

compassionate activism

Sandra: Hey everybody. Thank you for showing up for the practice session. This is August 2nd, our fourth practice session the Compassion Activism Program. Today, we're actually going to do something a little bit different or really different possibly. Last week, I was on vacation. My vacation was going to a 6-day silent meditation retreat, which I know to some people sounds rather torturous to be silent for six days. For me, it was really great just to be able to really ground and rejuvenate and just clear my mind and my energies out.

It actually lets you receiving a lot of creative inspiration. One of them was a re-conceptualization of the five practices because as I've mentioned several times, a lot of the five practices are actually grounded in Buddhism and I'm [san 00:00:53] Buddhist. I've taken a lot of the [flasting 00:00:56] practices and applied it to also just as context. Using language I think that people find much more accessible and digestible for them. I was sitting there listening to Dharma talk, which is like a teaching about the different Buddhist philosophy. Just noting how vague it is, it often is. It's not very concrete action-oriented. It's often very nice words and feelings oriented, which can be hard for people to wrap their heads around.

I was wondering, "Well, maybe there is something similar also happening with the five practices." They got me curious about, well, maybe a step by step process might be a better way of thinking about this. I'm too into formulas but sometimes people need a higher level of guidance, a more detailed level of guidance before they can be more ... They feel more skillful around engaging in this conversations with themselves and somebody else. Then once they get grounded in that basic process, then they can just let more flexibility that I know a lot of people often want to know exactly, well what words should I use. How should I phrase that? How should I ask that question?

We get that a lot or I get that a lot. I wanted to also provide that for folks and see how that works out for you. For folks who are watching the recording, I also invite you to e-mail me afterwards to let me know how this works for you in comparison to the five practices because based on the feedback, I'm going to move forward and do something different, to talk possibly with the other versions of compassion activism. I want people to know that and let's play around, experiment with it.

Let me share my screen. The way that I re-conceptualized this was two different processes. One is restoring internal justice for compassion. Then second was restoring external justice with compassion because one of the things that when the feedback or comment we always get is that folks want to jump ahead to the fourth or fifth practice

which is involving how do we have a conversation with the other person. I'm always like, "We're going to get there. You are the most important person to yourself so let's really focus there first." I thought well maybe because they're all together, maybe it's better if we separate them out.

I created two different processes, one around restoring internal justice; then two, restoring external justice because as we've talked about, there are really three different realities happening. There is your reality, there is the other person's reality, and then there is external reality which is the actual words and actions happening between these two people, right. We really only have access to our own internal reality. Everything is filtered through that, right.

That's why it's important first and foremost to focus on yourself because as we've been talking about, we are the most important person to ourselves. I flushed out the process of the first three practices. I'm actually going to very quickly go through this because I want to actually want to spend more time on the external justice process because I think it was fuzzier in how I presented it previously. I'm going to more quickly run through this and then get some feedback around how it's landing for folks. Then we're going to move on to the external one.

The way I went step by step is noticing the toxicity, first and foremost. What's going on? Are we engaging or resisting? Resisting, making people wrong, making ourselves wrong. That's often because we've collapsed all the different realities, right. I'm trying to push my reality to the other person, they are trying to push their reality onto me and we're just doing this business constantly. It doesn't really go anywhere. Then when we can be like, "Hey, we're doing this thing. Let's pause a second and breathe, and just like okay," move to step number two, engage in humble curiosity and being like, "Okay, wait. My initial reaction to this and what's going on is just that." What's happening underneath that for me and not assuming that what's the surface reactions is everything. Let's actually unpack a bit and bring mindfulness, which is just really getting in touch and sitting with it and how we've done and I have taught you in terms of holding space for yourself and letting whatever feelings arise arise and not making yourself wrong or right.

Just letting it happen, right, not trying to resist the change and make it go away, make it better, just being with it. Then we've done some breathing exercises and just somatic work and just acknowledging where the pain is. Then we've invited, once we're sitting with the pain or once we would unpack the different layers, we've often got to a source pain that was behind the different frustration, anger and stress.

Then I would ask you to invite the pain, to share with you, what do you need, what can I give you. Then sometimes we didn't hear something, sometimes we did have something shared with us. When we didn't have something shared with us, oftentimes I would ask you to say, "When you're ready to, I'd really like to hear. I'd really like to know what I can

do to take care of you, take care of this pain." This is where because we're inviting them. We're not getting mad at them for not having shared it. We're not beating ourselves up for not having heard anything. We are acknowledging that we didn't hear anything and that's okay. We want to. When it's ready to share, we're hear for it.

Then we talked about how we need to acknowledge that we haven't been taking care of the pain. This is where the practice of compassion and self-accountability comes into play. It's really important that we acknowledge that we haven't acknowledged that pain, we haven't been taking care of it, which is why it's still here with us. If we had taken care of it, it would have healed. We didn't know how to heal, we didn't know how to be with it because that's what not the oppressionist taught us, right, they taught us that we need to repress, minimize, distance, make wrong.

