

compassionate activism

Session 5 Video Transcription

Sandra: Hey everyone. This is the session number five for Compassion Activism. I'm really excited about today's session, because this is where we're really going to spend a lot of time focusing on helping people work through their individual struggles around applying the practice of mindfulness and compassion's accountability.

We spent the first four weeks talking about the first practice of humility and curiosity, which opens us up to the possibility that perhaps there's something more to what's going on beyond our initial reaction to the current situation that's emotionally charged for us, and then we talked about the second practice of there being three actual realities, right? Being able to distinguish between the three. The three were one, our own internal reality, so how I am experiencing what is going on is valid and distinct from the other person's internal reality, and their interpretation of what is going on in that situation, which is important, is valid and distinct from our reality, and then the third reality, which is external reality, it's the words and actions and energy that was happening between me and the other person. There's actually these three distinct realities that are happening all at the same time. If we come humble and curious about what's actually underneath this emotionally charged situation for both us and them, we can start to see, "Oh, there's actually these three realities happening at the same time, and they're all completely different."

Oftentimes, we think is the initial reaction that we're having is the only reality that exists, right? Then we get into these ... If we do engage in conversation, it is often like this, where I'm trying to push my reality, my initial reaction at least, onto them, and they're trying to push their initial reaction onto me. That doesn't really work out. It's not very productive most of the time.

That leads us to what is going on. That's in practice number three, where we're talking about how to bring mindfulness to our internal reality, to really get in touch with what's happening for us, and underneath that initial reaction. We talked about previously how stress, frustration, anger, and feelings like that are really just surface. They're just surface emotions. They're just manifestations of a deeper pain and fear and need that we've been ignoring, because that's how we've been treated. When we were growing up, we were taught that really, our feelings, our needs, weren't

important basically. Through various moments of our lives, and through messages from the media, systematic oppression has continued that message of your needs aren't important, your experiences, your feelings, your pain, are not real. What we're trying to do through the practice of mindfulness and compassion and accountability is really to correct that notion that no, that's not true. Our feelings, our needs, are important. How do we get in touch with them, and how so that we actually heal them? That's what this is about.

We spent the last two sessions actually on this third practice, so this is our third session going over it. Today is going to be another kind of quick review of how to do it, and then we're going to be taking Q and A. Questions, I'll be providing coaching, and for folks who want live coaching, which I hope a lot of folks do, because that's really where the juice is at. There's a lot of juice in having me guide you through this process. These are new skills that everybody's practicing. We kind of suck at it in the beginning. We spend our entire lives being taught to not be in touch with our feelings and our needs. That's what happens.

As always, let me share ... As always, we are going to be thinking of a real life situation, and we don't want this to be a theoretical seminar. This is a real life application course. Just think about a recent situation where something happened. You got emotionally charged, and you find yourself stuck because of your feelings that came up. You weren't able to respond in a way that you had hoped. I ask you to not do something that's like a nine or a ten level of emotional charge, because this is just a two hour session. We want to do something a little bit easier, so maybe a four or five, something that's more manageable, and that way you get this practice. You do the easier wins.

I want to start out just by sharing with you an example of a situation. This actually happened today, just maybe an hour ago, so it's really a fresh situation. I was in a staff meeting with a couple of other folks on the team, and one of the staff started talking about how they had done something and wished they had been able to do it differently, and that we had a team that had done something differently in this process. The details aren't terribly important. The point was ... What's important though is that they were kind of upset, and feeling some sort of pain and disappointment in how the process had happened. My gut reaction to that was that, "No, no, no. It was okay. There was not much impact. It worked out fine." I noticed her kind of getting smaller, and smaller in that conversation, kind of more physically. I kept trying to reassure her. I realized that that type of reassurance, my reaction to that, was not helping. The conversation stopped because she stopped talking.

I realized something was off. I asked, "Are you annoyed with me? Is something happening?" There was a little bit of conversation about how she had felt that I wasn't really validating where she was coming from. I also, because of the other staff in the room, I didn't want to continue that conversation, so I acknowledged that that had happened, while I had been acknowledging that yes, we could have done something differently, I was focusing a lot on how it was still okay. The process we had done was still okay.

I left the conversation there, and then came back to it at the end of the meeting. I wanted to get closure around it. I wanted it resolved to figure out what actually happened. Throughout the next moments in that meeting, I reflected. I was able to kind of quickly check in with myself and figure out what had happened with me. When I later checked in with her at the end of the meeting where it was just me and her, I was able to take responsibility because when I checked in with myself, I noticed that my intention was to make sure she knew that she had not done anything wrong. Make sure that she didn't feel like she had done a bad job. It just worked out that way.

My good intentions meant that I kept trying to change how she was relating to the situation. I was trying to basically squash her concern. She was feeling invalidated by me. Initially, when I was having that conversation, I noticed something was happening, but I wasn't really paying attention to it so much, until I was like, "Wait, this is really happening." I started paying attention more to what was going on with her body language, which had me reflect more.

The reason why it took me a couple seconds, or a minute or so into the conversations to really notice was because I really just wanted ... I didn't want her to have that stress. I was resisting her having that stress. I was resisting her feeling that pain. She was saying she felt some pain and disappointment because of how the process had played out, and so because I was resisting her emotional reality she felt, understandably, that the energy that I was sending to her was that of invalidation. That's why she could hear my words where I was not invalidating her feelings, but she still felt like I was invalidating her feelings. It was because I was resisting what was going ... I wanted her to not feel that way. I was in my make-believe world where I was attached at being different that I was.

When I was able to get in touch with all of that, and that just took like maybe half a minute of me pausing, being like, "Huh." I got in touch with all of that, and I was able to take responsibility for all of that with her. I talked to her about how I would do it differently if in the future ... When in the future she comes up with something she felt was not quite right, not quite how she wanted to do it. We were able to co-create something

different. She was also able to take responsibility for her end of that situation, and I ... I had taken responsibility for my end, so that created the space for her to feel comfortable as well to take responsibility.

That was really in this very short little exchange, but it's important because it's the manager-supervisor dynamic, so there's inherent power in this ... Inherent power dynamic to the situation. That was compassion activism in action, essentially.

I'm going to pause there for a quick second just to see if anybody had any questions about the example that I want to give. That I gave.

I want to have folks just kind of see ... Have an example of going through the different practices from emotional charged reaction to resolution. Any questions about that? You can also put it in a chat box, if you have any. Nope? Everything clear? All right then.

We're going to jump to mindfulness. Show you the screen. Just to give a quick review over what we're talking about when we talk about mindfulness, what we normally do is we stay in a toxic, swirling of a make-believe world where we aren't really in touch with what's going on. We're very much attached to a different reality being true, but it's not. In this situation I described, I was attached to her not feeling that pain of not having had the perfect process, of not having done things the way she would have wanted to now, with hindsight. I was resisting that reality of hers, and I kept trying to be like, "No, no, no. That's not a really valid concern, because it turned out okay." That's what I was essentially telling her. She was actually feeling judged by me for having that concern. Now, I had my concern, but that concern is not valid, so now I can't trust my instincts. It could go to all of that stuff.

