

compassionate activism

Sandra: Great. Hey, everybody. This is the third practice session of Compassion Activism. It is July 21. We're going to actually be trying something different today. I wanted to see what it will be like to do a speed application of Compassion Activism, within an hour, do everything as a group, which always makes it a little bit longer because people are in different places, related to their comfort and ease in using the different practices, as well as how strongly and deeply they're feeling the emotional charge around whatever situation is coming up for them.

I'm going to be helping people walk through or move through the 5 different practices. I just want to really remind folks that wherever you get stuck in, that's also fine. There's no right or wrong to where you get stuck in. While this practice ... It's just being with what is happening and not making yourself wrong. Not resisting what's going on. Not trying to change, and just being with it. That's what we've learned in Mindfulness. It's not trying to change it, or make it better, go away. It is where you are. If you're stuck, you're stuck. It just means that your body wants to go deeper into wherever you are.

I'm going to be moving people through this process. If you find yourself, "No. I'm in Second Practice ..." I'll remind everybody what everything is if you don't remember. "If I'm stuck in second practice and I cannot move to a third practice, and some of you guys have moved on. Oh my god. I'm doing a bad job. I'm a bad student." That's a great time just to be like ... Noticing that's toxic swirl, the toxic swirl of make believe, and making yourself wrong or you're being "A bad student." No. It just means that you're here. You're in Practice Number 2. This is where your work is. This is where your growth is.

To [inaudible 00:02:10] so you can choose either, just to follow along with me, and just so you get to see what that kind of full process might look like for somebody, and do it later for yourself. You can just stay with Practice Number 2 and continue to distinguish. You can tune me out a bit, if you wanted. You can also ask questions in the chat box, which I'll be taking.

This is going to be a lot of me explaining the practice, you maybe either thinking in your head or writing it out, if that works better for you. How you would apply the practice. Then I'd be taking questions. Like I said, we're going to do a speed version of this, allotting about 10 minutes per practice. Let's see how this goes.

The first practice ... Actually, no. Let me back up. We need to set the context first. I want everybody to think of an emotionally charged situation that happened to them recently, and not to choose something that's super emotional. Just [inaudible 00:03:16] "Ah!" Nothing that's going for decades. Nothing like that. Also, nothing that's super minimal, that's like, "Meh." Something that's like a 3 or 4, 3 or 4 level charge for you. It gets you a little worked up. You're like, "I really just don't want to deal with that." It's not like, "Ah!"

Everybody got one. You could put it in your chat box. I'm going to ask questions. People can reply in the chat box. [Josette 00:03:51] can tell me everyone's good to go.

Josette: Do you want people to share their moment, or moving forward into the questions

Sandra: No.

Josette: Okay.

Sandra: Just say yes. I've got one. I see people's faces, so I feel like ... Here's the face that I see. I'm going to take your visual cues is for the group.

Josette: We have [crosstalk 00:04:12].

Sandra: I get a lot of nodding or no's from me, please.

Josette: We have 2 from you, including myself.

Sandra: Great. Everyone has their situation. It's critical that you have a situation in mind. The first practice is noticing the toxicity and having humble curiosity.

Let's talk about noticing toxicity. Toxicity is when we resist what's going on. We engage in "It shouldn't have happened. They should have known better. I can't believe it happened." It's obviously preferable, but it didn't happen. We don't want it to happen, whatever happened. There's a level of demand, like a coercive demand that it really shouldn't have had happened. We're like, "That takes up all the space." We can't let go. It's like we're caught. We're caught by that. Also, toxicity also shows up in ... Somebody is typing. Can they be muted.

Josette: Sorry, [Alexis 00:05:30]. I think you're on mute.

Sandra: Great. Thank you. The other way toxicity also shows up is when we make ourselves or other people wrong for what happened, like wrong as a human being. Like I said, obviously, we prefer for this thing to never have happened. It did happen. It's just that something happened. When we make the person or ourselves wrong, it could look something like, "How could I let this happen? Why am I such a rude person? What is wrong with me? What is wrong with you as a human being?" It's like we de-humanize both ourselves and other people in this process.

As opposed to "You did a thing that was pretty messed up. What happened? Why?" It's a different feeling energetically. The toxicity is really when we have these thoughts, and we're caught in the grips of it. Like there's a dog with a bone, and we are the bone. We cannot get free from it, because we're just pouring all our energy into either resisting what happened, the fact that it happened, or making ourselves or the other person wrong as a human being. That's the first thing, releasing toxicity.

Do folks have a sense of like, "Okay. I can notice that. I know ..." That what they're thinking, and usually do.