Acknowledging that impact is important just as we want somebody who has hurt us to acknowledge the impact of our pain, of their actions on us. We also need to do that with ourselves. Then taking care of it, doing whatever you feel called for to take care of that pain. When we do that, we become the loving caregivers that we deserve but didn't get in the past. When we become that loving caregiver to ourselves, we get restored back to our natural wholeness. That's what's healing in that moment, is that actually we're taking care of ourselves. From that space, a lot of things are possible. As you've seen in the different practice sessions and coaching that I've done, people can move there very easily.

Sometimes those takes time, takes months sometimes for folks, sometimes it takes just a 10-minute thing, really varies depending what's going on. The more moments we have of this, the more it builds and the more it heals. This is another reframing of the first three practices that we talked about in the initial trainings. I want to stop here just to see ... I would love to see how this stands with us. I would love for our folks to share in the chatbox as well as folks who want to unmute themselves, which I think is star-6 I believe. Josette knows this, Josette is the one who normally says this.

I think it's star-6 if you're muted on the telephone. Yeah. I went there very quickly but if people want to share ... Does this step-by-step flow feel like, "Oh, this makes more sense. I can see myself doing this more." Oh, I think this is a little too more complicated than the practices or something in between, how are people receiving this. I know. I'm asking you to tell more.

Sam: Mary says, "I'm more of a concrete thinker so this does help."

Sandra: Sam, can you also say it without names here? Thank you.

Sam: Someone says, "This is more concrete and it is helpful. With the practices, I find myself trying to remember the names of the practices and I forget the steps." Another

comment, "I think the step by step is very clear especially since it emphasizes self first. It prevents one from trying to jump to external."

Sandra: That's a constant theme, always in the beginning. It's like I got to keep reminding folks all the time. Now, are there any questions about this? I mean, granted you have the benefit of having gone through the five practice's training. It probably makes more sense than not.

Is there anything you feel isn't quite as clear? Or generally, you're still confused about how to do.

Sam: I decided what might be helpful, which wouldn't be in the slide would be examples of being able to take care of the pain.

Sandra: Yeah. I think when I do a training on this, it would have more of the phrases that we talk about in terms of I see you, I see your pain. I care. You matter. You exist. Helping people ... Bringing mindfulness to something is very, it's [jargony 00:12:40]. It's a very full practice, which is why I want to keep using the word mindfulness. Yeah, I would teach it using ... Having those examples of things we can say to ourselves and then asking questions, like "What do you need? What can I give you?"

In terms of taking care of it, it's really listening, it's really listening to yourself because what you need or what your pain needs, it just depends. I can't tell you what it means. A lot of folks, it's interesting, a lot of folks say to me, "I don't know what I need. I don't know what would take care of this. I have no idea." It's because it's a listening. It's a listening to ourselves, it's like creating that space to be present and just wait. This is why we invite the pain, to share it with us. Almost like it's another person, right? It's our hurt self, right, it's our hurt one.

Sam: Someone said that, "Seeing visual diagrams would be very beneficial. I appreciate the language and framework but would also like to see what this means in a graphic form."

Sandra: In a graphic form, like a flow chart maybe?

Sam: Another person said, "A diagram or even a little flow chart would help." We have another person who said that they like the toxicity/realities comes first followed by humility/curiosity. I struggle with this order a tiny bit. The step by step feels more like a natural progression.

Sandra: Yeah. Yeah. That's what was coming up for me too actually which is why I flipped it because yeah, the first and the second step are ... I rearranged the order so I'm glad to hear that that also ... That seems to be a more natural flow.

Sam: Farther, it's just a lot of agreement on flow charts and that folks also like the reordering.

Sandra: Okay. All right. Well, see, that sounds good. The five steps ... It's six steps now. Sometimes I have concerns about giving too much information, having it overwhelm folks. Other times, it's like, people need detail. Do people feel like we could ... Because I could actually condense this if I wanted to, probably into three steps or four steps, three or four steps I could. This one, I wanted to flush it out a bit more. I could also do layers, I could have a top layer and have more and then have detailed action steps for each of the top three to people not feel overwhelmed. I just don't want people to feel overwhelmed. But I want people to have enough detail to work with it too, so just nice attention.

Sam: I'm not sure what this means. Is there a way to show on the chalkboard?

Sandra: We have a whiteboard but I'm also not sure what we're showing so if you want to elaborate a bit more. If you want to read the other stuff to our ...

Sam: Yeah, so we have two folks who like the breakdown of six steps. Another person said that, "Layers sound okay but condensing more would not give enough detail."

Sandra: May just subheadings, yeah. Okay. Yeah, because I think the quick version of this is always just brief, listen, invite. That can be the go-to for remembering, brief, listen, and invite. Yeah, I think having the layers with subheadings and visuals, yeah, I can definitely do that in the future. This is really great feedback. Yeah, it sounds like having these detailed steps really broken up helps us folks really ground them self and just be in that step itself, perfect. Okay.

We're going to move on to ... This has a lot of steps because this is more complicated. When I originally was teaching this, it was focused on more ... Because when you get restored to your natural wholeness, taking care of yourself, as people have been practicing this, you get shift into a space where you call forth. There is conversations you want to be having, sometimes not. Sometimes you called forth, the way you're taking care of yourself is by yourself and do something for yourself. That's totally valid.