This is a small example, but you could imagine we spend most of our times being like, "They should have known better. They should have done something differently. I should have known better. Why am I so weak, or incompetent? Why are they so weak? Why are they so incompetent?" We kind of are really focused on things being different than the way they are. We get stuck in that. There's nothing wrong with wanting something to be different. We want a lot of things to be different, obviously. That's why we're engaged in activist work. It's when we get stuck there, and it becomes this toxic swirl that throws us about. I use the dog with the bone, but we're the bone. The toxic swirl is what's got us. That's where it's not really helpful.

The way to kind of ... Instead, what we do to let go of that is just to acknowledge, right, if we can just kind of stop, let go of all the judging, the trying to change it, and make it better, not be with what it is, instead be

like, "Okay, that's what happened." There's no right or wrong, it's just what's happening is happening. Our feelings just are what they are, and we can start to be like, "Okay, I feel something. What am I feeling." Then as we keep acknowledging and holding it as being important and real and legitimate, we start to notice that there's layers to this, so we go from the initial reaction, whether that's stress, frustration or anger, resentment, irritation, whatever that initial reaction is, we need to unpack it, and it will shift to maybe there's some sadness. Maybe there's some pain. It's really what it's about. There's some pain that we're trying to avoid. That's why we stay in the make-believe world, because it distracts us from the actual pain, because we don't know how to be with pain. We find it very overwhelming.

This is what mindfulness, we learn that actually no, we can get reconnected and it's okay. It actually can lead to relief, as it does for many people, many times. Though, sometimes it can take a while. This is kind of the process. I'm giving quick overviews, especially for folks who are just tuning into this, because I know a bunch of folks have [inaudible 00:16:08].

Josette: We have a quick question in the comments. I'm not sure if now is a good time, but someone asked when dealing with a situation that can be emotionally charged, is it like not being comfortable with other people's reactions, feelings. Esther, if you want to go ahead and elaborate, I'm not entirely sure what the question's referring to.

Esther: Sure. Can you hear me?

Josette: Yep.

Esther: Is it ... In regards to your situation, is it like not being comfortable with that person's feelings/reactions, and kind of trying to rescue them, or is it just myself feeling from my past, or whatever triggering it, reacting to their reactions or feelings and not being comfortable with it. Does that make sense?

Sandra: Yeah, it can be any of that, and all of that. It's really ... Emotionally charged situations, the way I'm using it is when you don't have peace. It's when you don't feel free. You feel like you have no choice. You feel like you can't say what you really feel. You can't speak your truth. You can't just be like a normal adult walking around in the world, doing your thing. You feel stuck somehow. That would be why. Sometimes it's because of something, of how somebody else's reaction. Oftentimes when somebody we care about is upset, we try to make them feel better, IE to try to get them to stop feeling what they're feeling, and change their minds. That doesn't usually go well. We don't like when people do it to us, but it's kind of a go-to reaction to other people we care about being upset because we

don't like them being in pain, because that means that we feel pain, because we care about them, or it could be somebody saying something hurtful to us. That's a violation. Or doing something violating to us. It could be somebody reminding us of a past violation or trauma that happened to us, and we're more reacting from the past trauma, versus what it's happening right now.

It could be any of those things. That's why I say the initial reaction to a situation, it's really important to pause and check in with yourself to see what is actually going on, because it could be even a combination of all three.

It could be primarily one or the other. If it's a situation right now that's happening that's a violation, but you believe that it's just you, and your past, making shit up, well then you're not going to be able to really deal with the violation happening right then and there, right? On the flip side of that, where you always think it's 100% about what's happening then, so you react, so if you feel pain, and fear, and anger, that means it's 100% about what is happening right then and there as opposed to your past and something being triggered. We have a lot of things that we haven't healed that get triggered all the time. If somebody doesn't reply to your text within 30 minutes, they don't care about you. I'm not lovable. No, they just didn't reply to you. Maybe they're busy. You don't know that.

If it's somebody who repeatedly chooses not to reply to you in a timely way, and isn't willing to consider changing that when you've communicated to them that it's important to you, well then it's not just you and your past, of you having a history of being ignored and neglected, there was actually somebody who is not responding to you and doesn't care to change, even though they know it hurts you. Really being able to check in with yourself and unpack which reality are we talking about, that's super important.

Josette: Thank you, Sandra. We had another really good question. I don't know if this is a good time.

Sandra: Yeah, we'll just take questions.

Josette: Great. Abby Alex [inaudible 00:20:39], "What about when we use, 'They should have done that differently, thoughts to validate ourselves when we are trying to recognize that we were not treated well in a particular situation? I guess my question is how to get past this inclination to paint a picture of what would have felt good in this situation in order to contrast it with what actually happened?'"

Sandra: There's an order to things, and usually I'm not one to say that things are linear, because I think we oftentimes in our society, particularly western

society, say that everything is linear. Usually it's more like this. I think this is a linear thing, though. I think there's a step process to this. I think it's important to acknowledge what is happening first and foremost. Then once you say yes to what is happening, we can then say, "And now how do I want to respond?" If our gut reaction is to say no, this shouldn't be happening, you can feel it viscerally, right? You can feel me being like, "Yes, we could have done this process differently, and next time we can. We'll plan to." Versus, "No, it wasn't so bad. It's okay, and we can do something different." There's a rejection of the reality that happens. When that's the first step, then we can't work with it. We can say, "Yes, you said that really messed up thing, and I want us to talk about it so you can understand why that was hurtful." Versus, "How could you just say that? You shouldn't have said that. I can't believe that." There's a difference in quality when we resist something versus accept that it happened and then we move from there. It seems to not be important, but I think if people in practice, it does. It does show to be important.

I don't know if anybody had some experience in practicing this that they want to share, but that would be great.

Josette: For folks on the telephone, to unmute yourself, it's star six.

Sandra: If anybody had done this, experimented with it over the last couple weeks, see what it opened up for them. Sharing? Nobody wants to share? I feel like Ferris Bueller's Day Off. Anyone? Anyone? Anyone?

People are saying that they've been trying, but finding it hard, and then somebody also had an example [inaudible 00:23:52]. I don't know if you wanted to share.

Jasmine: Sorry, it just took me a second to unmute, because I'm ... Yeah. I don't know. I often wonder about these things, because they often don't really go the way I hope they'll go. Yeah, it was somebody I was considering ... Maybe we were going to start dating, and he had come over, and he had left a bag of stuff here. I texted him the next day saying, "You left your stuff." Then I just kind of left it at that, and he never got back to me. Six days later, I'm like, "I guess I'll just put your bag of stuff on the porch. I don't know what's going on." I didn't say that. I just said, "I'm putting your bag of stuff on the porch, if you want it." Then he wanted to ... I was just ready to be done with it.

He wanted to talk on the phone, and I just said, "Well, I ... " I didn't know what to do. I had stuff, and I felt kind of anxious looking at the bag of stuff, and not knowing what I should do with it, or if he wanted it. I don't know. The conversation went very badly very quickly. I was trying to do the thing of saying, "When this happened, I felt like this." He's like, "I can't deal with

this drama. It's way too much." It just turned into a really unhappy conversation. It left me thinking that probably I shouldn't have tried to talk to him at all. It may also be that I wrecked it by, in the beginning saying, "Here's your stuff." I don't know. I don't know.

Sandra: Yeah. I mean, we don't know how things would have turned out if you did it differently. What happens is that when you share what you're feeling, sometimes the other person can hear it, and sometimes the other person has things that's getting in the way of them hearing it too.

Jasmine: Yeah.

