

# compassionate activism

Sandra: Hey folks. This is session 3 of day 1 for the online training for Compassion Activism. We are going to talk about the pivotal practice today. The pivotal practice is the third practice of gentle mindfulness and compassion of self accountability. The first 2, as I mentioned in the last session, were really a lead up to this third practice. This is where I'm going to actually walk you through a process of getting in touch with your pain. Then like I said, once we shift our intent focus to the actual pain, as opposed to being distracted and resisting it, it will naturally arise, what needs to happen to take care of it and our desire to do so, aka compassion. Like I said, we haven't been taught how to do that yet. We've been taught how to access it through to our toxicity, our toxics world make believe as I have been saying.

This is going to be potentially new for some folks, or maybe if people have had therapy that was somatic based, body work based, or if they have a meditation or mindfulness they may have heard about it and be practicing already. This is ... I know a bunch of folks, this may be new for you. I want to, as always, start out choosing a situation. Choose a situation somewhat emotionally charged. It can be the same one that you had been, this entire day, been working with, or it can be something different. Like I said it's up to you, what you feel called to talk about, to think about. If you aren't sure about what situation or what thing is, you can pay attention to your toxic thinking, pay attention to the chatter in your head.

We did that in last session and people wrote down what they heard their mind saying to themselves. It was usually something along the lines of you have to do something, you should do something, why are you doing this, you can't do this. It's stuff that leaves you feeling powerless, helpless, voiceless, stuck, stuff between a hard place and a rock. Think about when you felt that really strongly.

Folks who are just tuning in, FYI, I'm recovering from a flu. This is why I keep coughing. This third practice of gentle mindfulness, I'm actually just going to jump in. I feel like I've been teasing y'all, I've been talking about it and I haven't been giving in out to y'all. I have not been sharing. Oops, no don't want to annotate.

We're going to just jump right in. I'm not going to talk about it, I'm just going to have y'all do it. Everybody, I want you to get comfortable. Get comfortable in your chair. I want you to close your eyes and just take a couple deep breaths and breathe in, breathe out, breathe in, breathe out,

breathe in, breathe out. I want you to listen to your thoughts, just like I had you do a second before. Listen to what it's saying.

Presumably its some form of you have to, you must, how dare you, you can't, you're not good enough, you're not important, something along those lines. If not, think about to the situation that you had chosen earlier. Remember, just kind of get in touch with that feeling. I want you to put your hand on where you feel it, where you feel it in your body. Maybe it's your chest, maybe it's you're throat, maybe it's your shoulders, maybe it's your head. We're just kind of noticing, we're not trying to change anything, just kind of notice. Notice where that feeling feels strongest in your body. Maybe you feel it in a couple of different places, but just kind of where does it feel strongest for you?

Now just breathe in, breathe out, keep your eyes closed. Breathe in, breathe out, and just notice. We're not trying to change it, we're not trying to go away. Just let it be, let it arise. I want you to repeat to yourself, "I see you." Breathe in, "I see you", breathe out, "I see you." Breathe in, "I see you", breathe out, "I see you." Breathe in, "I see you", breathe out, "I see you." I just want you to notice, once again, just notice, that's it. Don't try to change it, do anything with it, just notice. What's coming up? Maybe nothing, maybe everything. Maybe it has shifted, maybe it's the same. Let it go where it goes and that's it. Let it be.

Now I want, keeping your hand where you feel it strongest, and if it has shifted and moved to another part of your body, put your hand there too. Say, "I see you and I care." Breathe in, "I see you", breathe out, "I care." Breathe in, "I see you", breathe out, "I care". If you don't feel ready to care yet, you can still continue to say I see you and that's it. By "you" I'm referring to the feeling that you have, the feeling where you have it strongest in your body, we're talking to that physical area.

Wait, I skipped a step. I'm sorry. I want you to keep your hand on it and continue to notice. I want you to pay attention to what it feels like, what are the sensations around it. All right, how big is it? Is it very large, is it like a basketball? Maybe it's bigger than your body, maybe it's small like a golf ball. Notice what it feels like. Is it moving? Is it moving or is it stuck? Is it doing anything? Noticing the contours of the sensation in your body. Notice, look around it, get close to it. What is happening with it? Does it have a color? Maybe it is, maybe it's not, doesn't matter. Whatever is happening is happening.

Now I want you to say to it again, "I see you", breathe out, "I see you" breathe in. "I see you", breathe out, "I see you", breathe in. I want you to pay attention to anything that's coming up for you now. Maybe nothing, maybe everything, maybe it's changing, maybe it's the same. Just keep continuing breathing and paying attention, just notice. Now I want you to

continue to put your hand where you feel it and keep your focus on where you feel it strongest in your body wherever it may be and say, "I see you", breathe out, "I care". Breathe in, "I see you", breathe out, "I care." Breathe in, "I see you", breathe out, "I care."

You just want to notice what's coming up, once again maybe nothing, maybe everything. There's no right or wrong to this. Notice if anything has shifted. Pay attention, does it feel different, does it look different, is it moving around? Maybe yes, maybe not. Keeping your hand where you feel it strongest I want you to ask it, "What do you need from me? What can I give to you?" Maybe it says something, maybe it doesn't, just let it arise. If it told you something, you heard something that you can do for it, you can tell it that you will do it, or maybe not, but tell it, tell it if you choose to take care of it. If you didn't hear anything, continue to repeat to yourself, "I see you and I care."