Josette: Yes. We have someone saying "Totally. There's totally a way in which it can be erased to make someone else wrong in order to not be wrong myself. I've seen myself do that toxic patterns." Someone else said, "Yes. Me, too," to that statement.

Sandra: Perfect. This is where we normally swirl in. That's the nature of the toxic swirl make believe world, is that "This is where we live in. We're being caught up in it. We're being tossed around it." It becomes almost obsessive in terms of how we relate to it. It's like, "Ah." There's no spaciousness.

There's no spaciousness for us to think of a different way around it. There's no spaciousness for us to really choose how to respond to the situation because we're caught up in it like a dog with a bone.

Josette: I just wanted to ... Someone else added, "For me, it's feeling the pain of what's happening, which I thought was ... My struggle has been feeling not just unseen, but not allowed to be me."

Sandra: Right. The first thing is just noticing. What's problematic about a toxic swirl is that it pushes everything else out. It's as if we believe that this toxic swirl is all there is to the situation. Having humble curiosity means that ... It's like, "Well, there's these things. I'm thinking in their assumptions, or their assumptions or speculations that I'm making." There's probably more to this. I'm not quite sure. It's not all the information. It's having humble curiosity, being, "Okay. What else is going on?"

As we have been talking about Compassion Activism, it first starts with ourselves. It's the inquiry into what are we feeling? What's underneath all of it for us? The initial reaction that we experience in a situation is often not everything. It's just the tip of the iceberg for us. Our reaction could be related to what is happening in front of us. It could be something from the past. It's often times a combination of the both. It could be an 80-20 split, or a 50-50 split, or a 95-5% split. You don't know then until you dig deeper.

This is what the big having humble curiosity helps you get access to. It's just the openness that I don't necessarily know everything. It's not saying that what you're speculating is wrong. I don't know that. You don't know that. It's just saying, "I'm not quite sure." I just want to make that distinction that it's not really trying to undermine your sense of what's going on, but it just wants you to feel more curious and dig a little deeper to confirm what you think might be happening. Does that make sense for you, folks? Is there any questions about that?

Josette: No questions thus far, but feel free to throw any questions in chat. There was a great comment that someone said "I have tried to change what's wrong with me to what's going on with me, or what am I learning about myself in this situation." I thought that was an excellent illustration of your point.

Sandra: That's perfect, because the thing is when we assume that what we're ... If we get caught on toxic swirl, which is make believe, we take that as truth, then there's nothing that can be different. If we think that we are wrong. Like, there's something wrong with us to "Let that happen to us." Then, we get stuck. If we look at somebody else, like, "I cannot believe you." We assume that we know why they did something. There's no way anything could be any different, because we already know what's happening. We already know 100% of what happened, why it happened. Therefore, it's going to happen again.

There's no possibility that anything could be different, actually from this space. Having humble curiosity is actually one of the first doors that we need to open in order to have even the chance that something will be different in the future. That's why we're here. We want the future to look different than it is now.

We're going to move on to Practice Number 2. This is going well. Practice Number 2 is distinguishing realities, and acknowledging external reality. If you remember, there are 3 realities operating at the same time always. I'm having my internal reality, that you are experiencing this conversation through your internal reality. Since we're recording it, we actually know what exactly is being said, what are the words being exchanged between me and you and Josette. What are the actions happening? What is the energies being exchanged?

Now, these 3 things, my reality, your reality, and external reality can all be very different. Ideally, there'll be a lot of overlap in your understandings of realities. However, much of the time, they are actually quite different. The reason for that is that it's coming from ... We filter everything. We filter minimally through our physical senses, through our hearing, our eyes, understanding. Then, also through our past. What do things mean? Also, our personality. How do we normally react to stuff?

All these different combination of different things, that's how we filter what is going on, which is why we share the same space. We're hearing the same things. We're experiencing in very different ways. There's no right or wrong to that. It's just a different experience. What happens is that since systemic oppression [inaudible 00:13:22], there's only one experience. There's only one dominant narrative that has to be true for everybody. It doesn't allow for the multiplicity of all the different experiences as individuals.

Just noticing that your reality is one thing, is very different for somebody else. If this person didn't ... Josette did something that stuck to me. Hey, Josette. She didn't intend to. I still felt pain. I was impacted by it. Her lack of bad intentions does not negate the fact that I have felt some harm. Also, the fact that I felt some harm doesn't negate the fact that she didn't have any bad intention. They just both exist.