Sandra: The most that we can do is invite them to hear, to listen to our truth, and what we were experiencing, and on our side, we can work to get more skillful at it.

Do you want to kind of practice and say I'm that person? You want to practice with me, and I can do some coaching?

Jasmine: We can try, I guess. I mean, like I said. I mean, it probably would have had to have been different from the text. I don't know.

Sandra: That's fine.

Jasmine: I guess we could just imagine that nothing's been said yet, and we're going to have an actual conversation instead of a text conversation.

Sandra: Right. I've left my stuff at your place for a few days now, and you're sitting there wondering what to do with it.

Jasmine: Yeah. My mind is suddenly totally blank.

Sandra: What do you want to know?

Jasmine: I want to know if he wants it back or not. I just ... I want to know what I should do, really, but I guess I get to decide what I'm going to do.

Sandra: You want to know what I want to do with it, so you can ask me.

Jasmine: What do you want to do with the bag of your stuff that you left here? I don't know.

Sandra: Great. You can be like, "Hey, I noticed that you left your stuff here. Since we haven't talked, and you haven't come by, I just wanted to know what you wanted me to do with it."

Jasmine: Yeah, that makes sense.

Sandra: What got in the way of you just stating that, versus being like, "I'm going to put it on the porch."

Jasmine: It was the fact that he hadn't answered the first text where I asked him what to do with the stuff. It had been six days, and I was just basically like, "What the hell? I don't ..." Yeah.

Sandra: What was coming up for you? What feeling was coming up for you?

Jasmine: Rage, mostly. I'm so tired of people dumping their stuff on me, and just leaving, and then I have to deal with it somehow. I don't know. I do not understand other people. I don't just leave things at people's houses and ignore their texts when they say, "What do you want me to do with it?" I don't even know how to interact with it, because it's so different from how I am in the world. I get this kind of ... Also kind of desperate. Okay, so I tried the thing that I thought would work, and it's not working at all, and now what do I do?

Sandra: There was a lot of frustration, and it sounds like disappointment in other people. Is that right?

Jasmine: Sorry, it cut out there for one sec. What?

Sandra: It sounds like there's frustration, and there is disappointment in other people.

Jasmine: Yeah, definitely.

Sandra: What's underneath that?

Jasmine: A lifetime of resentments, really.

Sandra: How do you feel about your resentment? How do you relate to it?

Jasmine: Kind of helpless. I've done ... Whoever said in chat that I don't feel respected, they are correct. That is exactly how I feel. Other people don't even give a shit about how they affect me, and it would be wonderful if it didn't bug me, but it does bug me, and ... How the conversation went badly was that then he started on his, "It's no big deal. I don't see why you're upset. It's no big deal." As soon as I hear it's no big deal, I just go on a rampage. I am not capable of hearing that without getting really upset. I'm like, "Okay, if it's no big deal, I'll just take them to Value Village, then." I don't know. Then of course he got mad, but also I guess ... To me, it's always this power play. The power play is, "I can put something in your space, and then not do anything about it, and then get upset when you want to do something about it, and it bugs me." It's like this assertion, "I get to do what I want, and you just have to deal with it."

Sandra: That's a possibility. That's a possible reality for that person, but I want to focus on what you're feeling for yourself.

Jasmine: I feel like never letting anyone in my house, because I just don't want to deal with their stupid shit. I do actually live alone now. I gave up on having roommates long ago because I was tired of dealing with their shit.

Sandra: It's okay to not want to deal with it. It's okay to be resentful about it. It's okay to feel that. Do you feel like it's okay to not ...

Jasmine: No, I don't feel very okay about it. I feel like I should be more ... I don't know, relaxed about life, or something, but it does upset me a lot.

Sandra: Right. It does.

Jasmine: I mean, it's not very hard to imagine why I might feel this way, given my life history, but I also don't know ... I've been getting therapy for years, and it helps, but it doesn't ... Nothing so far has really ... I'm sorry. I'm taking a ton of time. I don't know if we need to go into all this.

Sandra: No, this is what it's about.

Jasmine: Nothing has ever really fixed how upset I am about the fact that my parents just took off when I was 14 and left me to deal with their stupid, unfinished house in the bush. I'm still upset about that. Every time another person does that, it just ... I was like, "Oh nice. You're another one of those people." You're right. I have no idea what goes on with them. I actually doubt it's malicious. I think they just don't give a shit. It doesn't matter to them what affect it has on me because they're busy doing their own thing.

Sandra: Possibly.

Jasmine: That's what they say. His story was, "Well, I was just busy doing my own thing, and I didn't think about it." I was like, "Well, that's nice."

Sandra: I want to keep you with you.

Jasmine: Yeah, I have a hard time with that.

Sandra: That's understandable, but I want ... I want to focus on your feelings. They count. You can not want that. That's okay. You can feel like this, and that's okay. It's not preferable. It's not what you want to feel every single day, of course, but it's legitimate. You have the right to exist. If you were able to say, "I feel X, and that's okay," how would you say that?

Jasmine: I've been trying to practice that. It's hard, though. I don't feel like it's okay.

Sandra: What's not okay about ... Why do you not want it to exist? Why do you feel like it can't exist? Your parents left when you were 14. That makes sense that you would feel this way.

Jasmine: I guess, for my entire life I've just heard a nonstop stream of, "You're oversensitive, and you're too emotional, and you're overreacting." I guess I believe it. Consensual reality is that I am overreacting all the time. My own reality is that the thing is upsetting, and I'm upset, but other people don't agree with my reality, and it's hard to hang on to my own. I guess I just sort of at some point wasn't able to. Realistically, I guess now it probably all exists in my own hear, right? The whole conversation is in my head saying, "You're overreacting," and all that stuff. I've been trying to figure out how to feel more okay about it.

Sandra: You don't need to feel more okay about it. You might prefer it, but you feel the way that you do, and they matter. Just because other people don't agree with you, that's their reality. That's separate and distinct from your reality.

Jasmine: Yeah. Why don't I have a more reasonable reality, though? Just frustrating.

Sandra: You know why.

Jasmine: Yeah.

Sandra: You know your own past. You have very valid reasons for feeling the way that you do. They may be more related to the past than they do to the current situation at hand, but that does not make your reaction, your feelings, any relevant.

Jasmine: Yeah.

Sandra: Pain ... This is going to sound weird. Pain, I say, is actually a wonderful opportunity. It's not a wonderful opportunity in the sense that, "Yay! I want to feel more pain!" Not like that, but it's a wonderful opportunity in a sense that it gives us the opportunity to give ourselves love and compassion to the person who's feeling pain, right?

Jasmine: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sandra: [crosstalk 00:36:49], and to give that love, and acceptance, when it's most meaningful.

Jasmine: I do actually agree with that, and I would say that my ability to do that ... I mean, I didn't really used to have any ability to do that, and I'm getting more. Sometimes I can, at least.

Sandra: Do you want to try now? Practice now with me?

Jasmine: Practice what?

Sandra: I feel upset, and that's okay. You want to try repeating that a couple times, five times?

Jasmine: I feel really upset, and that's okay. I pretty much just want to burn everyone else's shit that they leave at my house. I won't do it, but I feel that way, and that's okay.

Sandra: Yep. You can feel that way, and that's okay.

Jasmine: I feel pretty upset about it. I feel upset, and that's okay. My dog is concerned about the level of upsetness in the room.