Having the conversation with other people is an option. I really want to emphasize this because there are times when it's not appropriate or safe or even possible necessarily to have the conversation with somebody else. I don't people to feel like they have to but it is all about being at choice. It's all about non-coercion, not inviting. Like I said, the most important person in this process or healing is yourself. The most important person in this process of restoring justice is yourself because you are all that you have.

Everything else with other folks is an invitation with them, but you have control over how you relate to yourself. What comes up for you is what comes up for you. How you relate to that is up to you. That's your choice. That's really what I'm showing people is that you actually have tremendous freedom and power over how you relate to yourself. You just were told that you didn't. I'm like, no, that's not true. When it comes to other people, it's always an invitation to co-create together actually. They can always say no. That's what it means to be an invitation, it's inviting folks. It's that we actually respect and honor the fact that how they respond because they also have autonomy. They also have agency.

We may not prefer for them to say no to us, of course. We can honor the fact that they have their own [agency 00:20:01] of what they want to do. It just calls for us to engage in a different strategy, maybe not involving them, maybe involving somebody else, right. It doesn't have to stop there with that person. It just means that if we have some information that it's not going to work out with this person. We go and try something different. That's all that means, right.

I want to give you some more tools and ideas about how to have the conversation that's more likely to create a situation where they want to co-create something with you that's less oppressive, that's less problematic. The way to do is as first and foremost is creating a space, actually setting the intention for what the conversation is going to be about and why do you want to do this. I think it's really important to do that because these are emotionally loaded situations that we're talking about.

I think it's incredibly important to let people know what they're going to get involved in before they agree to do so. Oftentimes, we're not necessarily in a place to hold all that space for somebody else which is why if you're emotionally charged to begin with, that's telling you that you've got some work with yourself to do, that just means that you have some wounds. If you're wounded, going after the person who wounded you in the first place just means you're ignoring the fact that you're bleeding out here. Maybe you want to take care of this first. That's what I keep trying to focus on, folks.

If you come back to the place of taking care of yourself, oftentimes, you feel very grounded to have this conversation. The way to create this space is just first sharing the intention. Why do you want to have this conversation in the first place? I know I have accountability conversations that work oftentimes, for example. I remember this one time, I had to fire somebody because they had some ... There are some allegations of different really problematic and violent behavior of different sorts in the community from this person. I had setup the conversation because I want to engage and figure out what's going on, what is the relationship we want to have together with this writer.

This is a difficult ... I set the intention. I was like, "We wanted you to write for us for XYZ reasons and it's come to our attention that you may have possibly done XYZ things,

which is really problematic for us to continue having relationship with you if this is true. I don't know what's true or not because I wasn't there. I'm not a part of these communities. This makes it difficult for us but it's important to me to do this, to have this conversation with you." Setting the intention, if I'm having a conversation with somebody and be like, "So this awkward," or "I'm uncomfortable with this," or "I don't really know how to do this conversation but it's just important to me to talk to you about this because either you're my friend or because we're working together or this is happening and I don't think you realize what impact it's having."

I know this isn't how you want to be in the world. This isn't in line with your values. You set the intention and why you want to have it in the first place. It's very you-centered still. You're still using a lot of I statements in telling them what you want to create. Then. You start naming what could possibly come up. Why are you not concerned about ... Why have you not had that conversation yet with them? There is always reasons why we haven't. It could be like, "I wanted to talk to you about this but I was really concerned that you're going to think that I don't care about you anymore. You think that you're not a priority to me if you knew that I was feeling these things.

You name what you're concerned will happen because a lot of the reasons why we don't want to have these conversations because it might explode in different ways. I think naming is incredibly important because there is a disconnect. The reason why we need to restore justice to the situations because it's been broken. There is this disconnection happening. Naming that disconnection is incredibly important and why it exists, and how that exists. The only way we can actually work to restore it if we name it. A lot of people just want to skip over and co-create something cool and good together but you haven't named the pink elephant in the room.

It's also not really going to work out because the pink elephant is still there and you still don't trust this person because they created this disconnection. They don't even know it happened. We got to name it, we got to work with it. Then we invite them to acknowledge. You stated what you want to create. You told your truth. You shared your internal reality, your desires for this conversation. Now, you're going to invite to acknowledge that. Now, they may not agree with it. They may not want to do it but just invite them first and foremost that this is what you want to create. This is what your purpose, your intentions are in having this conversation. That's the first step.

Because that's the easier step for them to just be like, "Okay, I get that that's what you want." Then you invite them to actually join you in having this conversation which is a bigger step for them to do. Because they had acknowledged it, they're much more likely to take the bigger step, actually engaging in conversation with you. Does that make sense? I'm going to stop for a quick second to take questions around this.

Mind you, this is the Cadillac version. This is the full blown, you have a relationship, you have trust, you have to space to have these actual conversations. Mind you, this is the Cadillac version. This is not going to be what you're going to engage with every single person, obviously. I wanted to show you the full-pledged version ideally that would happen. I'm going to get to factors that make this ... You might want to try a different version of this or maybe not at all. I'm going to get those factors in a second but I'm giving you the Cadillac right now. Is there any questions about this or this like, "Oh, that makes sense?"

