

# Compassionate Activism

## Initial 2-Day Training Day 1 - Session 1

Please join us as we wait for other participants to arrive. We will begin shortly at 12 pm EST / 9 am PST.

If you have questions, please put them in the chat.

For technical issues, email [josette@everydayfeminism.com](mailto:josette@everydayfeminism.com)

## Checking In

1. What brought you to enroll in the online training program?
2. What do you hope to be different for you after taking it?

## Choose a Situation

1. What is a type of situation that is *moderately* emotionally charged for you?
2. What about it makes it feel so emotionally charged for you?
3. What is your typical reaction to it? What do you focus on when you react to it?

## **Compassionate Activism Model**

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

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## **The Five Practices of Compassionate Activism**

1. Noticing Toxicity and Having Humble Curiosity
2. Acknowledging Different Realities and Accepting External Reality
3. Gentle Mindfulness and Compassionate Self-Accountability
4. Compassionate Truth-Telling and Consciousness-Raising Inquiry
5. Shared Envisioning and Compassionate Non-Cooperation

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## **The First Practice of Noticing Toxicity and Having Humble Curiosity**

## Noticing Toxicity

- We are naturally creative, resourceful, and whole people.
- When we don't come from that place, it's often because we feel:
  - **Stuck** -> Doesn't feel free to move forward, either to respond or to let go of the situation
  - **Powerless** -> Doesn't see a way to change the situation
  - **Helpless** -> Doesn't feel like we have the ability to change the situation
  - **Voiceless** -> Doesn't feel able to say why they feel the situation is harmful

## How Toxicity Shows Up In Our Initial Reactions

When we're in a situation where we feel stuck, powerless, helpless, and/or voiceless, we often *skip over that feeling* and resist what's happening by:

- Demanding the past be different than what it was (aka should'ing, minimizing, denying)
- Making the other person wrong as a human being (aka judging, shaming, policing)

## Reflection Time!

- What are the ways toxicity shows up in your initial reaction?
- Are those ways related to any feelings of feeling stuck, powerless, helpless, or voiceless?

## Having Humble Curiosity

- We often assume we know everything about the situation based on our initial reaction, even when we're just speculating.
- When we treat our speculations as truths, we struggle to create something new.
- Our speculations may be true but we don't know for sure until we ask - ask the other person and ourselves.
- When we have humble curiosity, it's possible (though not guaranteed) to create something new.

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## Reflection Time!

1. What gets in the way of you acknowledging that you might not know *everything* about this situation already?
2. What gets in the way of you being curious and digging deeper into:
  - The other person's perspective
  - Your own experience

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## Key Takeaways

If you could only remember one thing from this whole session, what would it be?

## Next Session

The Second Practice of Distinguishing Realities and  
Acknowledging External Reality

Saturday, June 4th

**2 pm EST / 11 am PST**

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## Compassionate Activism

**Initial 2-Day Training**

**Day 1 - Session 2**

Please join us as we wait for other participants to arrive. We  
will begin shortly at 2 pm EST / 11 am PST.

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If you had trouble with the break out room, please download  
the latest Zoom version at: <https://zoom.us/download>

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## Choose a Situation

Select a recent specific single situation that is  
somewhat emotionally charged for you but  
not extremely charged.

## The Second Practice of Acknowledging Different Realities and Accepting External Reality

### Acknowledging the Existence of Three Different Realities

There are actually three realities occurring at the same time:

1. Your internal reality
2. The other person's internal reality
3. External reality

When we assume that our internal reality is the same as (or rather, *should be* the same as) the other person's internal reality and external reality, we run into problems.

### External Reality versus Internal Reality

External Reality consists of what is going on in the current situation:

- Words we hear (and don't remember very well)
- Actions we see (and apply meaning that exists or doesn't exist)
- Energy we sense (and how well we perceive them varies greatly)

Internal Reality consists of:

- How we relate to and perceive what the other person says and does and the history behind that perception
- The meaning behind what we say and do and the history behind that meaning
- The words, actions, and energies we bring to ourselves

## When Current External Reality and Internal Reality Aren't 100% Overlapping

- Our internal reality relates to what is going on in the current situation and varies with how much it's grounded in external reality.
- Our internal reality can be reacting to:
  - A more accurate perception of current external reality, OR
  - A less accurate perception of current external reality, OR
  - Pain and fear from the past that are being triggered by, AND/OR current external reality
- When our internal reality is less grounded in our current external reality and is coming more from our past, that doesn't make our internal reality wrong.

It's just more different from current external reality and therefore needs to be treated as distinct.

*Until we get in touch with our own internal reality, it's very hard to distinguish our internal reality from external reality and the other person's internal reality.*

## Accepting / Acknowledging External Reality

- Accepting / Acknowledge external reality as it is and as it is not.
- Accepting reality is different from saying it's acceptable.

## Practice Time!

- Practice saying 5 times "I accept / acknowledge that they said X and it happened."
- How is it different for you when you accept what happened as it is instead of focusing on what you wished had happened?