Sandra: They pick up on it though. Say it again.

Jasmine: I feel upset, and that's okay. I feel upset, and that's okay. I feel upset, and that's okay. It's true. I feel calmer the more times I say it.

Sandra: Keep saying it then.

Jasmine: Then I'm at least not fighting, I guess.

Sandra: Right.

Jasmine: So much of my life is like internal battles.

Sandra: Keep saying it.

Jasmine: I feel upset, and that's okay. I feel upset about something that happened 25 years ago, and that's okay.

Sandra: It's perfectly okay. I want you to say, "I feel upset about what happened to me 25 years ago, and that matters."

Jasmine: I feel upset about what happened to me 25 years ago, and that matters.

Sandra: That matters.

Jasmine: I don't understand why nobody cared at the time.

Sandra: Try saying, "I see your pain, and I care."

Jasmine: I see your pain, and I care. I see my own pain, and I care. I don't know. Something. I care about my own pain. I see my pain, and I care.

Sandra: What does it want you to do? How can you show that you care?

Jasmine: Probably not wait six days to get back to someone about the fact that I'm annoyed. I think not make myself wait in uncertainty for all those days, because that's really hard. I always try to do that, and it's just basically like stuffing that teenager back in the box again, and saying, "Nope. You just have to deal." It really doesn't help. Maybe if I took how I feel about things seriously and considered it important enough to do something about it at the time I would want to do something about it, instead of just waiting for some other person. If I didn't wait for their timing ... There's actually lots of options, right? If someone doesn't answer a text, you could just call them, say, "What's up? Why didn't you answer my text?" I mean, I never do that. I don't think I've ever done that in my life, but in theory, I have that option. I don't just have to sit there and mutely wait to see if someone's ever going to answer me.

Sandra: How do you feel in relationship to your ability to one, think of different ways to respond, and two, to actually do them now?

Jasmine: I feel more like it now, because I was starting to get ideas, and at the time, I just went into the pattern, and it's not a very happy place in that pattern, and I'm not creative in those moments, so I feel like that's part of not disavowing the other, earlier parts of me, because they were a lot more creative, I think, before they ... Kids, they're a lot more creative than adults, usually.

Sandra: Yeah. What's different for you. What's possible for you now?

Jasmine: I think maybe instead of thinking about it in terms of what I think I can endure, think, "What would I really like right now? Is there any possibility of moving toward that?" If what I really want is some decision about this bag of stuff, then what can I do that's more likely to result in that outcome?

Sandra: Right.

Jasmine: Sitting there and waiting for an answer is not a very good strategy for that.

Sandra: Not so much.

Jasmine: Not really ever turned out all that well.

Sandra: Now, see, that ... You just so wonderfully showed the power of mindfulness and self-accountability. You just went through the entire process.

Jasmine: I suppose so.

Sandra: You just did it!

Jasmine: Thank you.

Sandra: Yeah, I hear so much more lightness, you're laughing, you feel more expressed, more powerful, more free to me right now. Is that true?

Jasmine: Yeah, it's true. I feel much more like, "Yeah, I have options." I'm not actually ... I think what happens in those moments is I forget that I have any options. I just become the person who didn't have options, and didn't know, right?

Sandra: Now, you are ...

Jasmine: Yep, now I'm ... Well, like I said, it's more like I'm all the different mes at all the different ages, instead of just being one me that's stuck at one age and doesn't know how to deal with it.

Sandra: Yeah, you're powerful again.

Jasmine: Yep. Anything could happen for a day or two in someone's life. Okay, sure. If we get to two days, and there's no answer, it's like, "Okay, I've waited for as long as I'm willing to wait, and ... " I mean, I don't feel very comfortable about the idea of calling a person. I don't know. I find it hard to call people anyway at the best of times. I would probably ... Maybe I'll get to that edge someday. I think I would probably just text again and say, "So I didn't hear back from you. I want to know if you want your stuff or not. Can you please get back to me within ..." some amount of time, which I would pick.

Sandra: Yeah.

Jasmine: By the end of the day or something. I guess, really, like if somebody doesn't get back to you within a day about their stuff, I guess they don't care about their stuff much.

Sandra: You gave them their chances.

Jasmine: Yeah. If I give them the option, and they don't care enough to try ... I think that's where I get stuck, is that I feel like I'm responsible for the thing, even if they're not being responsible, and then I'm like ... You know? Just letting them take responsibility for their own stuff if they want it.

Sandra: Right. You let them know. You're good.

Jasmine: Thanks. Wow. I see there's like a million chat messages I should go catch up on.

Sandra: Yeah, go read them. You've got a lot of love in there.

Jasmine: Thanks.

Sandra: [crosstalk 00:46:19] folks care about your pain.

Jasmine: Going back on mute. Thanks.

Sandra: Thank you.

That was really powerful, right? Now I get to talk about you as if you're not here. I'm going to do that a little bit, and this ... She beautifully showed how to do this, how to shift from the toxic swirl to being mindful. I had to keep reminding her to stop making her feelings wrong, her being there, as well as stop focusing on the other person. Really just focusing in on checking in with herself and what's going on. You notice that there were layers, like at the surface level, it was about this bag of stuff that was left for six days, and then as we kept acknowledging that feeling of frustration and resentment, it very quickly went to what had happened to her, you know, as a 14 year old, with her parents leaving like that. That original source of pain with this.

Then as we kept just acknowledging, and saying, "I feel upset, and that's okay. I'm still upset from what happened 25 years ago, and that's okay, and that pain matters," you saw her shift. Shift from being really emotionally stuck in the toxic swirl, or being in touch with that pain, that deep pain for many years that she's been carrying, to having released it, at least in this moment, right? Released it in this moment where she could be like, "Okay, I have options." She got really creative. She felt like she could do it, right? Before, these weren't even available, these ideas weren't even available to her when she was in toxic swirl. This was really a wonderful example of one, two, three, the step.

I want to take questions from folks, either about what had happened, or the process. Actually, not so much about what had happened with her as an example. Let's not do that. For yourself, what came up for you in questions, or if you also want to get coaching. I'm going to put the slide back up because I have other folks that just asked for that. [Josette 00:49:11], were the questions in the chat?

Josette: Not any questions that weren't aimed at Jasmine. If anyone wants to add in. You are also welcome, if you are on the phone, to jump in. That is star six to un-mute.

Sandra: Were there any comments that you want to share from the chat, Josette? As we're doing that coaching?

Josette: Sure thing. There was a lot of conversation about how painful it can be to hear from people that you're oversensitive. That was something that came up a lot for several people and how you have the pain, and then you're trying to express the pain, and the person is either ignoring you, not acknowledging you, or actively invalidating you. That was something that came up for a lot of people.

Sandra: That's why it's really important to check in with ourselves, I think, and to take that pause when you notice those feelings coming up. Just see what is really relevant? What is going on? What do I need to take care of? Like I said, sometimes it's 100% about what's happening in front of us, sometimes it's like 90% what happened to us in the past, and only 10% what is happening right now in front of us. It could be 30% the other person's reactions, and their lashing out, 30% what's happening, and 30% from our own past. It could be any combination of that, so when we get in touch with ourselves, we're able to make that distinct, right? We're able to then say that to somebody else.