I want you to tell it, if you have a need, which means that you haven't been taking care of it as you could have, acknowledge that, "I haven't been doing the things you ask me, and I will take care of it now.", if you choose to. "I haven't been doing the thing you asked, the thing you need from me and I will." I want you to just take a moment to notice what's coming up, what's happening inside of you. There's no right or wrong to it, just notice.

Now I want you to say, "thank you" for all that it taught you today, and that you'll be back to take care of it some more. If you feel so moved you can give it a hug, a feeling in your body. Then I want you to take a couple deep breaths, breathe in, breathe out, breathe in, breathe out, breathe in, breathe out. I want you to wiggle your toes and your fingers, stretch, open up your eyes and come back to the external reality of here and now.

I just want people to take a second, move, shift, do what you need to do. Let what happened, just sit in it. We're going to do another white board. I want folks to share. Share what that was like for them. In the white board, keep it kind of into adjectives or adverbs I guess. If you have something longer you want to share, if you can put it in the chat box, that way ... I want you to share. What was that like for you. Maybe nothing happened, maybe everything happened. There's no right or wrong to this, this is the first time that we've done it and I apologize. I actually messed up in the beginning. I didn't do the steps properly do I kind of backtracked. It's okay, we'll do more of this later. Especially if you notice that something was different the first time I had you say, "I see you and I care" and the second time I had you do that, that's also interesting.

Josette: We have some answers. Can everybody hear me okay if I have a hopefully a mic now situated? Someone said, "I'm noticing that my anger is still very present, I'm holding my hands sometimes because the urge to slap someone is sometimes strong, but I also feel like non-violence

important so I've not slapped him. I feel conflicted about this right now." Another person said, "I thought I got a feeling of something somewhere in my head, but then when I went to put my hand there it disappeared and after I didn't get anything anywhere. Brain is beginning to not process anymore, this is very emotionally as well as intellectually tiring, less tension at the root, isn't that what many of us want to be seen and to know someone cares? I nearly fell asleep. Perhaps I wasn't awake enough. Less intense, less hyper, becoming more believable. I cried a little. The invitation to hug my voice was poignant. I feel something releasing with each breath." Someone else said awareness, someone else said loved.

Let's see, "My pain kind of moved around my body and I feel anger, but I was able to recognize those feelings and put emotions into words to address the situation with the oppressing person. I feel more relaxed and aware, I got closer to the root of the pain, I got a message to relax, trust and to let go of my needs around what needs to happen. I had my hand on my heart at first, but near the end my head started to hurt so I put my hands there and there was more ease." Exhausted. All right, one more we got. "Breath revealed that something else needed attention from what I chose. Touch in the area was triggering backed off and realized there was much, much more there but wasn't ready."

Sandra: That's really important. I'm glad that we ended it with that because it's all about listening. This is all about taking that moment, that pause, and really listening to what we need. If we started to touch upon something that we're not ready for, we can always pull back a bit. If we can, we can be at "I feel something and I'm not ready to engage with it", and that's okay. That's where we are, that's something that we can say. It's all about acknowledging where we are in that current moment and not making ourselves wrong for it and not trying to deny that it's happening.

What people have shared is that, and perhaps it's not true for everybody in this short exercise because it was short and it was a group one and I actually messed up the beginning, so it may be that people didn't get there. A bunch of folks got to a place where things felt released. Things even felt loved. We got messages about what they needed to take care of themselves.

Somebody else is sharing, "I think it's so important that we take a breath consciously." This is what it's about, this is why I say don't necessarily just believe me because I say something. I'm asking you to listen to yourself and try that out. We are the experts of our own reality, we are the only ones with access to our own reality. If we're not paying attention to ourselves, if we're not listening to ourselves, who is? How are we going to be able to share our truth if we're not even in touch with our truth, right? This is why it's the first step and the most important step actually.

For the folks who heard a message about what they needed, what that feeling, what that pain needed from them, got a message about what to give to them, for the folks who heard something like that, tell me, write in the chat box, how easily could you actually give that? How easily could you give what was asked of you? Was it really, when you heard that need, was it something like, "Oh I can't do that", or was it like, "yeah", or was it like, "I want to and it's going to be a little hard"? There's no right or wrong to this either. I just want you to get in touch with that feeling.

One person says "Giving it won't be easy but starting it is, so even though I thought I couldn't, I know I could begin. I want to and it's going to take time."

Josette: "Saying I see you was a lot easier in the second half, which I've now lost track of. What was the second phrase?"

Sandra: I see you and I care.

Josette: "I know what it is that I need to do. I also know it will require work. I think that my sleepiness is indicative of my week. I taught 2 seminars on trauma in foreign practices and I got into Facebook arguments. I'm telling myself I need to sleep."

Sandra: That happens, right? Listen to your body.

Josette: "I heard the need with clarity and also felt that I needed to give myself time to process and go with the flow." We have a heart and a me on the board. We also have a sad. "I found it difficult to say that I care. I have a hidden pain I cannot accept of acknowledge yet."

Sandra: Listen to that.

Josette: I need ...