## Key Takeaways

If you could only remember one thing from this whole session, what would it be?

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## Next Session

The Third Practice of Gentle Mindfulness and  
Compassionate Self-Accountability

Saturday, June 4th

**4 pm EST / 1 pm PST**

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## Compassionate Activism

### Initial 2-Day Training Day 2 - Session 1

Please join us as we wait for other participants to arrive. We will begin shortly at 12 pm EST / 9 am PST.

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## Choose a Situation

Select a recent specific single situation that is somewhat emotionally charged for you but not extremely charged.

## The Third Practice of Gentle Mindfulness and Compassionate Self-Accountability

### Toxic Swirling vs. Gentle Mindfulness

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • Not In Touch with Present Moment / Unconsciously Driven by the Past | • Connected To the Present Moment and How the Past Is Showing Up In the Present Moment |
| • Resistant: Change, Deny, Minimize                                   | • Accepting / Acknowledging  |
| • Make Wrong: Judge, Shame, Blame                                     | • No Right or Wrong / Just Is  |
| • Grounded in Your Make Believe World                                 | • Grounded in Your Internal Reality and External Reality                               |

## Shifting from the Toxic Swirl to Gentle Mindfulness

1. Stop resisting your feelings by trying to:
  - Change it, make it go away, or make it better
  - Judge, shame, or blame it for existing
2. Instead, acknowledge your feelings and validate their right to exist and mattering. Repeat for the next layer of feelings that arise, if any.
3. Eventually you will become aware of a need and action you can take to care of that need. You can then choose or not choose to do so.

## Practice Time!

## How Systemic Oppression Teaches Us Our Pain Isn't Real

When we share that we've been violated - whether that's physically or emotionally, we're told that:

- It didn't really happen -> **Denying**
- It wasn't that bad -> **Minimizing**
- It was your fault -> **Blaming**
- You were asking for it -> **Shaming**
- You should have behaved differently -> **Policing**
- You need to stop talking about it -> **Silencing**

**And we learned this lesson well. So now we're the ones making ourselves wrong for our feelings and suppressing our pain.**

## Compassionate Self-Accountability

- You are the only person responsible for yourself because you are the only person who can choose what you do.
- You (not other people!) are the most important person you need to be acknowledging your experiences, feelings, and needs.
- You can't help what life throws at you but you can choose how to respond to life.
- You choose your response through the words, actions, and energies you use => You create your internal reality

## Restoring Internal Justice with Love and Compassion

1. Get in touch with your internal reality through mindfulness.
2. Acknowledge/accept your internal reality as it is and is not.
3. Listen for what you need to take care of.
4. Address the need then or schedule for later.
5. If you resist addressing the need, get in touch with your resistance and the need underlying it until you have a need you are willing to address.

## Quick Formulas for Compassionate Self-Accountability

### Foundational Formulas

- I feel X and it's ok / that matters. (It's possible to feel X and that be ok)
- I see your pain and I care.
- I did/didn't do X and that happened.

### More Advanced Formulas:

- Yes, X happened, and I choose to do Y.
- When X happens, I feel Y because I need Z. I will do A / invite someone to do A.

## Practice Time!

- Create your self-accountability statement:
  - I feel X and it's ok / that matters. (It's possible to feel X and that be ok) OR
  - I see your pain and I care.
- Repeat 5 times to yourself, as you breathe in and out slowly.

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## Key Takeaways

If you could only remember one thing from this whole session, what would it be?

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## Next Session

The Fourth Practice of Compassionate Truth-Telling  
and Consciousness-Raising Inquiry

**Sunday, June 5th**

**2 pm EST / 11 am PST**

## **Compassionate Activism**

### **Initial 2-Day Training**

#### **Day 2 - Session 2**

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## **Choose a Situation**

Select a recent specific single situation that is *lightly* emotionally charged for you.

## **The Fourth Practice of Compassionate Truth- Telling and Consciousness- Raising Inquiry**

## What This Conversation Is About

- It's not about making them wrong. It's about sharing your truth.
- It's not about them changing their minds. It's about you wanting to understand their truth.
- It's not about getting them to stop. It's about you taking care of yourself and treating yourself like you matter.

## Reflection Time!

- What was your intention in this conversation?
- What type of world were you creating in this conversation with that intention?
- What would be different if your intention was to be compassionate toward yourself and focus on what you need from yourself?
- What type of world would you be creating with that intention?

## Why It's So Hard (But It Doesn't Necessarily Have To Be)

- Unless there's a threat of imminent physical threat or an act of physical violence, it's just some words, some actions, and some energies happening in external reality.
- In our internal reality, those external words, actions, and energies cause harm because they set off our internal pain that we've been carrying.
- The external situation is emotionally charged because we resist the pain it's setting off and therefore, resist the external reality and the other person's internal reality.