Sam: A lot of them says that it makes a lot of sense to them and they appreciate how it is laid out. Another person agrees creating a container for the conversation.

Sandra: Yeah, anybody who facilitates, you have to know that you want to create the space, create the container as the number said. Create a container for the conversation you're going to have. That always helps because the names that we get on the same picture, same page. Remember, we're trying to restore a disconnection that happened. This is one of the first step is just to name the disconnect, and so we're on the same page about that having happened. Then we're going to talk about it. This is the process of reconnection.

Sam: Someone says that they really appreciate the naming the known and potential roadblocks. You can help break the tension and also emphasizes on intentional conversation.

Sandra: Right because what happens is that when these conversations get tricky. We bring that energy into the conversation. Other people pick up on it. A lot of times, people pick up on your energy and they think all sorts of things as to what's behind it. Oftentimes they feel like you're mad at me or you think I'm wrong or you don't like me anymore or you're being. There is all sorts of things that get created in the vacuum. By naming it, you clarify. This is what it is. This is not what it is. Just be clear.

Now, they may acknowledge that or not. That's invitation you're making to them obviously but at least you're being clear, which is the best thing you can do because you believe you me, we all do this. We will fill in the silence with our own stuff. You don't want that to happen because remember status quo is systemic oppression. It's our baggage, let's not do that. It seems like people got that first step.

Now that you created the container, you created this space, accept the intention, now you want to actually start engaging in it. This is where you name the disconnection between what their intention ... What you think might have been their intention. You don't know because you're asking them but you set what their intention was and what their impact had on you. Also, this means whatever you thought might have been their intention, which might be a negative intention, which is possible. It's important to know

that this is what you think might have been their intention. It's okay to stay that, "When you said that, it felt like you're really trying to get me, like you were trying to get back at me for XYZ. I'm not sure if that's true but that's how I experienced it. It made me feel like you really didn't care about it and I wasn't a person to you." I'm just making stuff up.

You could see those conversations happening especially for instance, in a relationship, in an intimate relationship. The important thing is you're staying in your own internal reality. This is still your truth-telling. This is how you perceived it. Acknowledging that what you have access to is your own experience. You don't have access to their experience. When you share what you think might be true for them, you have state that also might be true and you're not sure. You want to check in. That's what this is about.

Remember, we're not trying to take my reality and push upon somebody else. We're just saying, "This was my experience. Is that what your experience was? What was your experience?" It's about being able to hold, "This happened for me. This happened for you. Okay. How do we come together now?" If you want visuals, I like to use hand gestures, as opposed to doing this and this, we're doing this, this, this. Yeah, just naming that disconnection between intention and impact. Then holding the space for their self-inquiry. What I mean by hold the space is another way of talking about mindfulness I think because we're helping them just notice what's coming up for them and being with it, not trying to change it, make it wrong, make it go away.

It's just whatever is coming up comes out for them. Then we start asking them questions. These questions, I would invite you to really use your anti-oppression analysis to guide your questions. If you ask to understand, why did they think doing this was okay? Why did they think that sexist joke was all right? Why did they think making that transphobic comment was funny? This is where the systemic oppression being status quo is useful in the sense that you probably know where it's coming from. You can make a pretty good guess. You're probably right to a certain degree. You won't be 100% right because everybody is different. There is combination of stuff happening but you have some well-informed ... You can have some well-informed questions to ask them.

As most people don't really ... Aren't really conscious of what they're saying. They're just mimicking, they're just parroting what they've heard. They haven't really thought about it as so much. Some of the words that you could just use is, "Tell me more." It's really simple, just tell me more. Like I said, most people haven't really thought about what they're doing. It's what they've known. It's what they've grown up with. I have tons of conversations with my 88-year old grandmother who was raised starting in the 1920s in Korea under Japanese colonization, through civil war, through immigration, United States, all that stuff.

Yeah, we live in a very different world than my grandmother grew up in. I just ask her, "Tell me more. Why is this important to you?" My cousin is dating ... So we're Korean-

American. My cousin is dating somebody who is Indian. In Korean culture, social hierarchy is a huge part of our understanding of people. She was asking me, "Where do Indian people lie in the social hierarchy in the United States? Are they here? Are they here? Are they above? Who are they above and who are they below?"

I was trying to be like, "Well, that does exist, and we're also trying to dismantle that." We're trying not to put people in these boxes, in these hierarchies. It does exist in this country. It's telling us to, "Tell me more about why this is important to you. Why do you care about this?" It goes back to she wants to make sure her granddaughter is going to be treated well by other people. She wants to know will her granddaughter who she loves dearly be "brought down" socially, if you're marrying somebody who is Indian.

It's out of this fear, out of this pain of what it's like to be stepped on in society and not wanting that to happen to her granddaughter. Me being like, "Yes, I don't want that to happen to her either." I think we should work to make sure that we don't put people in these racial hierarchies. That's how we should do it. It's like, "Where did you learn these things?" I remember my mom and I were living by this trailer park. She was asking, "Do those people there, do they really just get drunk all the time and beat their wives and never work?"