Sandra: Wherever you are ...! Sorry it's just that, wherever you are, that's okay. Obviously as a group, I had to progress the group. That does not mean that you needed to come with me if you were not already there, which is why when I said we're saying I see you and I care if that doesn't feel good to you, if you're not ready to say that, keep saying I see you, just keep saying I see you. Okay? Then when you feel it shift and you can say I see you and I care, that's when you get there. There's other things that you can do too, but that's the basics.

Josette: "I need to write more, it addresses my pain but I get so much release from that." "When I told my heart I cared I realized the gravity of what I was promising and what it would take." "Hard for me to care for self."

Sandra: Right. This is all incredible listening. It's all incredible listening and there's no right or wrong to this. Some people feel like I need to be in the place where I did the exercise right, I know what I need to do and I feel 100% gungho to do it. Some folks are like that. Sometimes it doesn't take very long. Other times, it takes a long time. Sometimes it takes multiple deep sessions, sometimes it takes months, sometimes it might take years of continuing to do this work, it depends on how deeply embedded and normalized the trauma is. It shows up in different ways. There's no right or wrong to this, it's just it's where you are.

You remember how I've been talking about resisting, how we normally resist by making ourselves wrong for the feelings that we have and we try to deny, we try to change what we're feeling. I'm not asking you to do that, I'm asking you to do the opposite. I'm asking you just to be here with it. Wherever you may be, which may be that you realize that it's hard to care for yourself, you're not there yet, then focus on that. I want to offer coaching if front of everybody. Someone who feels comfortable with that, which I know is a little bit intimidating, but hopefully somebody is wanting to get some individual support, because obviously I can do a lot more with an individual 1 on 1 conversation than I can with a group. Does somebody who got stuck in that exercise and would like to get a little bit further along, whoever that may be, you can volunteer now.

Josette: Folks on the phone, you can do \*6 if you want to jump in.

Sandra: This is, if you're familiar with the movie, Ferris Bueller's Day Off, I go anyone, anyone, anyone? [crosstalk 00:27:10]

Josette: We have a volunteer.

Sandra: Yay.

Josette: That would be Valerie. Valerie if you want to jump in via audio.

Valerie: Sure, hi. Sorry my English is not too good today because of the sleepy and French is my first language. If I don't make sense ...

Sandra: No worries.

Valerie: I actually found it really hard to feel anything. I was at the seminar that you gave and even then it was really hard for me to kind of feel where exactly I felt the kind of ick stuff. It was going to be hard for me to kind of even get into that first contact. Yeah, so it's fun.

Sandra: Yeah, no, that happens, is we're noticing. That's why the first practice is noticing right? [inaudible 00:28:02] we normalize it so much to repress and

not be in touch with it, so that makes total sense. Makes complete sense. Thank you for volunteering.

Valerie: No problem. I think somebody else in the chat [inaudible 00:28:17] to volunteer.

Sandra: Well we're going to have more opportunities, so tomorrow to. If that person wants to, I don't know if we're going to get to 2 today but tomorrow we are going to be doing some more of this. Actually in every session from now on we're going to be doing this. I would like for you to close your eyes. Remember everything is invitational. You can always say yes, no, counter offer, go as far, as deep as you want and pull back whenever you want to.

Valerie: Sure.

Sandra: Close your eyes. I want you to take a couple deep breaths. Just breathe in, breathe out, breathe in, breathe out. I want you to do a body scan starting from your feet. Kind of notice how it feels like. If it's tense, if it's hurting if it's relaxed. Move to your calves, just notice, not trying to change it. Move to your thighs. Is something hurting? Is it relaxed? It is achy.

Valerie: Geez. Somebody is coming downstairs. It kind of gave me a mini heart attack. There we go. Now the heart is pounding. Hi. I'm just going to need myself a second.

Sandra: Life happens sometimes. Coughing happens sometimes.

Valerie: I'm sorry. I have to go. I'm leaving like 15 [inaudible 00:29:55].

Sandra: Oh, okay.

Valerie: If somebody else would like to take over, that's okay. I didn't realize how the hour or 2 like it's like, "Oh it's totally 4" and it's not 4. I think [inaudible 00:30:13] a couple people chiming in. I will try to kind of do the body scan thing, because I think that might be really awesome and helpful. Thanks for having me and have a nice rest of the session.

Sandra: All right, well thank you for volunteering and like I said we'll be doing this for all future sessions so there's plenty of opportunities, including the bimonthly Q and A's.

Valerie: Mm-hmm (affirmative), all right well thanks very much. Have a nice evening I guess. Bye.

Sandra: Bye. All right, who was next in line?

Josette: Mary Hill.

Sandra: Mary Hill, you're up.

Mary Hill: Okay. Forgive the hair.

Sandra: No worries. We're all human, things are happening, I'm coughing. It's all happening.

Mary Hill: I'm getting ready for a thing later on. I felt it but it was hard to hold onto it. I almost started switching to a far more emotionally traumatic thing to just kind of hold onto it. I felt it very much in my heart, that's usually where I feel. Then I may be because I'm on my bed, and I kind of laid back to be in a nice position, but I definitely think I fell asleep.