**So these external words, actions, and energies DO NOT have to cause us harm if we take care of our pain and acknowledge external reality and the other person's internal reality as they are.**

## Toxic Ways We Often Relate

We make them wrong as a person:

- Judge them
- Shame them
- Police them
- Punish them
- Dismiss them

We resist their experience of the situation (aka their internal reality):

- Deny and minimize what they're feeling
- Focus on how they 'should' be feeling (aka make believe world)
- Try to force them to agree with us (aka push our internal reality on to them)

### Toxic Swirl versus Mindfulness for Their Internal Reality

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • Focus on how they 'should' know better and it never should have happened  | • Let go of your make believe world and acknowledge that what happened did happen          |
| • Assume you know what their internal reality is                            | • Get curious about what happened in their internal reality                                |
| • Resist their internal reality and make them wrong as a human being for it | • Acknowledge their experience and feelings of the situation as having happened            |
| • Tell them why they're wrong for having that experience                    | • Ask them questions to help them unpack their own experience                              |
| • Try to force your internal reality onto them                              | • Share your internal reality (and other perspectives) and invite them to consider them    |
| • Not care about where they're coming from or how they got there            | • Listen for their pain and how it got created, which is underneath their initial reaction |
| • Demand agreement even if it's coerced or feel silenced                    | • Offer another approach that is more inclusive and addresses their pain and/or values     |

## Reflection Time!

1. What are the common ways I engage in toxic swirl in these situations?
2. What's the impact on the other person and on me when I approach them from the toxic swirl?
3. What specific ways could I approach it that's coming from a place of mindfulness?
4. What might the impact on the other person and on me be when I approach it from mindfulness?

## **Apply to Yourself First!**

1. Practice of Humility and Curiosity
2. Practice of Distinguishing Realities and Acknowledging External Reality
3. Practice of Gentle Mindfulness and Compassionate Self-Accountability

## **Then Apply to the Other Person!**

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## **Share Your Truth**

- Share your internal reality as part of your own compassionate self-accountability and in service of your own healing
- It's about you and what you need to give yourself. It's not about how they receive it or if they agree with it.
- At most, you can invite them to consider it as your experience while acknowledging that they also may have a different experience of the situation. They have the right to say no and they just may say yes.

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## **Just Ask!**

1. Inquire to meet them in their internal reality
2. Invite them to meet you in your internal reality

**Use your anti-oppression analysis to inform how you inquire and share your perspective**



## **It's About Staying Focused on the 3 Realities**

- More effective if the person who's more stuck in the toxic swirl shares their internal reality first.
- If both people are struck in the toxic swirl, make sure to take care of yourself first and foremost.
- It's not about who's most calm because you can be calm and be in toxic swirl.
- It's about who's more focused on the 3 realities, which can be communicated in a fierce and loud way and express anger, frustration, and resentment.

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## **Key Takeaways**

If you could only remember one thing from this whole session, what would it be?

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## **Next Session**

The Fifth Practice of Shared Envisioning and Non-Cooperation

Sunday, June 5th

**4 pm EST / 1 pm PST**

## **Compassionate Activism**

### **Initial 2-Day Training Day 2 - Session 3**

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## **The Fifth Practice of Shared Envisioning and Non-Cooperation**

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### **Choose a Situation**

Select a recent specific situation that is lightly emotionally charged for you where you felt stuck.

## **Apply to Yourself First!**

1. Practice of Humility and Curiosity
2. Practice of Distinguishing Realities and Acknowledging External Reality
3. Practice of Gentle Mindfulness and Compassionate Self-Accountability

## **Then Apply to the Other Person!**

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## **Practice Time!**

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## **Co-Creating a Shared Vision**

1. Through the Fourth Practice of Compassionate Truth-Telling and Consciousness-Raising Inquiry,
  - Get connected.
  - Identify shared values/goals/interests that are core to each other's realities.
2. Given your new understanding of each other's realities, create a solution that honors the shared core values.
  - Do not get fixated on the position you've taken previously (yes, X but, Y). Focus on the shared interest.
  - Try "Yes *[insert their perspective]*, and *[your perspective]*. So how about we try X together?"
3. If fear from the past presents itself through feeling stuck, go through Practice 1-3 again.

## Compassionate Non-Cooperation

- You can't control their behavior but you can choose yours.
- If you can't co-create an agreement, then choose to disengage - while hoping for their best, including being able to co-create in the future.

### More Toxic Swirl versus Compassionate Non-Cooperation

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| • Assume you know what's best for them at that moment                            | • Acknowledge that their perspective is their perspective and it doesn't have to be the same as yours in order to be legitimate                               |
| • Want to make them agree with you and not willing to accept a no (aka coercion) | • Invite them to agree with you and being willing to accept a yes, no, or counter offer   |
| • Make them wrong as a person for not agreeing with you                          | • Acknowledge while you don't agree with their position, it makes sense to them in this moment  |
| • Not care about where they're coming from or how they got there                 | • Get curious about what happened in their internal reality. Listen for their pain and how it got created, which is underneath their position.                |
| • Remain silent and resentful.   | • Hope they receive the healing they need in order to become more free from their pain and be more open to co-creating and aligning their values and actions. |

## Key Takeaways

If you could only remember one thing from this whole session, what would it be?