We live in a world, though, that says, "Josette didn't have any bad intentions. Therefore, you shouldn't feel pain," which is negating my experience. We, as activists, know that ... We often talk about how that's messed up, obviously. What we often do, though, is we often say, "Well, I was hurt. Your intentions don't matter. Your experience of the situation doesn't really matter either." That's because our pain is really pushing out the ... Wanting to hold space for somebody else's experience, which happens. Does it mean that they aren't both valid? It just means that it's really hard to hold the space for both at that point in time.

It's just in noticing that. It's just distinguishing "I may not care about Josette's perspective at this point. I might not be interested in her perspective at this point." That's fine. It still exists. It's still valid. As is not. Because all that happened, we acknowledged external realities. All that happened was a couple of words.

Just starting to distinguish these things. That's what starts to open up, "What is going on deeper with me?" Any questions about that?

Josette: No questions yet. However, someone mentioned that "The friction between me and how others are, and feeling like I have to swallow it and not say anything. I feel they won't understand or hear me." I'm dealing with that, I guess, that friction between acknowledging that things exists, but feeling you're not being heard.

We do have a question that came in.

Sandra: Let me just quickly respond to that one, first. This model is really about applying compassionate activism to yourself first, and then to the other person. Often times, when we're in an emotionally charged situation, we want to dump and talk with the other person, and then work with the other person to change their mind, get them to agree with us. Stop what they're doing. That's all understandable. Also, if I've been harmed, physically wounded, and instead of taking care of myself, I go running after the person who hurt me, but I'm bleeding out. You could do that, but it's going to be a real struggle. It's not going to go very well because you're really hurt. This conversation is not going to go very well, because you're bleeding out.

What I'm saying is first, let's focus on ourselves and take care of our own wounds, because we're the ones who are most important to ourselves. We're the only ones who really take care of us. We actually have that power, which is having taught to not believe that we do, and taught to do the opposite of healing ourselves, affirming ourselves.

It's a very natural desire to just to focus on the other person. What makes this so hard is the fact that you're still bleeding now. You still are wounded emotionally. That's why we start with ourselves first in this process.

Josette: Actually, related to that, the question was "How do you handle when you're willing to accept another person's reality, but they are not willing to hear yours?" They followed up with, "Maybe that's being answered now with what you've just said."

Sandra: One, we'll get to that part. One, we'll get to that part in 20 minutes. Secondly, there's a way people resist when we make them wrong as a person, which actually is psychologically healthy. Often times, when people don't want to engage in a conversation with us, it's actually because we're making them wrong as a human being.

Sometimes, you come at somebody in many different ways. There's no way they're going to engage in that conversation. That's also possible. Most of the time, I would say, it's because we're actually trying to coerce them. People often talk in this part and like, "How do I make them change their mind? How do I make them stop?" These are all coercive desires that we have, is they're not invitational.

We'll talk about how to invite folks later on. It really needs that we have to really be in a place where we want to invite people. That means taking care of our own wound first. The fact that we're bleeding out is going to make us a little just ... It's going to make us a little difficult to choose the appropriate response, because we're dealing with a lot of pain ourselves. That's going to interfere with our ability to talk with somebody else.

It's not dissimilar for a physical wound, to be honest, that's why I'm using the a bit gory of a metaphor right now. Sorry about that, Josette. If somebody is bothered by that, they can let me know, and I'll use a different one. I have to use the weather sometimes. More mundane.

We're good with Practice Number 2. All right. Speedy. We're being very speedy about this. This is great. The third Practice, this is the heart of it, as I've been saying. This is the practice of gentle mindfulness and compassionate self accountability.

I want folks to close their eyes and get real comfortable. Remember the emotionally-charged situation you've been thinking about. Think about it happening, replaying it a bit in your head, and noticing whatever thoughts arise, that toxic swirl make believe. This time, you're noticing those toxic swirl. As you're listening to those voices, and those messages, also notice, where is it showing up in your body. Where do you feel it most concentrated? Put your hand there. I just want you to notice what it's like to be there, to focus in on this sensation. Rate it from a 1 to 10, 10 being most intense.

I want you to breathe in to that sensation, and then breathe out. Breathe in to the sensation. Then, breathe out with the sensation. Breathe in with the feeling. Breathe out with the feeling. Just notice what's coming up for you. Maybe something shifted. Maybe nothing has. Keeping your hand there, where you feel it the strongest, just breathe in, say I see you. Breathe out, I'm here. Breathe in, I see you. Breathe out, I'm here. Breathe in, I see you. Breathe out, I'm here.

Just notice what's coming for you in that one, not trying to change it, don't judge it, just be with it. I want you to breathe in, and say you exist. Breathe out, you matter. Breathe in, you exist. Breathe out, you matter. Breathe in, you exist. Breathe out, you matter. Just notice if something is shifting, something is deepening, maybe nothing is changing.