I have a history of being ignored and neglected, because I was emotionally neglected growing up. It's just kind of a pattern, because that's how trauma is. We keep playing this out. I noticed that recently I was feeling ignored by somebody, and that person had tried to come see me earlier that day, but I couldn't actually, but then they were going to see some other people. I was feeling ignored, because I was feeling like I was put at the bottom of the priority list. I was able to see that situation, see their attempts to come see me, and the situation at hand, and be like, "This is not really about what's happening right now. This is actually just me, my pattern being triggered."

I was able to get in touch with that, and hold that feeling of that pain of being neglected and ignored so much throughout my childhood and communicate that with this other person. "Hey, I'm feeling this way, I'm feeling this happened today, and I started having these feelings of being ignored, like I'm not important to you, and I know that it's 90% me, and 10% you, and so I want you to know that I'm not mad at you about it, but it also happened between us." I was able to take responsibility for my emotional reality, but still communicate it in a way that didn't invalidate my reality, but it also recognized that this person didn't actually do anything to ignore me. Because I was able to share that without projecting my trauma onto them, they came back like, "That's really not true. Do you know that's not true? What do you need from me?" I was able to be like, "Well, I'd like it if you would come over later." They did.

I need to do the primary work of holding my pain, and holding that feeling of being ignored and neglected, and take care of myself, and I was able to

communicate in a way, to the other person, where they felt ... Why I invited them to also support me in taking care of that pain, right. That happens.

Josette: We had another question from Kayla. Kayla wrote, "What if you're dealing with hurting yourself, like diminishing yourself or your capacity, and you're battling against yourself? How do you deal with that?"

Sandra: That's the primary battle that we have, isn't it? We have a battle ourselves. We fight our feelings and needs that come up. It's really just coming back to my feelings have a right to exist, my needs to matter. That's why these quick formulas that I'm going to share now, these quick formulas for mindfulness and compassionate self-accountability is really about stopping that resistance to ourselves, stop fighting ourselves with what we're feeling. The whole world, systemic oppression, our families, the media, they all tell us that we aren't important, that our feelings don't matter. A lot of this is unintentionally happening, right? Even though we have the greatest of parents, stuff happens, and we feel invalidated. We feel like our needs and feelings don't matter, and we carry that trauma. It could have just been one conversation.

I had one cousin who she told me that her self-esteem, her confidence in math was destroyed by one comment that one math tutor said to her when she was like ten. Ever since then, she's avoided math. When we're young, we don't really know how to deal with a lot of this stuff. We carry that forward, even though now we're grown-ups, now that we're adults. This is why we come back and we say this simple thing. I feel upset, and that's okay. I have this pain, and I care about it. It matters. That does wonders. That's exactly the kind of compassion we didn't get the first time around.

By us giving ourselves that compassion, that's when the healing starts to happen. Then as you noticed with Jasmine, she had some ideas now. She got creative. You'll see a natural shift after a while happen after you've acknowledged your reality enough, it will be released, so that emotional charge will go away, or at least it's lessened enough so that you can move into brainstorming and then you want to take action. You're not forcing yourself to take action anymore. You want to take action.

That's a really key difference is that oftentimes we believe that we need to force ourselves to do stuff, especially as activists. I was talking to somebody recently who feels like whenever somebody says something sexist, she feels like she has to say something, and there are some people in her work environment that say sexist things, and she doesn't want to go into work, she doesn't want to deal with it, and she got in touch with how she was feeling really tired. She was feeling so tired of these conversations, but she felt like she had to have them. I was like, what if it's okay that you don't want to have them? She's like, no, I have to have

them. I'm a feminist. I said, well, I don't believe you can say fully yes to something until you can fully say no to it. That's what consent is, right? A coerced yes is not a meaningful yes. We actually coerce ourselves a lot of times, and we say I have to do this, I must do this. That's called coercion. I should. That's all coercion, actually. That's very different from I choose to say something versus I have to say something.

Even though yes, we agree, we would like to say something and resolve this conversation so they know that saying sexist jokes is not funny, but right now, I'm tired, and I don't want to say something. I can feel tired and that's okay. When we give up resisting how we feel, she too also moved into a place where she felt okay, I can do something. It's okay if I don't.

Another thing to really remember is that feeling a feeling is different from acting on the feeling. They are two different things. We often treat them as a same thing. If I feel anger, most of the times, we want to repress it. We don't want to give it any voice. We don't want to be in touch with it, because we feel like if I feel the anger, if I get in touch with the anger, then I will act out the anger in ways that hurt people. No, those are two entirely different things. I can feel the anger, be in touch with it, acknowledge it. I feel angry, and that's okay. I can choose to do many different things. I can choose to write it down in a message to them. I can choose to say it to their face. I can choose to invite them into a conversation. I can choose to complain about it to my friend. There are many things that we can do with it. I can choose to lash out. We are responsible and in control of our actions.

Our feelings, though, they just happen. They just come up. They're important. They're red flags. They're our warning system that says, "Something's important here. Pay attention to me!" Whether that's from the current situation, or the past, or some miscommunication, it's just telling us something. It's important. Pay attention. Usually because we haven't been paying attention to it for many, many years, and the only way it can get through to you is to make you so angry and so stressed out that you can't ignore it. This practice is going to help you get in touch with it before it gets to that point.

Are there any other questions, Josette?

Josette: Yes, there was one quick questions, and it was ... One second. I have to pull it up again. How do you respond when someone says, "What is wrong with you?"

Sandra: What is wrong with you?

Josette: I asked for clarification, but I'm not sure if that means in the kind of mean way, making you wrong and being like, "What is wrong with you? I can't deal with you," type thing.

Sandra: Whoever said that, do they want to share a little bit more?

Speaker 5: Sure. Sorry. I didn't see the chat. Can you hear me okay?

Sandra: Yeah. We can hear you.

Speaker 5: Usually, it's my mother is my biggest trigger. Usually, when we're having a discussion, or a conversation, it's like, "What's the matter with you? What's wrong with you?" It seems like I'm not responding how she wants me to respond, or she's not hearing what she wants to hear, and so I get defensive. I want to learn to try not to let it affect me. A healing process, I want it to begin, so that's why this is so helpful. How would you respond, or how would you help me, coach me through a situation like that with her or with anybody else?

Sandra: You commented ... You say something. Can you think of a recent thing, just so we have something to work with.

Speaker 5: I talked to her yesterday, and I said, "Where's dad?" She's like, "I told you. What's wrong with you? I told you he's in school." I had forgotten that she sent me his schedule. She's like, "Are you okay? What's wrong with you?" I was like, I just responded, "Are you okay?" I try to change the subject.

Sandra: What were you making it mean? How were you interpreting those words?

Speaker 5: I take it as there is something wrong with me, and you can see it. That's it.

Sandra: How do you feel about that?

Speaker 5: My initial is anger, then it's hurt because I don't know how to talk to her without it escalating to something ugly then I regret.

Sandra: Do you feel like when she says, "What's wrong you with" that she's making you wrong as a person?

Speaker 5: Yes. I shrink into a little kid again.

Sandra: Where do you feel that in your body?

Speaker 5: My chest. My whole body, basically.

Sandra: What are the sensations like?

Speaker 5: I'll start maybe, I'll feel like a shake, or something. I'll want to react. It's easier because it's on the phone. If it was a physical, like she was right in front of me, it would be really bad.