Sandra: A soothing voice is [crosstalk 00:31:42]

Mary Hill: Yeah, no, that has happened a lot whenever there's some sort of guided mediation, I'll get like "Yes, soothing voices, soothing voices", and I'll wake up 5 minutes later or 3 minutes later and I'm like everyone else seems to ... breakthrough. Okay"

Sandra: Well it is what it is. You were sleeping, and maybe it could be a distraction mechanism. Possible, I don't know. Can you share a little bit about a situation that you're going to be focusing in on?

Mary Hill: Let me quickly check how near my mom is because it has to do with her.

Sandra: All right.

Mary Hill: Mommy? Cool. I had kind of fallen behind on cleaning the house and I've had a big history with my mom kind of not communicating in a way that is easy for me. It kind of comes on as attacking and I've had struggles trying to explain it to her. I was diagnosed with mild depression a few years ago and now it seems I might also have some anxiety. She has kind of attacked me for like, 'You should be better at cleaning the house. You should know this sort of thing. You need to be on top of this.' She's always been good at that, verses for me sometimes it is a legit struggle to shower more than 4 times a day.

For me I was like, "I thought I had a victory. I did the dishes and I showered and I picked up some things." Then all I'm hearing is "You failed, you didn't do this." I just kind of froze, ran to my room, didn't really say much and then kind of got up the courage to bring it up to her and sort of go like, "It's like I have a mental illness that effects every single part of my life." While I acknowledge it was a big, it was like, Yay, I technically did the thing. It definitely ...

Sandra: Took a [crosstalk 00:34:01]



Mary Hill: Yeah. It took a long time to get to bed afterwards.

Sandra: Right. I want you to close you're eyes now. I want you to take a couple deep breaths. Breathe in and then breathe out. Breathe in and breathe out. Where do you feel that sensation as you remember that situation?

Mary Hill: Chest.

Sandra: In your chest? Okay. Tell me a little bit more about that sensation.

Mary Hill: It's kind of hard to hold onto at times, but ...

Sandra: It's okay if it goes away, that's fine.

Mary Hill: Yeah, it seems to kind of ... It started at the heart, which makes sense and it feels like it's slowly winding it's way up my shoulder. It's both kind of a almost feels like a raised and yet sunk in sensation at the very same time, a kind of pushing me out but still has its hooks in me.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Mary Hill: I can feel my heartbeat speeding up just a little bit and it being a little bit harder to take deep breaths.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative). On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being most severe, how strongly do you feel it now?

Mary Hill: Sometimes we're at a 3. I get started off stronger at another point, so now it, like I said it's kind of feeling like it doesn't ...

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Right now is all that matters. Right now it's a 3?

Mary Hill: Yeah.

Sandra: If you had to name this sensation, what feeling would you label it as?

Mary Hill: Kind of a [inaudible 00:36:15] sort of thing. It kind of feels like there's a vibration but it also feels like it's burning a bit. Like I said, it feels a bit both wanting to get out and wanting to hook in.

Sandra: If you could label it as an emotion, sounds maybe like judgement or shame, maybe?

Mary Hill: Frustration.

Sandra: Frustration? Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Mary Hill: There's frustration with her for not getting it and there's frustration with me for not finding a way to communicate it in a way that she will get it.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I want you to notice the frustration. Tell me, this frustration, how big is it? Does it fill your chest, your body, or is it like a golf ball? How big is it?

Mary Hill: It's about the size of my hand I would say. It started out kind of feeling this and then it sort of spread out.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative). It's kind of the size of your hand and it's both really deep in your heart and pushing outwards as well?

Mary Hill: Yeah. It feels like it's kind of right under the surface almost, but it wants to try and go further in.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative), like it wants to be more deeply embedded in you perhaps?

Mary Hill: Yeah.

Sandra: How do you relate to this feeling of frustration? Are you like, "Yay I have it", "I can't believe I have it again, I don't want to have it"? What is your relation to this feeling?

Mary Hill: There is acknowledgement. I was the one that said, when I said I acknowledge that this happened verses I accept that this happened. There was a big difference for me. I acknowledge that it's there, but it's happening again because I haven't yet found the right way, not the right way but a way to get it across. It kind of feels like I've tried one way and that didn't work, and I've gone back and I've tried another way and that didn't work, and I've gone back.

Sandra: Okay.

Mary Hill: I keep on trying to find a way to access her internal reality and I keep on not getting it. The word I wanted to say but I kind of like I know it's not but still thoughts, was like I wanted to say, "I failed", but it's not a failure. It's just I haven't found the right way, but it's like, "Oh god, I have to find the right way. What is the way to get this into her consciousness, to get it to a way that she could understand?".

Sandra: Okay. Focusing on the feeling, the frustration is digging deeper and it's pushing out. It kind of feels like it's trying to take over a bit, maybe?

Mary Hill: A little bit.

Sandra: Yeah. I want you to keep your hand on it and say, "I feel frustrated, and that's okay."

Mary Hill: I feel frustrated and that's okay.

Sandra: It's okay in the sense like it's happening, not that it's preferable, but just it's happening. Breathe in, "I feel frustrated", breathe out, "and that's okay."

Mary Hill: I feel frustrated and that's okay.

Sandra: Breathe in, "I feel frustrated".

Mary Hill: I feel frustrated.

Sandra: Breathe out, "that's okay."

Mary Hill: That's okay.

Sandra: Breathe in, "I feel frustrated."