I want you to, now, breathing in, breathe out, like I've been doing with you, just choose whatever phrase feels the best for you. What do you need? I care. I see you. It's okay. Just notice what's coming up for you as you repeat those acclimations for yourselves.

Now, I want you to ask it, ask it "Is there something you need or something I can give you?" Listen. Maybe it tells you something. Maybe it doesn't. It's okay. If it did tell you anything, then say, "I'd like to know. When you're ready, you can always tell me. I will take care of you." If you did hear something, I want you to say something like, "I didn't do that before. I'm sorry that I hurt you. I commit to doing it now," or whatever version feels best for you. It might be like, "I hear you. I'm not ready yet to do that. I will think about it."

I want you to think at them, and say you'll be back. Then, breathe in. Breathe out. Breathe in, feel the breath come into your body. Feel the breath go out of your body. Feel the breath come in, and go out. Come in, and go out. I want you to wiggle your toes and fingers and open up your eyes. Come back to here.

That was a speedy version. Wherever you got to in that conversation, it's perfectly all right. I had to move it rather quickly along. I want to give you a bit of a range of what this could look like with those. If people have questions or want to share actually what came up with them, like I said, maybe nothing happened for you. There's no right or wrong, it's just whatever came up for you, came up for you.

Josette: There are no comments yet. If anyone wants to come share any questions they had about that, and if you're on the phone, that would be star-6 to unmute, as well as mute yourself with star 6.

Sandra: Often times, when we do this, you're getting in touch with what's in our bodies. The reason this is helpful is because it shifts the focus away from the toxic swirl. Notice the toxic swirl is the first part of being like, "Maybe I don't want to go within that swirl." You actually really need to actually shift your focus away from the toxic swirl to something else. This is what infuse us to reality, and what you're actually feeling. All those "Shouldn't have to's, can't believe's, make wrong," all those make believe, all that's out there.

We pour all our time and energy to things that are just out there, that aren't even real. It did happen. That's what happened. It's real that it happened. Keeping insisting that it shouldn't happen, well, that's actually not. It's make believe. We aren't actually able to do anything about current reality if we're focused in putting all our time and energy into the make believe world. For us, what is real right now is what's going on with us emotionally, how it's showing up in our bodies. That's actually what's happening. It's just switching the focus.

Noticing the toxic swirl reminds us to return to ourselves, to return to our current emotional reality. That's often when people try to access their pain, they're often doing it through the toxic swirl make believe. That's not positive. It's just going to explode in your face. That's what people often try doing, which is why people are really scared of being in touch with their opinion, because we're doing it

through the toxic swirl of make believe, of making themselves wrong as a human being, of feeling powerless and helpless in that situation.

It's not really useful, to say the least, to get in touch with your feelings through the toxic swirl. If we get in touch with it, first grounding ourselves through our breath. That doesn't necessarily work for everybody, though it does for many. Maybe other folks, it's movement, like walking, kind of playing around if you feel like breathing doesn't work for you. Breathing is often useful because it really grounds ourselves in our body, if you feel it coming in and out. It tends to let the chemical rush flow out of it, and calms you down a little bit, which gives us a little more spaciousness, dig a little bit deeper into what's going on underneath that upset-ness.

Just focusing first on the physical sensation of it gives us an intangible to work with so it stops being so overwhelming for us. It's something concrete that you can hold on to. Just remembering that you always have this practice, this as an option to you.

Josette: There were some really great responses. Someone mentioned, "I realized I feel like I'm fleeing myself in this situation. I feel abandoned. I requested love and support for myself. It felt very powerful." Here's an added, "It feels hard to tune in to the feeling. I tried to mute it most of the time so that it slips away faster. I realized the pain I was feeling is understandable in the presence of the absence of a value of respect, which is something that I stand for very much." Finally, the last comment said, "Being more present in one's body is a step away from the toxic swirl and toward a more positive state, hopefully. It's hard to do that, because toxic swirl is more familiar. Therefore, a little bit more comforting. It feels familiar, so it feels safe even if it's actually feeling bad."

Sandra: Right. That's very real. A couple of people mentioned that it's not comfortable. It's not easy, because they're used to running away. They're used to not being in touch with their feelings. They're used to be focused on everything but what's going on internally with them. We have been conditioned to do that. This is not a moment to engage any, "I'm a bad student because I cannot do this right." No. That, could be just more toxic swirl, just an FYI.

There is no "Standard." Who teaches us there's this ideal that we have to fit into, or we fail as a human being? That doesn't sound like a question, again. You have to be a certain type of woman, man. That's what teaches us, that we just cannot be our self. Our experiences just cannot exist. It has to fit into this little box in order to be valid.