I was like, "You don't even watch American TV. How do you even know this? Stereotype exists, of 'white trash.' You don't even watch TV. You watch Korean TV only. Where did you hear this?" Apparently Cops is where she saw this in Jerry Springer because you don't really need to understand English to know what's going on in these TV shows. She got bashful, ashamed, she realized that was probably problematic. Helping people just sift through, sift through. Where do you hear it? Why do you think that's true? Then telling a bit of the history behind something.

If I'm talking to somebody about welfare and they're like, "Well, I don't want somebody who is going to have 12 babies and have 12 babies just to get some more money off of welfare. I don't want to support that." I'm like, "So where did you hear about people having 12 babies?" Then well actually the history behind that is blah, blah, blah, blah. Did you know about that? It's an inquiry, right. It's this inquiry. Did you know about this? As opposed to, how the fuck do you never hear about ... Because that's a very different attitude because that's making them wrong as a human being. You get that? Yeah, I get the frustration but we didn't know this.

You have to understand that we did not know this either. We have all been taught these lies. We all learned it at some point. Just because you learned a little bit faster than somebody else, does not make you better as a human being. We have this thing, as socially conscious people, that we think we're better than less socially conscious people. You got to think about that that we think we're better people inherently. That notion in of itself is what we're trying to dismantle. We're not trying to live, we're not trying to

perpetuate that. This is why inquiry, invitation. It's all like, "You have your humanity, your experience, I have mine. What's going on? It's different." I'm going to pause there and take questions because that was a whole lot.

Sam: Someone says, "I have all kinds of questions swirling regarding what if they don't believe or trust your intention, project their assumptions about intention etc.?"

Sandra: Then you stick to step number one, where are we, step number one of this which is continue to create the space. Well, actually you can jump to this too. But it will be about why do they not believe you? Why do they not trust your intention? You can invite them. If they're like, "I don't believe you. I think you're just going to jump on me and be really pissed at me." Then you're like, "Okay." This is where the yes-and comes into play. Yes, I acknowledge that's what you think is happening or you think that's what this thing is about. I like to understand why you think that way.

We choose, yes, acknowledge the reality and I choose to do X. Then you just ... Because there is a history. There is a reason so everybody has a reason. It makes sense to them why they do what they do based on their history, their personality, what they've gone through, what their values are. There is a reason why. Now, we have incomplete information. We have straight up inaccurate information. We lack the tools to process the information we do have oftentimes. It's really this is where the humble curiosity comes into play. We want to have inquiry into what is going on, what is behind it. You can say, "I like to talk about why it's hard for you to believe that this is what I'm about. This is what I want our conversation to be about. They might go into it then. Then you have that conversation, "Tell me more or why do you think that's true?"

Then you have that conversation. But if they're like, "I don't even want to talk to you about ... Well, I don't want to talk to you about it because I just think this is going to blow up. This is not going to be good. Then you can be like, "Okay. I got that," because it's an invitation, remember. They can say yes, no, counter offer and you honor that. You don't have to like it or agree with it but that's what inviting means. It's that you're honoring the fact that they said no without trying to punish them because if you try to punish them after they said no to us, that's coercive and controlling.

You can say, "I would really like to know why it's so hard for you to even talk about why you don't want to talk about it because it's really important to me." This is where you set the intention and why it's important to you. You say, "Because I want us to be able to work together or to be in this relationship together," whatever it may be. If you don't want to talk about it, that's okay. I just really want you to know that I'm here if and when you are. Similar to how when we were doing with ourselves and we're asking the pain to share what they needed from us or what we could give to them, and then they didn't tell us, then we're like, okay. Okay. You weren't ready to share, that's okay. When you are, I'd

really love to hear it because it's important to me. It's the same thing. It's the same thing that we do with somebody else.

Sam: This ties into the example about the writer that was potentially hurting communities that you weren't a part of. What about when you're addressing something that the person didn't do you but did this to someone else and you want to address it as the way of supporting the person who is hurt?

Sandra: It's the same conversation, to be quite honest because what you're getting is what their reality was for this thing. It's always an invitation for them to have that conversation with you because their experience, the person that was harmed and the person who had caused the harm, their realities, their experience, that situation are going to be very different probably. That's okay. Remember, that's okay actually because that's just true. We can't do anything about that. It's just true. We can monitor this thing all we want but it's not going to be the same as it happened. We just acknowledge that.

The point is not to be like, "Well, your story is not the same as this person's story." We can just assume that to be quite honest. But it's like, "Well, what is your story? What was going on with you? You did this thing, so what was going on for you when you did this? What were you thinking about? What made it seem like that was an okay thing to do?" It's the same process. Then you can do it with the other person, the person who was harmed. Now, you can hold both truths as being distinct and both valid. The question is if this person was actually well-intentioned, didn't want to cause the harm, but now, now that they've learned that they have caused harm and they understand that the harm does not negate the fact that it didn't intend to.

Then we can move to the next step which is well, neither one of us wanted you to be harmed so how do we co-create something from there? How do we make sure that our intention impact our line of the future? What do I need to do to make amends for the past? Does that make sense?

Sam: Someone asks, "How can I do this with someone who talks so much, I have a hard time getting a word in edge-wise. I feel like even when I try to start a conversation, I'll say a sentence or two and then this person takes over."