Mary Hill: I feel frustrated.

Sandra: Breathe out, " and that's okay."

Mary Hill: And that's okay.

Sandra: What do you notice coming up for you now?

Mary Hill: It's moving to my throat.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Mary Hill: It's more of a constricting feeling.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Mary Hill: Trying to prevent those words being said.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Tell me ...

Mary Hill: For me, there's a big difference saying that I acknowledge my frustration verses to say it is okay or to say that I accept it. The what you said of accept is not acceptable, I get it mind sense and I'm not yet there body sense.

Sandra: Right that's fine, that's fine.

Mary Hill: Saying I feel like that's okay, there's immediately sort of like, "Not okay, no. This is not okay treatment", verses it is okay that I'm feeling this thing. It is

a logical and understandable thing to feel, and just trying to make that distinction in my body.

Sandra: Well you're not there yet, so let's just stay with this feeling. Tell me more about the feeling in your throat.

Mary Hill: Now that I'm not saying it the feeling is dissipating, like I'm having a bit of trouble hanging on so it's kind of not there. It's about a 1 right now.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I want you to say to yourself, "it's possible to feel frustration and that be okay."

Mary Hill: It's possible to feel frustration and that be okay.

Sandra: Breathe in, "It's possible to feel frustration and that be okay".

Mary Hill: It's possible to feel frustration and that be okay.

Sandra: Breathe in, "It's possible to feel frustration.

Mary Hill: It's possible to feel frustration.

Sandra: Breathe out, "And that's okay.

Mary Hill: And that's okay.

Sandra: What are you noticing now?

Mary Hill: That was much easier to say. I don't really feel much of a thing right now.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Mary Hill: There doesn't ... I think I, at this moment the feeling isn't there.

Sandra: Do you have any other feelings coming up for you now? Just sense what's coming up for you in your body. Maybe nothing.

Mary Hill: Right now it kind of feels like nothing.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I want you to think about speaking to your mother. What do you notice coming up in your body?

Mary Hill: It's back.

Sandra: Right. The frustration?

Mary Hill: Part frustration, part anxiety, almost knowing that it's some form of it is going to happen again.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Tell me more about the sensation of anxiety.

Mary Hill: [inaudible 00:44:15] can't tell if my heart is beating a bit stronger.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Mary Hill: It kind of feels like it's back. It's very light, it's maybe like a 1 or a 2. It's hard because when I'm trying to talk about it, the feeling at times is just kind of like melting away. Then when I just feel it, it kind of convalesces again. When I'm trying to get a handle to name it, this particular feeling, when I know it's frustration, like right now already I'm able to breathe slower because I'm not as much focusing on the hypothetical situation of talking to her.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative), it's a slippery one. Maybe, Mary, let's try this. Put your hand where you feel it strongest.

Mary Hill: Not sure I feel it right now. I can go back to previous places but at this moment it's not there.

Sandra: Okay. I don't want to feel my frustration, and that's okay.

Mary Hill: I don't want to feel my frustration, and that's okay.

Sandra: Breathe in, "I don't want to feel my frustration".

Mary Hill: I don't want to feel my frustration.

Sandra: Breathe out, "and that's okay.

Mary Hill: And that's okay.

Sandra: Breathe in, "I don't want to feel my frustration".

Mary Hill: Feel my frustration.

Sandra: And that's okay.

Mary Hill: And that's okay.

Sandra: Breathe in, "I don't want to feel my frustration".

Mary Hill: I don't want to feel my frustration.

Sandra: Breathe out, "and that's okay.

Mary Hill: And that's okay.

Sandra: I don't want to feel my frustration.

Mary Hill: I don't want to feel my frustration.

Sandra: And that's okay.

Mary Hill: And that's okay.

Sandra: What are you noticing now?

Mary Hill: There was a bit of resistance here and I think that was because I reacted to the part of I don't want, almost as instead of what it was, the external reality of those words "I don't want", and I kind of interpreted it as I don't want to feel as in I am purposely repressing, which I don't necessarily feel is true. There was kind of like, I don't truly believe. Not that I don't believe those words but it was hard to separate it between the feeling of "I don't have a desire to feel frustration because frustration is annoying to feel", verses "I don't want to feel my frustration so I'm pushing it down and not feeling it."

Sandra: Where are you now?

Mary Hill: Honestly hard to tell.

Sandra: Yeah, I get that. How do you feel about that?

Mary Hill: There's definitely the fleeting thought of almost like, "Ah, I feel like a bad example", and then kind of be like, that's not what this is about. There's almost like, "Ah, I'm not having a big breakthrough. This might be boring to be watching. I don't know." Where like, "I'm kind of feeling it. No, jk lolz, I'm fine. Now I'm kind of feeling it, no I'm kind of fine.", of that sort of back and forth. There's a bit of self consciousness in general creeping in.

Sandra: Where are you feeling that in your body?

Mary Hill: That one's kind of more centered, not directly there but it's kind of a little bit here. It kind of feels a bit external, like a little ball.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Tell me more about the sensation.

Mary Hill: Trying in a weird way to get a handle before I necessarily ...

Sandra: No, just whatever comes up, comes up. There's no forcing here. It's just whatever arises. If nothing arises that happens.