Doing this, even validating the fact that we have a different experience, and that's okay, that's actually resistance to systemic oppression. It's healing ourselves. It's going to be difficult in the beginning, because, honestly, we all suck at this. You have been trained to do the opposite. That's okay. In terms of not like it's preferable, but like that happened. When I first learned how to do anything, I sucked at it. Then, we grew up in a society that kept punishing us, replacing us when we didn't do it perfectly. We become even more scared to doing the things we're not very good at.

As children, as babies, they're fearless. They'll just keep on trying to learn how to walk and keep falling over, and keep on trying. It's just a matter of practice. It's a matter of practice and just knowing, "Yeah, I'm going to suck at it in the beginning," at least. Sometimes, when it gets really hard, I'm going to need just some more support.

There are times when I struggle with it. One, I know have the tools, I have the practice, I have the skills to work with it. When I find myself struggling still, I'll turn to somebody and I'll get support. I'll talk it out

with somebody. I have a life coach. I have friends. I have Josette. Josette is a wonderful support to me. We do this for each other. It's a great way to be in a relationship. That's all this is. All right.

Josette: There was one more comment that I just wanted to add in because I thought it was really great saying I can get to the point of identifying what is needed, giving myself what exactly is needed as the growth edge, which I think a lot of us can relate to in that ... That's something that we can just keep going on. I thought that was a really great point.

Sandra: Right. It's incredibly important to remember that this work is around being with where we are at, not that where we're at never changes. It changes over time. Allowing our feelings to exist, allowing our feelings to take up space, this is actually a very radical act. Our needs are legitimate, as is the fact that we don't have the history of taking care of our needs, because that's how we can condition. That's what our needs have been invalidated.

Holding space for both the fact that you need something and you're not ready to give it for whatever reason. If you're focused where that's where you're at, you could say to yourself ... [inaudible 00:36:33] affirmation to be like, "I need X, or I want to give myself X. I find it really hard." That's okay. I want to do this, and I really struggle to do it. That's okay. Or that it happened, or that's happening.

Often times, we feel like it's an either/or situation. That's what causes the feeling of stuck-ness, or one of the things that can cause the feeling of stuck-ness. As we know, binaries, either/or's, yes, no's like as being the only options are not really true. Many things are possible. We can hold both. Instead of doing a yes, but, we can do a yes, and.

I want folks to take whatever feelings they're having right now, where they're feeling stuck and thinking about moving to the next practice, to say, "Yes. I feel X, but I blah, blah, blah," maybe I can't do it, or don't want to. People can put that into the chat box if they want to. Just notice what's coming up for you as you say, "Yes, I blah, blah, blah, but, I blah, blah, blah." What are the rocking hard places for you? Just notice what that's like, it probably really sucks.

I want you to take the same things and switch it to, "Yes, I blah, blah, blah, and I blah, blah, blah." Just repeat that to yourself 3 times. If you want to share what they were, you could also put that on the chat box. Just notice what is it like for you saying "Yes, and." What is the difference of that and "Yes, but."

Josette: So far, it's just mine. One, but I will share that. I said, "Yes, I want to defend myself, but I am scared." When I said that I felt powerless, and stuck, and "Okay, that's it then. I'm just scared and hurt. There it is." When I said, "Yes, I want to defend myself, and I'm scared," there felt more possibility. Just like, "Okay. That's what's going on. How do I move forward?" That was the kind of question that came up afterwards when I said the "And," but when I said the "But," I felt defeated and "Oh, well. There we go."

Sandra: Great. It would be great if other people can share it just like what was the difference for them, and what feeling came up with that "And." I think what you described, Josette, is really what often happens. It's not always. It definitely often does happen like this. It's a small little linguistic change that we do about language, but what happens is it stops the binary of the "Either, or, yes, but." There's only one. No, there's not. There's many. There's many ways to be. Yes, and is affirming all of our realities at that point. We have 2 struggling emotions. Yeah, it's messy. We had options. We say that most people often times, not always, but often times, get more expansive, feel like, "Okay. I'm not quite sure what to do yet. I feel like maybe there's something." Maybe they start having some ideas off the bat. Just sitting with that.

Josette: Some of the answers that came state, "Yes, I feel that anger, but I don't know what it needs," and changed that to, "Yes, I feel that anger, and I will keep listening." The other one goes, "Yes, it opens us possibilities, but makes my need the cause of the pain I'm trying to avoid." Mine is, "Yes, I need space and time to myself, and I don't want to hurt her feelings." Someone said, "I prefer the "Yes, and." Another one says, the statement reads, "Yes, I am judgmental, and want to learn to be compassionate towards others." " Yes and is hopeful, versus the but."