Sandra: Yeah, I know folks like that too. This is also where you set the container, you create this space. When you do the intention just be like, "I want to have this conversation with you. It's really important to me because XYZ reason, and then you name the roadblocks. What makes me concerned about having this conversation with you is that you're a talker and that's okay but it means that sometimes I feel like it's hard for me to say anything and share what I'm feeling because you might interrupt and you might not listen to me. That makes it really hard for me to share what's going on with

me. Can we have this conversation where you just listen to what I'm saying? I want to know what you're thinking but after I'm done talking."

You're creating this space and you're naming the roadblocks. I've done this people who were like straight up, for a whole hour talked with three other people in the room and never realized that she did not stop for a second to create space for us to say anything. It was just nonstop for an hour. You know what? She stopped and she listened to me. People don't know what they do. People are walking around flailing left and right, hurting people, hurting and smacking themselves, smacking other people. People have no idea they're doing this. They really don't. They really don't.

It's actually a gift that you're giving to them, to be quite honest. You name these roadblocks without making them wrong as a human being. It's a gift you're giving them. Yeah, you're inviting them. You're inviting them to be the person they want to be which is in a loving relationship with you, right. Okay. Let us go onto the next thing which is ...

Now, you've gone into the point where you're like, "Here is my reality. Here is your reality and we've unpacked both. Yey." We've identified something, oftentimes want to try something in common we have. Now, we get to do co-creation. We're like this now. We're so distinct that now we're together. There is re-connection. This is where restoration happens. I didn't put this in this slide but I should also mention that there should have been a make amends component to those. Shows us their compassion, self-accountability oftentimes for the other person in the conversation, they want to know what they can do to fix it, to make it better or make amends.

Then you can tell them and you invite them to do it in a certain way because they don't what to do. They can guess but you're the ones who has been hurt. You know what would do that for you. It's important for you to invite them so they can make amends in a way that you feel actually is making amends. Then you've dealt with the past. You've dealt with the pink elephant. Now, the future is open to you. There is no longer this huge pink elephant taking up all the space so you can maneuver, you can do anything with them now. You have so much space, so much freedom, so many options.

You're like, okay, well I wanted to do this thing, to make this thing. You want to make this thing, okay, so now that we've dealt with the pink elephant, how can we actually make this happen? Then you can start co-creating from there. Most people try to jump over their pink elephant and jump to this point. That just doesn't work because you just have the pink elephant taking up all the space and you have no trust. You have no trust that has been built.

Here is the thing, folks, is that when times are good and people around are having fun and that's yey, I'm all for that fun and joy obviously. That doesn't necessarily mean that trust is being built though because trust happens when ... Trust can be broken and

people can fail to show up for you in a way that you want them to and don't care and don't take responsibility for their actions. Trust happens when people come through and you come through things together. That's when real trust is built.

I actually in relationships, personal, romantic, professional ... When an issue, tension, friction arises and we work it out through this process, even though as a manager, this happens and my staff hasn't been doing something, sometimes it's something bigger too. I'll go to them and they'll be like, "I feel like I'm in trouble. I feel like I'm in a principal's office." I was like, "You are in trouble. This was not ... You knew this was not right to do and you still did it." I say it in a way that doesn't make them wrong as a human being but I'm like, "I thought you know better than this. Okay, so what happened? Tell me."

Okay, so how are we going to fix this? How are we going to make sure it won't happen again? Trust is built that way because they messed up. I didn't dehumanize them in the process. We came through it to build something more wondrous actually. There is a reason why people mess up. There is a reason why people don't follow through. Now, we actually got a chance to deal with it. We got a chance to heal it. That's actually, I see pain as a wonderful opportunity. Not because I love pain, I don't particularly enjoy it obviously, but it does provide us the opportunity to offer compassion and care where it's most critical, when it means the most. That's when trust is built because you did acknowledge their humanity. You did see the pain and you cared about it. That's where you can co-create in a way that actually brings alignment between intention and impact. I'm going to stop there and take questions.

Sam: Some feedback, I think most of us only know how to say I'm sorry to make amends. I often feel like that is not what I need or want. I appreciate you saying, my folks don't know what to do to make amend. Often, I don't what I need from someone else anymore than I know what I need for myself on the self-accountability end.

Sandra: Listening, people are struggling to figure it out. I'm just like, breathe, listen, invite. You don't need to try. You don't need to try. You just need to give yourself some space and listen to what it is that you need. If something is getting in the way of that need, of you hearing it, maybe it's because I'm so stressed about it. I'm so frustrated about it so I can't even listen. That's where you are. In your stressed, frustrated place, okay, just acknowledge that.

Most of the time, to be quite honest, what we want is emotional acknowledgement. That's got to be honestly, the truth for most situations. There is obviously some situations where they can do something different. Most powerfully, emotional acknowledgement is what we seek. When we give it to ourselves, that's a lot of it. Then just to give you an example what happen, one of my traumas is feeling that I'm not important to people. I was seeing somebody who for various reasons, wasn't able to

come visit me as intended. I started having these feelings. It reminded me of this deeply embedded habit energy that I have around not feeling important to people, who claim that I am important to them.