Sandra: Is it kind of ... Is it a tingling sensation? Is it a hot sensation? How is it manifesting?

Speaker 5: It's a hot sensation.

Sandra: It's throughout your entire body, you say, or is it concentrated?

Speaker 5: Yeah, it's throughout my body.

Sandra: Is it moving?

Speaker 5: Yeah, like I said, it starts usually my chest. Then I'll feel my whole body just, you know. Then I just freeze. If I'm on the floor, and I'll just freeze. Like where do I go from here with this stuff? Is it physical, like she's in front of me, I just will start attacking with words. I feel like I have to defend myself.

Sandra: Yeah. I want you to stay with the feeling in your body. How do you relate to that feeling?

Speaker 5: What do you mean?

Sandra: When that feeling comes up for you, do you try to make it go away? Do you try to ignore it? [crosstalk 01:06:24] that feeling?

Speaker 5: Yeah, like I was trying to just ignore it, like I said yesterday on the phone, I was trying to change the subject so I wouldn't feel what I was feeling. I was like, "Okay, here we go again. I don't want to feel it."

Sandra: Can you see that that's toxic swirl?

Speaker 5: Yes. I don't know who to change it when I'm in it. Now, that's ... You know, like what you were talking about, like the check-in and just wait, you know? Not engage in it.

Sandra: It's not about changing it.

Speaker 5: Okay.

Sandra: When you try to change how you're feeling, that means you're resisting who you're feeling. You're not acknowledging for what it is.

Speaker 5: Okay.

Sandra: What work would you use to describe this feeling?

Speaker 5: What word to describe what I feel? Or what I felt?

Sandra: Yeah.

Speaker 5: Hurt. Really hurt.

Sandra: You say, "I feel hurt, and that's okay."

Speaker 5: I feel hurt, and that's okay.

Sandra: Say it again.

Speaker 5: I feel hurt, and that's okay. I feel hurt, and that's okay. I feel hurt, and that's okay.

Sandra: What are you noticing?

Speaker 5: Less tension. Accepting myself and my feelings, even if she doesn't.

Sandra: You can give yourself the acceptance, even if someone else doesn't. You're the most important person to yourself. What about, "I feel hurt, and that matters."

Speaker 5: I feel hurt, and that matters. I feel hurt, and that matters. I feel hurt, and that matters.

Sandra: Right.

Speaker 5: Thank you, Sandra.

Sandra: What do you want to do now about it?

Speaker 5: Try to find the acceptance to just focus more on myself and acknowledging myself, again, even if she doesn't. She may never.

Sandra: Maybe, maybe not. You can give yourself that acceptance.

Speaker 5: Yeah, I want to practice that, especially for my daughter.

Sandra: One more thing to practice.

Speaker 5: Yes.

Sandra: "I deserve acceptance."

Speaker 5: I deserve acceptance. I deserve acceptance. I deserve acceptance.

Sandra: What do you [inaudible 01:10:28]?

Speaker 5: Less tension and more peace, more accepting of myself. That's okay. That felt good. Thank you.

Sandra: Thank you for sharing. Once again, I get to talk about you and what happened.

You could hear it right? You could hear it in her voice as she went from focusing on her toxic swirl. When she was focused on her mom, what her mom was doing, what she was saying, what she was probably meaning with that, and she wanted to get rid of that pain, she didn't want to feel it, she froze, she would distract, she was doing all these things normally to not feel the pain, to not have that feeling. Then through just really like a minute or two of saying I feel pain and that's okay, that matters, I'll take care of you, just in a couple minutes of doing that, she got to a really different place, and you could hear it in her voice. She sighed out. It's like a relief.

I'm not sure if that's what she felt, but I know other people who do this, they tell me it's like a relief when they get in touch with their feelings, and that's the irony of this. We spend our entire lives running away from our feelings and our needs.

Yesterday, I was at my boxing gym, and I was saying how I was going to do this mindfulness Buddhist retreat for five days tomorrow, and they're like ... I was talking about my class, and I was like, "Yes, it's getting you in touch with your feelings, and she was like ... The other person I was talking to, she was like, "I can never do that." I was like, "Most of us spend our lives being distracted, trying to distract ourselves, and so we don't deal with it." She's like, "Yeah. I don't even know what that would be like to be in touch with my feelings. I can't do that. That would be so scary." Yet we just did it. Right? It's a relief. Not the apprehension going into it is yeah, really overwhelming, but the actual act of doing it, you can see the emotional charge starts to go down until there's relief, and they shift into being creative and resourceful, and feeling powerful. I would say they get back to their naturally whole self in that moment. Then they're able to respond the way that makes sense. He left his stuff at my place, didn't respond. I'll just reach out again and ask him, "Hey, you didn't respond. I still want to know what to do with it. Let me know by tonight." All of a sudden, she has options.

What I want you to get really clear on is that the emotional charge that we feel, a lot of that is related to our resistance to our own feelings and needs. It's a resistance to what is happening. A resistance to the other person's internal reality. We haven't gotten there yet. We'll get there in the

next practice, but that's viewed ... When we resist the three realities, starting first with our own reality, that is where the emotional charge comes from. Otherwise, it's just a conversation. It's just an action, which we could just respond to. It was buying groceries, or looking at the weather and going, "It's cold. I'm going to wear a coat." "I'm hungry. I'm going to eat this." "I want to do this, but I don't know how. I'll go ask somebody." It becomes as simple as that. The emotional charge is from when we resist our feelings and needs, and we resist what is happening in external reality, and the other person's internal reality, right? This is why ... It is linear, in the sense that we need to say yes to what is happening, and then we can choose what to do.

Anybody have questions about that?

Josette: We had a couple of questions a little bit earlier, maybe about ten minutes ago about can you elaborate more about not being able to say yes until saying no?

Sandra: It's 7:20, so I want to give, actually, a bathroom break. Bathroom break, five minutes, come back at 7:25, or whatever time it is, at the 25 minute mark.

All right. We are back. Hey, Josette. My trusty support. Can you repeat the question?

Josette: Yes, it was, "Can you elaborate more on not being able to say yes until saying no?"

Sandra: Right. If I feel like I can't say no to something, then it's coerced. I'm being forced into it. Even when we actually agree ... Say there's something we believe is important to do, it could be anything, it could be eating healthy, for example. We can all generally agree that eating healthy is a good thing to do. I'd like to do it. If we feel like we can't say no. If we feel like we have to eat healthy or else, and we're going to get shamed, and judged, and policed, essentially, punished. We're oftentimes going to resist doing it. All of a sudden it's not as easy as picking out some food and making something, or eating some fruit, it's not so easy anymore. There's this whole emotional toll to it, because we're trying to make ourselves do something. We're coercing ourselves. Even though it's us doing it to ourselves, it's as toxic as if somebody else was to try to coerce us to try to do something.

Until we feel like we can fully say no to it, and we don't police ourselves, and we don't judge ourselves, which is distinct from somebody else trying to do it. Somebody else could still try to do it, and they may, but if we don't police ourselves around it, and we make it okay for ourselves to say no,

then we can say yes, and it's a freely made choice. It's really voluntary at that point. Then we much more easily move into action.

That's what you'll notice. Everybody felt stuck at the beginning of the coaching. Everybody felt stuck. They felt like there was something they wanted to do, and they didn't want to do it. They felt like there was something they had to do, and they didn't want to do it, but they made themselves do it, either to say something, do something, or to silence themselves in order to not make it escalate. They did not choose fully to do that action, so it took a toll on them. That makes sense, right?