Sandra: I want to go back to one of the earlier comments that said it feels like my need is causing the pain. The need is a big factor of the pain that you're feeling, I would say. I believe that we're naturally cold, except that we get torn away from them. We get told that we are not enough, we're not worthy. We're not lovable. We're not important, that we don't matter. Our pain, our needs, they also don't matter. They're not legitimate. They don't deserve to take up space. When we do that, I think that's where the pain comes from. We internalize it, because we've been told it so much that it's conditioned into us.

We have needs. We're human beings. We're not robots. Even robots have needs. Like, our computers need to be rebooted, too. It's not like they can just keep on going forever. Even robots are like that. Technology is like that. As human beings, we definitely have needs. They're real. They have a right to take up space. In terms of, minimally, us acknowledging them. When we don't acknowledge them, or you don't take care of them, yeah, that causes pain for us. When we act as the caring, compassionate caregiver to our pain, and we meet those needs, whatever it may be, we meet those needs, that actually restores us back to our natural wholeness, because we're acting out of love. For me, the way I ... I'm not going what it takes this week, but obviously, I think that who we truly are is just love. Is this what not about reconnecting to each other. It this work not about understanding the share of humanity that we have of one another?

For me, this is obviously my advice. Companies don't do this spiritual practice and healing. I see that very much in line with systemic oppression. People come from different places to this work, obviously, in their desire to create a more just, loving world. Really, we're trying to create a more loving world at the end of the day. We do that by being the love ourselves. That one more minute we give love to ourselves is one more minute love in this world. If we just create more minutes with more people, imagine that, you'll be a tidal wave, but a positive woman of love. To me, the tidal was not a good example, but you know, I'm just saying.

Pain, I say, is a wonderful opportunity, not in the sense like, "Yey, I felt pain. I want that," because we obviously don't, neither do I. It's a wonderful opportunity, in my perspective because it provides us the opportunity to provide care, love, when it's most needed, when it's most critical, which is when you're in pain. It can make the biggest difference at that point.

Josette: There was actually a comment that came in that I thought was a good, I knew that we probably need to move on, but I love this section. The comment reads, "I want to act out of love. I fear being hurt when I do so because that's often been my experience in this world." A lot of us can really relate to that, as well.

Sandra: Yeah. Remember, this work is first with ourselves. First with ourselves. For better or for worse, it's in our heads. The good news is it's in our heads. The bad news, it's in our heads. We have the ability to give ourselves that love. Just focus there until you really feel it. If you struggle to, you're like, "I need this, and I'm not ready to give it to myself yet." That's okay. That's actually being loving to yourself. You're

giving your feelings the space it needs to exist. That's all we're really talking about in this step. Remember, most things are not linear. However, this kind of is. I really need to do 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Don't try to jump to the fourth practice, which is talking with the other person before you've really done this work with yourself, which is the first 3 practices. That's where we want to go. I get that. Remember, bleeding out. Take care of your own wound first. Show yourself that love first and foremost, because you are the ones who deserve the most from yourself.

When that somebody else gives it to you, it'd be nice, but you're already giving yourself the most of it. It's like icing on the cake if they do, but it's not going to destroy you if they don't, because you're already doing that. You're already filling up this need for yourself.

I'm going to move on. I want to talk about this shift, though, the shift from the third practice of being with yourself and taking care of yourself to the fourth practice, which is ... Let me remember the order. The fourth practice of compassionate truth telling and cautiousness raising truth telling. Let me say this again, because I messed it up. The fourth practice of compassionate truth telling, and cautiousness raising truth of inquiry. You know what I'm saying.

This shift to this needs to be natural, needs to be called for, because especially the more emotionally charged initially was for you. The reason why I say this is because we often try to force ourselves to have this conversation with the other person before we've attend to our own needs. Like I said, we're not going to be in the best of states to have that conversation because we're still in a lot of pain and bleeding out. We need to tend to ourselves first.

If you still feel like you are forcing yourself, like you have to, that's you coercing yourself. Just because you're doing it to yourself, does not make it better or worse. It's equally bad as somebody else trying to coerce you, trying to make you do something, make you say something, make you whatever. I know that can be really hard, as perfectionist, and as activist, as saying there's always things that we should be doing in order to be a good person, a good activist worth taking up space in this world.

They're all just coercive demands upon this. They really wound us. There's a reason why we use a language of, "Whip them into shape. Make yourself do it. Drag yourself into it." It's all violent. It's all violent. I believe that you cannot really say yes until you completely say no. That's why coercion doesn't work, or it does work. It does work in a sense it makes people do stuff, but it doesn't get you the result that you want. It's the opposite of love. More love in the world. More coercion does not equal more love.