I shared it with them and I was like, "I know this is 90% me and 10% you and this is what's coming out for me." They felt really terrible that they had done something that had been the source, the catalyst, had been the catalyst for my feelings of not being a priority to them and not being important to them. They're like, "What can I do?" I was like, "Well, I'm going to take care of myself because this is something I need to affirm from myself. If you want to come over, that would be great too." Making it clear this is not about them, this is really about me and they could help. It would be nice. I'm inviting them in making all these distinctions. It's not coercive and I'm not putting it on them because that's not actually what happened. It's not actually that I'm not important to that person.

This is what you can start to co-create because you can invite them to give you something that is nice but it is not going to destroy you if they didn't because you can imagine that if I hadn't done this internal work of acknowledging myself, first identifying the source pain. If I hadn't taken care of that myself, had I asked that person to come visit me and they had said no to me, I might have been emotionally destroyed in that moment. Maybe destroyed is a big word, but I'd be really upset. That person doesn't text you immediately back but you really want them to text back and you're like, "Do they not like or whatever?" Dating. Right? That's a very different way of handling it, [stage 00:56:46] approaching it, right.

Sam: You mentioned that making amends should be included on current slide. Should that be number three?

Sandra: Yeah, that should be number two. I'll just make a note of that for future reference. Yeah, that should be ... Well, so then they would also be identifying ... Identifies their source pain. This is where we are mimicking the process and what we do with ourselves. We're actually then replicating that process to somebody else, which is how we get to the source pain is through dialogue, external dialogue versus internal dialogue, what you're doing.

Yeah, it's the same thing. You identify the source pain and then you take care of it. What do you need? When you identify what they need or what you need, it's both. It's confusing, let me make sure to make this. Make amends, let's see. Make amends for themselves and to you. Right, so it's more complicated but that's general, yes. I'll clean it up for next time.

Times when you have to really ... As I said, that was a Cadillac version. That's a Cadillac version. Factors to consider is the emotional charge for each person involved. Usually,

you don't want to be incredibly emotionally charged. That's just an occasion for you to take care of yourself. I don't think you need to be 100% calm either when you're doing this. If it's not a hugely emotionally charged thing, it's like a 1, 2, 3 level charge, you can oftentimes have a conversation. Just be like, "I'm upset about this thing. It's making me X, Y, and Z. I want to talk it out with you. I need you to hear what it's like for me in this moment, in this situation."

I'm really upset about it or I'm really angry about it, so I want you to know that I'm not trying to make you wrong for it and I'm really angry about it. You can totally do that. I've done that. Making these distinctions and setting the intention and naming roadblocks is incredibly incredibly useful because if you're angry then people oftentimes will interpret that you're trying to hurt them now because what's a lot of people do when they get angry, they do try to hurt people. It's not a surprise that they're now concerned that you're going to try to lash out. Anything you say could be taken as an attack even if you don't want to, if you know that they tend to.

I always say, name your intention and name that roadblock. It's very easy for them to fill in the gap. This is why you can still show up in your full emotional self as long as you still create space for their full emotional self. If you're not in a place where you can do that, if they're more emotionally charged than you, then it's important to ... You're so really emotionally charged. It's too much emotional charge happening, take care of yourself. Take care of yourself, okay?

If they're not emotionally charged really and you're somewhat, then you can often have that conversation actually as long as you can still make those distinctions. It all depends on if you're both like this, don't do it. Don't do it. Power dynamics, that another thing you want to be mindful about, just what are the power dynamics especially if it's at work and depending on the organizational culture, taking responsibility and owning your mistake, acknowledging publicly at Everyday Feminism, that happens. We have a funny culture about that where we send an e-mail being like, "I'm sorry I did this thing." It's a public self-accountability thing that people voluntarily do.

A lot of cultures and organizations aren't going to be like that. It's safe for us to do it here but it's not necessarily safe at other places to do that, so just being you have to work with that, that's a separate conversation that we could have if that's a situation you're in. Then obviously risk involved if they're toxic, controlling and/or abusive. Generally, there is no need that you really need to expose yourself to them and because if they're like this, they're oftentimes not going to be open to having that conversation. You can try and they're probably going to shut you down. That just means that there is other people you can have this conversation with to get support for yourself.

If they don't want to co-create something with you, then they don't want to co-create a more loving situation, relationship with you. Then you can't co-create with them. It just

means that you got to move on to somebody else and explain what's going on with them and get their support to deal with this situation. They also just might not be available, like they could have passed away. You may not be able to contact them because they live somewhere else and you don't know. Like I said, the person that's most important is you. I've had people do this with people who passed away, like their parents who passed away actually, and just talking it through and visualizing them and having this conversation with them.

If you want to have this conversation with somebody who you could talk to but you're not ready for emotionally yet, you could still have that conversation in your head with them and visualize. It's called practice. If it happens in here, if it happens out here, it's the same thing, not the same thing but they're both powerful. They're both powerful. It's very powerful just to have it here. It's a muscle that you're building up. Even if that person is technically not available or you're not ready to have that conversation with somebody else, you can still practice it in your head and that's powerful.