Mary Hill: For me, I found the second I name it, it kind of goes away, so when I sort of said, "I've got some self consciousness and it feels like a ball", it started to sort of immediately ... What I could get from it, it was just kind of constrictive.

Sandra: Let's not name it then. What are you feeling now? What's coming up for you now? There's no right or wrong. Maybe it's nothing. Think about when you're talking to you mother. What's going on on your forehead?

Mary Hill: Kind of metalish band, squeezing.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative), tell me more.

Mary Hill: Almost a hard headeding because I feel like I'm bashing up against a brick wall a lot.

Sandra: It's like a metal band constricting. Is it actively squeezing? Is it pulsing, is it still?

Mary Hill: It feels like it's still but if I try to force it off it would get tighter, almost like a Chinese finger trap.

Sandra: How big is it? The entire head?

Mary Hill: [inaudible 00:51:01] the existence I could press in.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative). On a scale of 1 to 10 how strong?

Mary Hill: 3 to 4.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I want you to get closer to it in your head. Put your hand where you feel it. I want you to kind of visualize yourself getting closer to it. I want you to walk around it. What are you noticing as you walk around it?

Mary Hill: The first thing that came to my head was that it has jagged edges at the side, and that it seems to be made of metal.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Is it piercing something?

Mary Hill: No, but the threat that it could.

Sandra: What else are you noticing?

Mary Hill: It almost looks like that old style bulb of Frankenstein thing, like the [inaudible 00:52:12].

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Mary Hill: It's old. It's not rusty, but it's sturdy.

Sandra: It's effective. I want you to visualize yourself inside of it. Can you do that?

Mary Hill: Sort of. It feels very dense and narrow. In order to get through it I would have to literally squeeze myself paper thin and slide through.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative), do you want to do that?

Mary Hill: Sort of. I feel like I am. I got the image of me doing it, but sort of I'm like this is unpleasant.

Sandra: It's your choice. Do you choose to do it? There's no right or wrong.

Mary Hill: Don't really know.

Sandra: Okay. We won't move then. Where are you now in relationship to it?

Mary Hill: Kind of on the edge of where the jags are there and I feel like I'm kind of right here on the outside leaning against it.

Sandra: I want you to look at it and repeat "I see you."

Mary Hill: I see you.

Sandra: Breathe in, "I see you."

Mary Hill: I see you.

Sandra: Breathe out, "I see you."

Mary Hill: I see you.

Sandra: Breathe in, "I see you."

Mary Hill: I see you.

Sandra: Breathe out, "I see you."

Mary Hill: I see you.

Sandra: What are you noticing come up for you?

Mary Hill: The first thought that kind of came up was like, "this is silly" and it started to like dissipating. I was like, "No, wait. We're doing a thing", so I then just kept on saying I see you. It's still there. It's a mean thing but like I ...

Sandra: It's still there.

Mary Hill: It's still there.

Sandra: I want you to say, "I see you and you matter."



Mary Hill: I see you and you matter.

Sandra: I see you and you matter.

Mary Hill: I see you.

Sandra: And you matter.

Mary Hill: And you matter.

Sandra: I see you and you matter.

Mary Hill: I see you and you matter.

Sandra: What do you notice coming up for you now?

Mary Hill: My jaw kind of clenched. I don't really want it to matter.

Sandra: Right. I want you to say it again a couple of times.

Mary Hill: I see you and you matter. I see you and you matter. I see you and you matter. I see you ...

Sandra: what's coming up now?

Mary Hill: ... And you matter. Not as much jaw twitching.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Mary Hill: It's becoming a bit easier to say. In a way it's almost making it way more real.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I want you to say, "You matter and I care."

Mary Hill: You matter and I care. You matter and I care. You matter and I care. You matter and I care.

Sandra: What's coming up for you now?

Mary Hill: It feels a little bit less substantial.

Sandra: In what way? In a way that it ran away from you?

Mary Hill: It kind of felt like it was pressing up here [inaudible 00:57:41]. It's more like it slipped down. It doesn't feel as constricting.

Sandra: Ah, so it feels more like a release than a running away then?

Mary Hill: Yeah.

Sandra: That's different right? Is that different?

Mary Hill: Yeah.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I want you to keep saying that, "You matter and I care."

Mary Hill: You matter and I care. You matter and I care. You matter and I care. You matter and I care. You matter and I care.

Sandra: What are you noticing now?

Mary Hill: It feels like it has slipped down more.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Can you ...

Mary Hill: It feels even less substantial.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Can you ask it if it needs something from you?

Mary Hill: Release.

Sandra: Do you know how to do that?

Mary Hill: Not necessarily.

Sandra: Can you ask it what it means to release?

Mary Hill: Set us free. I don't know who the us is.

Sandra: You can ask.

Mary Hill: I'm not getting any clearance here.

Sandra: That's okay. Ask it, "What does it mean to set you free?".

Mary Hill: It just kind of reiterates it, it just says "set us free", again. It doesn't ... It feels like it's a kind of a symbol thing. It's not really a band anymore, it's more like a plate. When ask it it's almost [inaudible 01:00:45].

Sandra: I'm sorry I was coughing. What did you say?

Mary Hill: It's kind of almost like, "it means set us free means set us free."

Sandra: Like take the plate off?

Mary Hill: No, it ... Well maybe but it just says like, "Set us free means set us free. There's no trick into this."

