

compassionate activism

REFLECTION WORKSHEET

Compassionate Activism Model

1. 100% Committed to a Vision
2. 100% Acknowledging of Current Reality
3. In Community, In Every Moment

The Five Practices of Compassionate Activism

1. Humility and Curiosity
2. Distinguishing Realities and Acknowledging External Reality
3. Gentle Mindfulness and Compassionate Self-Accountability
4. Compassionate Truth-Telling and Consciousness-Raising Inquiry
5. Shared Envisioning and Non-Cooperation

Select a Situation

In order to integrate this model into your daily life, please select a common situation you face to use throughout the session.

1. What is a type of situation that is moderately emotionally charged for you?
2. Why is it emotionally charged for you?
3. What is your typical reaction to it?

Practice #1 - Humility and Curiosity

Our initial reaction to a situation is often just the tip of the iceberg. When we believe our initial reaction and the assumptions behind them are 100% true and grounded in reality, then we aren't able to create something different. So treating our initial reaction and assumptions as just a starting point and as speculations is key to creating a different response to the situation.

Reflecting on Your Typical Reaction

1. What gets in the way of you acknowledging that you might not know everything about this situation already?

2. What gets in the way of you being curious about the other person's internal reality and asking questions to learn more?
3. What gets in the way of you being curious about your own internal reality and digging deeper to get in touch with it?

Practice #2: Distinguishing Realities and Acknowledging External Reality

There are three realities operating at the same time in all situations. When we confuse them as one reality, we run into issues because that is not how they're experienced by us. The three realities are:

- Your internal reality
- The other person's internal reality
- External reality

External reality consists of:

- Words
- Actions
- Energy

Our ability to accurately receive and assess external reality is affected by how emotionally charged we are around the situation. So the first step is to start distinguishing external reality from our internal reality and acknowledge that what happened in external reality did indeed happen.

Reflecting on Your Typical Reaction To the Situation

1. Share briefly what you normally think and talk about regarding the situation.
2. With the help of your partner, identify what parts are make believe.
3. Describe what was said and done in that specific situation between you and the other person(s). Focus on the words and actions only.
4. Keep paring down your description until you and your partner feel like it's just composed of the words and actions.

Reflecting on Your Reflections

1. What gets in the way of you acknowledging the situation as it is and as it is not?
2. What do you gain from resisting the reality and focusing on make believe?
3. What's the impact on you when you don't acknowledge the situation as it is?

Reflecting on Acknowledging as Acceptance

1. Share "I acknowledge/accept that they said X."
2. What and how is it different for you when you just focus on the words and actions and accept that they happened as such – and not as you wished had happened?

Practice #3: Gentle Mindfulness and Compassionate Self-Accountability

Normally, we're caught in a mental swirl - which is usually toxic. This prevents us from getting in touch with our internal reality because our mental energy and time is being poured into resisting the existence of reality aka make-believe.

Toxic Swirling vs. Gentle Mindfulness

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| • Not In Touch with Present Moment | • Connected To the Present Moment |
| • Resistant/Denying | • Accepting/Acknowledging |
| • Judgemental/Shaming | • No Right or Wrong/Just Is |
| • Grounded in Your Make Believe World | • Grounded in Your Internal Reality and External Reality |

To shift from the toxic swirl to our internal reality, we bring mindfulness to our internal reality. To break out of the grips of the toxic swirl, use the first Practice of Humility and Curiosity and second Practice of Distinguishing Realities and Acknowledging External Reality to let go of the toxic swirl.

Then bring gentle attention to your internal reality and acknowledge it without trying to change it, judge it, minimize it, etc.

Reflecting on Practicing Mindfulness

1. Share briefly what your typical toxic swirl is around the situation.
2. Share what it was like when you brought mindfulness to your reaction.
3. How was mindfulness different or similar than the toxic swirl?

Shifting from the Toxic Swirl to Gentle Mindfulness

1. Stop making your feelings wrong for existing by:
 - Trying to make it go away
 - Change it
 - Judge it
2. Instead, acknowledge your feelings and validate their right to exist and mattering using statements like:
 - I feel X and it's ok / that matters.
 - I see your/my pain and I care.
3. Repeat for the next layer of feelings.
4. Eventually you will become aware of a need and action you can take to take care of that need. You can then choose or not choose to do so with statements like:
 - Yes, X happened, and I choose to do Y. (Yes, and)
 - When X happens, I feel Y because I need Z. I will do A / invite someone to do A.

Quick Formulas for Compassionate Self-Accountability

- I feel X and it's ok / that matters.
- I did/didn't do X and that happened.
- I see your/my pain and I care.
- I did/didn't do X and that happened.
- Yes, X happened, and I choose to do Y. (Yes, and)
- When X happens, I feel Y because I need Z. I will do A / invite someone to do A.

Practice and Reflect

1. Create your compassionate self-accountability statement depending on your situation from the list of quick formulas.
2. Repeat the statement five times and breathe into them.
3. Share what comes up for you as you declare this statement, especially around what feels easy or difficult about it.