want to get, I want to change it out again.

Speaker 2: Yeah, give me one second.

Speaker 1: Okay. I want to note that it feels like this exercise was easier. Each time I asked you ... The first exercise was focusing on your story. All your assumptions that you believed to be true. Then we talked about focusing on what was said and what was done. That was still a struggle because people were having trouble parsing it up. Then people then got to a place where they're like, asking to ... I accept that they said this. I acknowledge that they did this. That seems to have worked for a lot of other folks. That there's some relief and clarity. There's a weight off their shoulders. They feel more understood.

Notice as you put less time and energy into the make believe world and you put more time and energy into actually the reality. Things become easier. Things become lighter. There's a method to what I ask of you sometimes.

Okay, so I'm going to clear this. I would like, if there's ... If people could just type either in the chat box or write on the whiteboard. If they had one takeaway from themselves. Just think about, we had a two hour session. There's just one takeaway, they really want to make sure they remember from this session. What is it? Takeaway.

So just want to read some of this. Giving myself pause to question. Reflecting how tied I am to my assumptions. Key not only to healing but doing this work. Getting in touch with own's internal reality which is not the same as external reality, which is not the same as the other person's internal reality. Acceptance is not excusing behavior, it's freeing yourself up to not get hurt. Acceptance can take away the power the other person has over you.

A lot of folks are saying similar stuff which is great. Just note that this is the foundation for the rest of the course. Rest of the module. I'm sorry. Rest of the practices. Really understanding that there are these three different realities. Because when we mush them together, some get really ... Things don't work. Things do not work out. We're going to keep practicing this because this is something new for everybody, right? You've had a lifetime of making everything mush together. As you're going about your day today, through this next week. I want you ... When you get into situations. Notice ones that are not charged, but are just common everyday conversations. Notice just how you relate to the different realities. Your reality, somebody else's reality, what was actually said and done. Notice your ability to make those distinct for yourself. Start out like I said, with not emotionally charged one, but just every day ones. Things that are fun with your friends maybe. See what's different. When it's more emotionally charged, and when it's less. I think you're going to be able to see that it's actually because ... With the ones that we can see, that it's not. That it is more fun. It's playful the energy, It's because we're giving space to the different realities to exist actually.

When it's very emotionally charged there's no space for the different realities to exist. Okay? You might [see 01:09:07] that. Maybe. Maybe not. I don't know. Try it out. See what happens for you. On that note. I want to say thank you for everyone, to showing up for this second session. We will be putting this online after we edit it. Today's Thursday so probably not until Monday actually will it be up. We'll also put the transcription. As well as the chat. You'll have all this [inaudible 01:09:34] stuff later. Thanks everybody.