Sandra: Okay well say, why don't we try, "I set you free now." Say that. Breathe in, "I set you free".

Mary Hill: You free.

Sandra: Breathe out, "I set you free."

Mary Hill: You free.

Sandra: Breathe in, "I set you free."

Mary Hill: I set you free.

Sandra: Breathe out, "I set you free."

Mary Hill: I set you free.

Sandra: What do you notice now?

Mary Hill: The bolts are kind of undoing and the plates are separating.

Sandra: Why don't you continue, "I set you free."

Mary Hill: I set you free. I set you free. I set you free. I set you free. I set you free.

Sandra: What are you noticing now?

Mary Hill: Kind of just more of what [inaudible 01:02:19] before, just more [inaudible 01:02:21] it's kind of moving away. There's a little bit of space between me and it.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Right. I want you to keep doing this.

Mary Hill: There's kind of a warm sensation now, when it used to be cool.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I want you to take a couple more minutes and just keep saying that to yourself. I'm actually going to switch back to the group right now, and I want you to keep kind of doing this. If you need to put us on mute or something so you can keep doing this, but keep doing this. If something shifts for you within the time, the 30 minutes we have left, or 20 minutes we have left I want you to come back. Okay?

Mary Hill: Okay. Not exactly sure if I open my eyes to mute myself that it will kind of go away.

Sandra: I will ... Can you do that on your own?

Mary Hill: I can mute you, but you have to turn our volume off. You're going to have to ...

Sandra: That's fine of turning our volume off, I just don't want to keep on repeating ...

Mary Hill: I can mute you. I can mute you Mary.

Sandra: Keep on doing that. If you feel a shift at some point, come back and let us know. Thank you, thank you for sharing.

All right. I want to kind of talk about what happened there. Like I said, this work isn't about making where we are different. It's more about getting deeper into where we are. There's no right or wrong to this. Sometimes when I coach, sometimes it takes like 10 minutes and they shift into an entire different place. Sometimes it takes a lot longer. I have things that I need to grieve for months, years even. It's a slowly unpacking process. That happens. There's no right or wrong to this. It just is what it is. It was good because Mary could catch herself when she started engaging in toxic swirl and was like, 'Oh I shouldn't feel this way', like when she got self conscious. She was able to let go of that and keep with it, just keep staying with herself. Right?

That's what this is about. Had she engaged in like "I'm feeling self conscious, I'm feeling ... I don't think I should it, I'm taking up too much time", that's all trying to avoid what's going on right now. She caught herself, refocused. Notice that I kept using the body to bring her back. Regrounding it in your body because we've been taught to separate from our body. That's where our feelings live, they live in our bodies. When in doubt, just go to there and listen. Do you notice that I don't know her, I know nothing about her situation, I know nothing of what's going on with her. I do this with coaching and my people shift all the time with me when I'm coaching, because I don't need to know anything about them, I'm just listening and I'm helping them listen.

I would pay attention to where she was and then I would validate that and help her validate that, and keep kind of going deeper. When it moved, it moved, and then we shift to there. I ask some questions to kind of get a little bit deeper and then we would just shift. It just kind of kept moving. Other folks, when I do this with them, they'll start off feeling angry and then they'll shift into realizing that they feel sadness, and then they'll shift to feel fear and then they'll shift to feel pain. It will be in different parts of their bodies. There's no right or wrong to this.

I think on of, it feels like for Mary, one of the coping strategies for her is to disassociate, or just separate herself from her feelings and to repress that. They very quickly would run away from her when she tried to get in touch with it. When she said that naming it would make it go away, run away from her, which is different from being released. You notice I asked her that feeling with this on her head, when if she felt it getting weaker if that

was a running away kind of weaker or was it like a release weaker. It was the latter, it was getting a release.

Paying attention to those subtle differences because they're really real. If it's getting weaker because you're repressing it subconsciously, then that's something different. That's still resisting what's going on, verses being present to it. The power of mindfulness is that when you bring gentle, loving, accepting, acknowledging attention to it, it starts to get released. It starts to get released. Mary shared that she also struggles with depression and perhaps some anxiety as well. This is pretty deeply embedded her. This is probably related to that, right? Even how strong depression is in folks and how it impacts people, she was starting to notice a shift, right this thing that was entrapping her, is keeping her inside, it was starting to be dismantled. I don't know what else is going on. She's going to get more access to it as she continues to be with it. Maybe within the time period she'll be able to share, maybe she'll share tomorrow, I don't know.

This is what I'm talking about. It's actually quite simple. It's actually quite simple. We make it complicated by getting in our own way, by resisting as I talked about, by living in toxic swirl of make believe. I want to break for a moment and take any questions people had about what happened. Tomorrow we're going to start out with this third practice as well because I said it's pivotal, so I'm spending 2 sessions on it. I'm going to talk more about the more specific steps of it. I wanted you to experience it. Anybody either want to share what happened with them, or they want to have a question about it?

We don't have enough time for me to coach anybody, but perhaps ... Actually so let's do that. I don't have time to coach anybody, so how about we have people share who felt a shift. This is not to make people feel bad or wrong. If you didn't feel a shift that's totally okay. You are where you are. If somebody feel a shift, I know a couple people did, if they want to share, please do, either through the chat box or verbally. If you got something from watching me coach her, as Mary did this work, there's a lot of learning when you watch other people go through what we're trying to do.