When you try to make yourself do something, your body reacts. Says, "No! No coercion! Bad coercion. I don't like you, coercion. I don't want to do it." We end up dragging ourselves through it, and making ourselves do it. We whip ourselves into doing it. Just because it's us who's saying it to ourselves doesn't make it less coercive. Instead of saying, "I have to do something. I should do something. I must do something." What about, "I choose to. I could choose not to." It's a simple language change, but it makes a big difference for a lot of folks. I can choose to, or not to do something. Okay. I choose not to. As opposed to I have to. I must. That's all coercive language, right? When we hear that, everybody goes, "Ugh." That's why it's so heavy. It's like this. It's coercive. You notice at the end, everybody, they kind of lift it up, and they're like, "I can do this. There are options." It becomes a choice.

That's why I say you cannot fully say yest to something until you can fully say no to it. That's a big part of this is helping people understand that it's okay what they're feeling. From there, they can choose how to act on it.

Any follow-up from that? Does that make sense?

Josette: Yeah, We had a couple of questions about how do you help yourself ... It isn't an obligation to, for example, healthy eating, or to just make it okay to say no, and to know that if you say no, it's okay?

Sandra: Right. I could keep telling you the same thing over and over again, but it would be much more powerful and useful if somebody wanted to get some coaching, and I could help you through that. I know we have lots of problems saying no and not making ourselves wrong for not eating healthy. There's a lot of us.

Josette: Abby, go ahead.

Abby: Yeah, I asked one of the earlier questions, and my kind of struggle is that, for eating healthy, I sometimes feel like I'm doing myself a disservice if I don't, so it's like that should scenario where you really should do this, or if

it's like going to bed at a certain time to make sure I get enough sleep, and then I'm not ready to go to bed, because I'm not done with whatever I was working on, and I think I end up feeling like I'm sort of trapped between you should do this because you know it's good for you, or making myself feel like it's an obligation, it's not good for me. The two things there.

Sandra: What's the impact on you of feeling trapped.

Abby: I feel like I can't make a decision either way, so I end up feeling like I'm frozen in this sort of should ... What should I do situation.

Sandra: How much time and energy gets put into it?

Abby: So much.

Sandra: Right.

Abby: I think ... No matter what I end up doing, I feel bad about it. I feel like I should have either done that from the beginning, or I should have not struggled with it, or I should have made a different decision, or I should have planned better. There's always a way to make myself feel bad about it.

Sandra: That is not a happy place.

Abby: No.

Sandra: It sounds like a really unproductive place as well.

Abby: I think I spend a lot more time trying to push myself ... And energy trying to push myself towards some kind of action than acting.

Sandra: Right. What if ... I want you to just repeat this. "I can choose to eat healthy, or not."

Abby: I can choose to eat healthy, or not. I can choose to eat healthy, or not. I can choose to eat healthy, or not. I think it's hard because I believe that now, but it's like in the moment ... It's not usually about the actual eating healthy or not, it's like am I failing myself in some way because I haven't ticked off whatever you're supposed to do to be good to yourself?

Sandra: Tell me more about this feeling, am I a failure, because we're just talking about eating. Right?

Abby: Right. It should be so, so simple.

Sandra: But it's not, and that's okay.

Abby: I think it's for me very much like I have no one but myself to blame if I'm unhealthy if I don't take steps to ... If I'm not making healthy choices, if the result is that I end up being really tired the next day because I haven't gone to bed on time, or getting sick because I haven't eaten enough vegetables or what have you, then I have no one to blame but myself.

Sandra: What do you make it mean when you don't do these things? You could just be tired. You could just not eat something. What are you making it mean?

Abby: I think it means that I'm irresponsible, or that I'm ...

Sandra: It's worse than that.

Abby: It's that I failed myself in some way.

Sandra: What's underneath that?

Abby: I guess that I won't ... No one will be sympathetic to me, or care if I have done something, if it's because I could have avoided it myself.

Sandra: Tell me more about that.

Abby: If I am tired, and it's my own fault, then people won't be compassionate to me, because I could have done something, and I just didn't, so then I'll feel loneliness from them, or cut off from people, or maybe like they don't care about me.

Sandra: Do you think you're not important.

Abby: Maybe. I think sometimes. I think I feel like maybe I have to prove that I'm good enough a lot. Worthy of people's care, and respect, so if I don't take care of myself, then why should anyone else care about me?

Sandra: Yeah. I want to try another statement out. This is, "I can not eat healthy, and I'm still good enough."

Abby: I can not eat healthy, and I'm still good enough. I can not eat healthy, and I'm still good enough. I can not eat healthy, and I'm still good enough.

Sandra: What are you noticing?

Abby: I think it does. Touching something.

Sandra: What is it touching?

Abby: That fear that I'm always going to fall short somehow. That my falling ... Maybe that me not doing ... Making one small choice in my life isn't

determining how worthy I am in the larger way, so if I don't eat healthy for a week, it's not going to matter, in terms of my worthiness.

Sandra: Then there's still a part of you that feels like it does matter, it does determine.

Abby: Yeah. I think I feel that way about ... I'm in grad school, and I feel that way about school, work as well, if I don't do my best than it's not good enough.

Sandra: I want to go back to where you feel that pain in your body. Do you feel it now?

Abby: Yeah.

Sandra: Can you tell me a little bit more about it?

Abby: It's like a achy feeling in my chest and then my neck. It feels sort of like a pressure.

Sandra: Does it have a shape?

Abby: A blob.

Sandra: How big is it?

Abby: Like a tennis ball.

Sandra: From a scale of one to ten, one being most severe, how strongly do you feel it?

Abby: Like a five or a six.

Sandra: What is this tennis ball blob thing, does it have a color? Does it move?

Abby: It's like a darkness. I don't feel it move, but sometimes it does.

Sandra: Does it feel more stuck?

Abby: Yeah. It feels kind of like sticky.

Sandra: Could you close your eyes for a second? I want you to envision yourself going into this stick, blob tennis ball. What are you noticing from the inside of it?

Abby: I'm having trouble going inside.

Sandra: That's okay. Can you see it? Are you standing outside of it?

Abby: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sandra: I want you to get a little bit closer to it.

Abby: Okay.

Sandra: I want you to walk around it, touching it, what are you noticing?

Abby: I think that it's scared of me.

Sandra: Tell me more.

Abby: I think it's afraid that if I heal it, something bad will happen to me because it's trying to protect me. I think that it's trying to protect me from I guess letting myself fail, but I think it's more like it's trying to protect me from giving people a reason to not care about me or love me. That's what it believes.

Sandra: What happens if people don't care about you?

Abby: Then I'm alone.

Sandra: Then what?

Abby: Then I'm sad.

Sandra: Then what? What is it really afraid of?

Abby: That I'll be hurt. Yeah. That I'll be hurt.

Sandra: What happens when you're hurt?

Abby: It's very painful, and I have a lot of trouble doing other things.

Sandra: Can you breath? Breath into that pain? Do you feel that pain right now?

Abby: Yeah, well I can't tell if I feel the pain itself, or the fear of the pain.

Sandra: They're pretty similar.

Abby: It feels softer now.