If you're not there yet, then don't go there yet. Don't force yourself. Don't think you have to do this. Just be wherever you are. The irony of this is that when you're really at just where with what you are, that acknowledgment will help release your needs, so release your pain, actually, because you're taking care of it. It's handled. It doesn't need to nag you anymore. It doesn't need to jump up and down in front of you to get your attention anymore, because you took care of it. You shift into an openness of you have lots of options now. You can have this conversation in different ways. When you feel called forth to have a conversation, that's when you do, you naturally shift into it.

For folks who want to, who are ready to move to this step, or maybe you're not so ready, but you want to experiment anyways, we can try this out. Compassionate truth telling is compassion for yourself. You're telling your side of the story. You're sharing your internal reality, your perspective, not for the other person. This is still for you. Remember, you're still the most important person to yourself. You're

sharing it because your reality, your truth matters. You are putting it out there for yourself. However they react, that's on them, but it's not about how they are going to respond to you. It's about you asserting the fact that your truth does matter and deserves to take up space.

It's incredibly important to focus on it being your internal truth. Using I statements. That was the reason why we focused on using I statements in this work. If you can share ... It depends how the relationship, your comfort and trust with that person, para-dynamics, of course. Ideally, you'd be able to share what you discovered by getting in touch with your pain. You'd like to know ... I realized that when I heard that, it reminded me of this really painful thing. It made me feel like I was worthless. It made me feel like I didn't have a right to be here. That actually calls for some vulnerability.

The thing is that when you're taking care of that vulnerability, it actually, it just becomes your [inaudible 00:53:36] towards natural wholeness. It's often not that hard. Sometimes, it still is. You can say things like, "This is really hard for me to share." I really want you to take some time listen and sit with me, because this is important to me. Even if you're not perfectly doing this, because ideally, we feel 100% natural called forth, and it will be really easy for us. Sometimes, we still want to say something, it's not there yet.

We should just say that. I say, "I want to have this conversation with you. I'm really upset about it, I'm really upset about what you said. This is hard for me to talk about. Can we have this conversation?" Setting up your intention about what do you want to create in this conversation. I want folks to think in their heads, how would they set up the conversation? You don't have to go through your details. As I illustrated, what are some ways you could set up sharing your truth that all is, wherever you are, at this point with the process.

Josette: While we're waiting for people's answers to come in about what we say can honor their truth and share their truth, I think a common question we've had in the past is what if it's like a scary situation? For example, the situation I was dealing with is getting harassed on the street by really scary looking like dudes in trucks, just always in trucks. I had a bike accident. I was bleeding on the side of the road waiting for my friend to come pick me up. They still harassed me even in those moments when I was most vulnerable.

It happens all the time. I can almost guarantee that when I step out of my house and go downtown, that some white guys is going to come up to me and yell at me, like scream at me. That could be for a number of reasons. My guess is the whole Trump thing. In those moments, I'm actually physically terrified for myself. Obviously, in that particular situation, I don't think they're going to listen. I actually think they could listen if I knew them, or if I saw that happen and I was talking to them as a friend with the person on the other side of it. I don't know what to do in this kind of situation. I know that that's come up a few times in this sessions.

Sandra: Yeah. That's why I mean you have to take into consideration different factors of para-dynamics, physical safety, the risk involved, the trust in a relationship, or maybe there's no relationship whatsoever. The less you have of that, the harder it is to have any type of conversation, much less an emotionally vulnerable one. This is where the listening to yourself, and that what is that you need, because a lot of times, when I do this with the folks, it's not even that they even necessarily need to have a conversation with somebody. Sometimes it is. Maybe the conversation is not necessarily with the person who said the thing. Maybe that person was a stranger, you're never going to see them again. Maybe they're a toxic and abusive person. It's not in your best interest to restart that relationship and have a conversation.

There's something else. Maybe there's a different way of channeling, addressing your need. I think one of the great things about call back and stop street harass, what they've done is they've created these online platforms that people share their stories. The people do find out how common this is, and how really awful this is. That's a different way. Like I said, it's a matter of listening to yourself and what feels or like the action that you need to take, because you're right. You're right in a physically dangerous situation. Engaging is probably not the best idea. It's not your only option.

Josette: No other source came through. I didn't know if you wanted something or if it's in the phone size 6, or we can also move on 2.

Sandra: We have one minute left.

Josette: We do? Oh no. I lost time.