Somebody asked a question about if they're not emotionally available. If they don't want to co-create something with you, then the conversation can be okay, so you don't want to ... Talking about a romantic relationship as is often the case in a lot of people's lives where they don't want to address an ongoing issue in the relationship for example. It's really impacting your relationship, and so you can ask them, "Okay, so you don't want to talk about this issue. It's really impacting our relationship. It's hurting me in XYZ ways. I'd like to know why do you not want to have this conversation?" It could be they don't know how to. They don't have the tools to. They don't care, they don't think it's important. There is a learning each time.

When somebody says no, there is a lot of learning to happen there actually. Like I said, if they're like, "I don't want to talk about why I don't want to talk about it," you can be like, "Okay. I would like to know why you don't even want to talk about it, why you don't want to talk about it." They're like, no, no, no, no. Be like, okay. I can respect that. I really want you to but I respect the fact that you don't want to. If you in the future, you change your mind, I'd like to. I can't be in this relationship if we can't even talk about these basic things. You can deal with or not.

It's not punishment, it's you doing your own actions. This is the difference, is that you're going to do what you need to take care of yourself. Somebody keeps saying no, no, no to you, that person doesn't want to say yes to you so they don't want to co-create. Everybody deserves to be loved and nobody is entitled to a relationship. You earn a relationship. That's all I got to say about that. We're running a little bit but I want to make sure we have time to get a general feedback. I know I normally do what was [to-da-clus 01:06:06] most important but for this, I would like to get people's ... We can do both. What was the most important to you that you learn? You want to make sure you remember as you walk away or as you move away from this session. Also, how do you

feel about this step-by-step process versus the five practices? Let's do both. Let's do yes, and.

As we're waiting for people to type, I want to go back to the question about not knowing what you can do to make amends or what you need for somebody to make amends to you. You can just state that. You can say, "I feel like there is something that I need and I'm not sure what it is." You'll know that you need something because they won't feel complete for you. It feels like there is still something you need to work at more. That happened not so recently with something around work where we had a [snafu 01:07:22] in some process. I took responsibility on behalf of the staff, in our organization and for the process that didn't go through the way it was intended to. The other person was left feeling like, well, I don't know what else to say because you did just acknowledge and take responsibility for it. I still feel some ways about it.

I was like, "Okay." I was like, "I could see that maybe when we didn't do these things that was our process, maybe it might have impact you in XYZ ways. I know that the reason why we have this process in place is because we blah blah blah. That didn't happen. Is that maybe what happened for you?" She was like, Yeah, and blah blah blah." We got to unpack more. Like I said, the emotional acknowledgment is oftentimes what is really important because one, when you acknowledge it, it means you've identified the source pain. You've worked through the layers. That's when things start to feel complete, when you work through and you work through all the different layers and you identify actually what is really hurtful about this. Then you can take care of it. If you don't know, that's okay. Just be in a space where you don't know and then you just keep unpacking.

Sam: We have some feedback on the framework. "I'm a much more concrete person so having this option of more step-by-step things to go through with the subheadings, that is really good for me." Another person said they wanted to take some time to look at them side by side and then say which they prefer but the list framing feels very concrete. Big takeaway, the needing to fight the thought that those who are more socially conscious are inherently better.

Sandra: Yup. All right. It looks like we got a winner. We're going to go with this new step-by-step process. I'll clean it up. I'll put the Powerpoint so it's available for folks to have.

Sam: We've got another response. For the first question, "The thing I'm walking away with and remembering is that it's okay to name the intention of the conversation. As for the Cadillac version of this, I really like the listing of the steps. I would really like to see a flowchart because sometimes there are two ways for each step. For example, I'm ready or I feel you, I will come back to you." "Taking care of my emotions first is still hard for me because in the past, I felt like I was too self-absorbed." Another person says, "I really like what you said about it's a gift when you name the roadblocks without making them

wrong. I really resonate with this and I really like this new approach. It's very accessible and clear."

"I love the six steps. I really helped me a lot." "I was late today, sorry, so I don't feel like I understand this one well enough to compare but I like what I heard. It's helpful to have both in my toolkit. For the takeaway, the importance of emotional acknowledgment is really helpful for me."

Sandra: Okay. I just want to jump back up to a previous comment about people feeling like they're too self-absorbed when they focus on their selves and their needs. What happens is that we become self-absorbed when we only acknowledge our own ... One, I think we're actually usually caught in toxic world and make believe world around our own needs, which then pushes out our ability, pushes out other people's realities them. What I'm asking folks is actually incredibly self-grounded. I'm asking people to be truly deeply rooted in their internal experience and what they need to go there because that's actually the only thing you have is your own experience. We literally don't have access to other people's experience or this external world.

Everything is sculpted through our own internal experience. You literally don't have anything else. This notion that we can be anything but self-grounded and coming from our own self internal reality, it's just false. When that's the only thing we pay attention to and we deny and ignore and erase other people's experiences and their internal realities, that's when we get the problems. We have to be really deeply rooted in our own experience and holding space for other people's experience to also exist and be legitimate. If only we can get everybody to really own their own realities, like imagine the world, it would be so different.

Okay. So that is all for today. Thank you so much for your feedback. I heart everybody. We like to do this in Korea. Heart, big heart. Okay. Thank you and I will be sharing this when we send out the e-mails so you have the Powerpoint on the notes. Okay. Buh-bye.