Sandra: I want you to take a couple breaths. Breath into the pain, and breathe out the pain. Try saying, "I see my pain, and I care."

Abby: I see my pain, and I care. Is that what you said?

Sandra: Yeah.

Abby: I see my pain, and I care.

Sandra: I want you to say this to yourself as you're holding this tennis ball with love.

Abby: I see my pain, and I care. I see my pain, and I care.

Sandra: What are you noticing coming up for you right now?

Abby: A relief. The feeling that tennis ball, and all of that feels sort of lighter. It feels more like in the open, and like it's softer.

Sandra: Yeah.

Abby: It's not so hard to touch it.

Sandra: Yeah. What do you want to do about the pain now? How can you take care of it?

Abby: I don't know. I think just do something that feels really good, like [inaudible 01:37:52].

Sandra: Good.

Abby: My body, that always makes me feel better.

Sandra: Right. That's possible. Hey, that would actually be healthy. Look at that. It happens. You choose to do it. Do you want to do it?

Abby: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sandra: Do you choose to do it?

Abby: Yeah.

Sandra: Say, "I choose to run."

Abby: I choose to run.

Sandra: "I might change my mind, but I choose to now."

Abby: I might change my mind, but I choose to now. It's okay if I change my mind because it's my choice.

Sandra: Right. What did you learn from this?

Abby: That I can ... The choices are just choices. They don't mean everything about who I am.

Sandra: They don't. There's just choices.

Abby: Yeah, and if I make a mistake, it's just one mistake. It's not everything.

Sandra: Right. That's all it is. That's so wonderful.

Abby: Yeah. Thank you.

Sandra: Thank you. That was so, so wonderful.

Abby: Yeah, it feels a lot better. Thank you.

Sandra: Thank you for sharing.

Abby: I'll go on mute now.

Sandra: Then check out the chat.

Once again, it was only what? Maybe ten minutes, or five minutes? I don't even know how long it took. That's all it took. You saw where she was, right? She was really there. She was really stuck. If I don't eat healthy, I'm a terrible person, I'm a failure, people are going to judge me, they're going to come for me, I'm going to be hurt, no one is going to love me. All these things. Then she got to a place where she was like, "I can choose to. I can change my mind. It's not the end of the world. It's just one mistake. That's it. I'm good. We get back to our natural wholeness, and it doesn't mean that we have to ... I'm not talking about us never having moments when we're upset. That's not what this is about. This is about when we're upset, we're able to check in with ourselves and take care of our pain.

We get back in touch with our natural wholeness. From there, we can go for a run, or not, but I probably will because now I want to run. I'm choosing to. Before, what felt like a coercion, where she felt like she had to do something healthy to be good enough, now it's like ... She didn't want to. She got caught up in that toxic swirl, going back and forth, just feeling this not dealing with this reality, which is that she was feeling coerced, and she was feeling this pain underneath. It wasn't about the food. It was about not being enough. Not being lovable. Not being important. Once she validated herself and her feelings and her needs, poof. I want to go for a run.

It can be that simple. It was interesting in my coaching for her. This happens where we go round ... Our toxic swirl is very tricky. It can be very subtle. It does its best to distract us from the root cause from the source of the toxic swirl. Plus I also wanted to show you a couple different ways of accessing your feelings. I went to an affirmation, actually, which I wouldn't necessarily do, because sometimes doing an affirmation before you're

ready is more about changing. I had her say, "I can choose to not eat healthy, and I'm still enough." I wanted to see if there was a dissonance being created. It was a little bit ... I could see we're having a windy path to get to the source of the pain. I was like, "Okay, we're on a windy path. Let me throw something else out there to see what happens." That's why I tried a different route than the typical, "I feel X and that's okay." There are many paths to it.

Sometimes the most powerful can be when we say everything's fine, legit, and it's so not true for us. I mentioned another session that I used to say to myself in the mirror every morning that I have the right to be happy. Not the guarantee to be happy, but the right to be happy. This was within a context of a lot of self-sacrifice that I was doing, that I had given up that that was a possibility for me. It was my lot in life to take care of other people, their suffering. Even though I had all these good intentions for caring for people, not allowing them to suffer, not wanting them to be alone, when it became coercive for me, shit got bad. I did this practice of I have the right to be happy, and the dissonance between that and me totally not believing that to be true, and my actions reflecting that belief that it's not possible, that I have no right to be happy, that helped me get in touch with my own pain. It surfaced it. It's so normalized sometimes, it's hard to bring it up. If we don't bring it up, we can't do anything about it. There are different ways to access the pain.

I know that's five minutes until 8:00, so I want to put us into breakout rooms, and folks can just talk about if there's one thing that they want make sure that they walk away remembering, or they want to take away from this session, what would it be. What is the one takeaway that you want to make sure that you remember. Breakout rooms.

Josette: I'm going to write the prompt in the chat. If you also want to copy and paste that somewhere, or write it down yourself so you and your partner can refer to that, it's also there.

Sandra: Great. We're only going to do it for five minutes, so by 8:00, and then we'll just quickly come back and wrap up.

Thanks for letting me know that. Folks can just type in the chat what some of the takeaways for you are. If anybody wants to share theirs while other folks are typing it in. I'll read some off too.

"I matter."

"I have choices. I am in control."

"Being present to how I feel, whatever it is, whatever intensity. Not diminishing or controlling it."

"That we have choice."

"Not ignoring our needs and feelings."

"We don't need to wait. We have the power to make our own choices."

"Printing out the four affirmations and practicing them."

"Doing the mantra, doing the affirmations in the morning in front of the mirror."

Lots and lots and lots of goodies.

"Notice when I'm focusing on the other person, or escaping into intellect or action. Just take a moment to get in touch."

"Coming into physical sensations of the body to get fuller awareness of feelings, ideas, traumas, and stickiness."

"The power of sharing our feelings with this group." I just ... That's so incredibly true. I really want to thank every single person who's one, shared in the group chat, and then two, especially to the folks who came out, and had me coach them in front of everybody. That is not an easy thing to do. I myself don't prefer to do that, so I always really appreciate it when everybody else does. As you can see, it's so powerful for other folks, because they see themselves in what you're going through. You are not alone. So many other people are going through the same thing. It's really amazing and wonderful to see that shift that's possible for you. It is possible for other folks too.

It just takes that pause, and saying some affirmations. It's changing our words. Remember when I said external reality is just words, energies, words, actions, and energies. Our internal reality is the same way. If we change the words we say to ourselves, we change the energy from fear to compassion, and then our words and actions will flow out of there. What we say to ourselves, what we do to ourselves when it comes to our energy of compassion, is fundamentally different. Then we experience something entirely different than when our energy was that of fear. Our words and actions came from a place of fear. Just remember that we have a choice. Our feelings, we don't have a ... They just come up. How we relate to them, we do have a choice. We are responsible for how we relate to our pain.

Thank you so so so much, every single person, and just FYI, I will soon be sharing about a two-day training to help folks who could not do a ten week training with us. Just kind of keep that in mind if you're sharing this with anybody. Know that we're going to be offering a different format pretty soon, a virtual, two-day training with monthly calls as well, which you also will be able to partake in, so even after this course is over, you'll still be able to do Q and A with me in the future. We're going to keep spreading it, spreading more and more healing and compassion in the world. Thank you. Good night, everybody.

How did we do?



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