Sandra: I know. The speedy process. The cautious is raising inquiry, just to summarize, is really an invitation. This is why it's important to come into this space with this conversation where we do honestly want to invite them, like genuinely, energetically like that is how we're approaching it. We want to invite them to share their perspective and listen to ours. By invite, I mean that we ask them to share. They can say yes, no, counter offer. Counter offer being like they want to share something else. We'd really be okay with whatever the response is. We don't make them wrong. We don't try to punish them. We don't try to force them to give up to yes. Often times, if it's not invitational, it's going to be coercive.

What happens when you invite somebody. They're like, I don't really want to talk about it. You can say something like, "Oh. You don't want to talk about it? I get that. Okay." It's also really important to decide like, to understand why you don't want to talk about it. They might say, "I don't want to talk about it because of the past." They might say, "I don't want to talk about why I don't want to talk about it." Then, you'd be like, "Okay. I get that. You don't want to talk about why you don't want to talk about it. It seems like it's kind of uncomfortable or maybe upsetting to you. Is that what's going on? It's important to me because I care about our relationship. I don't want the incident to get into the way of us being friends. I'll let when you're ready and willing, I'd love to have that conversation."

Usually, this breaks down people's defenses. They're like, "I really understand that you actually are inviting me. You're not just out to punish me." Even if they don't take what when you're offering them, well you've planted that seed in them. The next time you try to have this conversation about maybe something else, they're often going to be more open to it, because you're building this trust of creating, not a coercive relationship, but an invitational, a loving relationship, actually.

I'm going to speed to the next fifth practice step. Once you have named what has created the disconnection between the 2 of you, instead of you trying to push your reality on to them, and they're trying to deny your reality and push there's on to you, you're actually meeting each other by inviting each other to share and listen and really get where the other people are coming from and being like, "Those are 2 totally different perspectives. I didn't know that was going on with you. That happened for you? I didn't get that and know that. Now, I see. Thank you for sharing. Now, we're here. We're together now."

Now, that we realize that Josette intended good things for me, and I felt the impact of pain, well, now, what can we do to create something different where the intention and the impact are actually aligned? This is where we co-create. We start envisioning based on our mutual desire for us to be happy and be friends, and have a healthy relationship, whatever it may be. You look for the share the interest. You look

for something that you have in common that you [inaudible 01:02:08]. You can build something. You can envision based on that shared value, interest, goal, whatever it may be.

If you talk about it and you cannot come to something, then you can just agree to not co-create. Instead of making them wrong as a human being, we do compassion and non-cooperation, which is we acknowledge that we would like to, and we cannot, for the reason. Hopefully, in the future, we'll be able to. We can grieve that lost opportunity. I think there's a lot of pain when we want to do something with somebody and they say no. When we feel that pain, we often want to lash out against them and make them wrong. Instead, we could just be with the pain, go back to the first 3 practices to be with the pain of getting a no in that lost opportunity in anything that we attach to it. Just grieve it. Be with it through mindfulness.

You can also share that with them. Being like, I really want us to do this thing together, it's not possible right now. That's really sad and hurtful for me. I hope in the future we can do it.

We're 4 minutes over. If we had 90 minutes, I think we could do it with some coaching, too. I want folks to think about what would be their main takeaway from this session. We covered a lot of ground through [inaudible 01:03:55] of it. Think about what's your main takeaway. Then put it in the chat box for Josette to share.

Josette: Yeah. I'll wait for some to come in. Just to fill in some space, I think my biggest takeaway is I think he redirected energies statement that you made, that was really helpful. I think that's part of why I'm really feeling bad about the situation is obviously the harassment is over. It's done. Whatever. I felt powerless. I feel like that powerlessness is actually a secondary thing that I haven't dealt with. I guess redirecting energies.

Anybody else got any takeaways from today? We have appreciate the opportunity to deepen the practice all the way through, which was cool. That the focus is on compassion toward myself at each step, not trying to take on their pain and heal that, or completely reject it. I say my main takeaway is the reminder of being present in one's body as a step to move away from toxic swirl and to reorient towards making progress even if it's scary, or seeing myself as as damaging as someone else coercing me into doing something I'm not ready for. That's really fun.

Sandra: Excellent. Well, thank you so much for doing Compassionate Activism.

Josette: Thanks, everyone.

Sandra: Just know that these tools, so you know, are really available for you. Just, when you start noticing feeling trapped, feeling like you're stuck between a horror place and a rock, that's the first practice, noticing toxicity, and start from there. Thank you, everybody for showing up. We'll be sharing this again so you can watch it later if you wanted to. Bye.

Josette: Thank you everyone sharing. You all are very, very wonderful. Lovely doing this with you.

Sandra: Yeah. Bye, folks!