Josette: Someone said, "I think I managed to get a feeling while you coached Mary, even though I didn't get past the I see you stage."

Sandra: Yup. Sometimes it's easier for us to relate to other people because we tend to be harsher on ourselves than other people most of the time. We beat ourselves up a lot more and we disassociate from our feelings a lot more. Sometimes we can get more access by watching other folks. Sit with it, if where you are is I see you, and that's about it, stick to there. You don't need to move on. Stick to where you are. If you feel stuck there, stay there. Something wants your attention. Then when you feel a bit of a shift,

maybe you'll get present to something else. Do what feels right, calls to you.

Josette: I appreciate that the mantra can shift for what works, not staying with something that isn't as accessible. The more repetition Mary allowed, the more spaciousness there was in the process, the more emotion was revealed the more my own heart opened as if seeing Mary let me see ...

Sandra: As if Mary seeing me.

Josette: As if Mary seeing Mary let me see me differently too. Got it, thank you.

Sandra: Right. Like I said, that's the power of watching somebody be coached in front of you. I specifically asked for somebody who's struggling with doing the exercise. If it worked perfectly great for you, great, but a lot of people are still struggling. That's perfectly all right. There's no right or wrong to it. Get a little extra assistance, that's all. It's true, the more we repeat ... Think about it, we have these grooves, these toxic messages that have undermined our internal reality, has said our feelings aren't important, our needs aren't legitimate. Systemic oppressionists taught us that our experiences aren't real, especially as children. Then you put upon that different modularized identities and even privileged identities. Like I said it has cut us off from feeling, being present to the pain of oppressing other people. All of that is there.

This is a groove that has been well cut into your brain. That's why repetition is such a big part of this practice. I'm trying to have you shift into a new groove. These are habits, your muscle memory. I have you repeat it over and over again. Just stick with it. You're countering a lifetime of toxic messages. It's not going to take a lifetime to create a new groove, but you got to do a little practice. You got to repeat it a little bit, just FYI, there's repetition in this program.

Josette: When you told us to visualize the pain I was able to visualize it as part of a larger wound. By connecting the 2 I was able to understand how healing from the smaller wound would actually require working with the larger one as well.

Sandra: I find that, this is what I say, we are naturally whole. Once we let go of our resistance and we actually shift our focus, because that's all we're doing is shift our focus to what is actually being experienced in our bodies, it will tell you all sorts of kinds of things. You'll learn like Amaz is telling us, "Is able to visualize a large wound be connected to a smaller wound and healing it." It's remarkable what we will learn if we just listen to ourselves.

Josette: Another person said, "I really appreciated the way Sandra really practically lived out the no right or wrong here, rather kept being in the not knowing

curious base. The frustration Mary felt summed up my feelings. I couldn't identify what it was before." Someone else agreed.

Sandra: Yeah. Like I said, this is what you've been taught. You've been taught to ignore your feelings, suppress them. You've been taught that they're not real. Yeah. That's true. That's understandable. What you could do is be like, "I feel frustration and that's okay." Go to whatever is strongest is for you at that moment. If you're somebody who feels guilty about being frustrated, you feel like you shouldn't feel frustrated with yourself, you're supposed to be loving toward yourself, there's a lot of shoulds in the way self love and self acceptance is talked about in our society. That's another perfectionist thing, another perfectionist bar that we're taught to jump over when we haven't been given the skills to. Like you need to love yourself. "Well fuck, why do I not? How come I can't? Everyone's supposed to." No, no, no, no. It's hard. I struggle to love myself. I struggle to accept myself, and that's okay, or that's happening. If that's okay feels like too much acceptable, even though that's not what we're saying, stick with that's happening.

You got to play it right. You notice that with Mary I was very experimental. I didn't know what would work for her. I just tried out different things and see what landed, see what seemed to resonate with her. If something began to shift with her, well then I kept her going in that way. I don't know. Play around with it where you are. Play around, keep repeating. You'll know when something feels good. You'll know when it's doing something. When it feels uncomfortable kind of sit with that. This is new, that makes sense. Sit with it.

Josette: When we were promoted to say "I see you and you matter", I saw myself as a child. When I felt an overwhelming need to comfort when I saw the pain as a hurting child it directs me to address healing.

Sandra: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Excuse me. For folks who have done inner child work, yes, great. I used to run an every day self love course through Everyday Feminism. This actually was a big part of it is that we would personify the pain that we felt as what I call a hurt one. It's a younger version of ourselves that was traumatized, that carries some sort of overwhelming pain and fear that got stuck there. They didn't know how to respond. It is very effective to personify them, personify the pain as a hurt child, ourselves in the past, because we naturally feel more compassion toward a hurt child verses ourselves. It also helps make it distinct and we can do something for them. There's a whole another thing, I won't go into right now. It does totally work. If you naturally feel yourself personifying them as a hurt child, go with it. That's effective. Try it out. If it didn't happen for you, just try it out. See what happens. Give it a name too. FYI, it has a name. Ask it.

Josette: Then we have, "I realized that I created me." That was the last comment.

Sandra: [inaudible 01:18:12] I'm not sure what you mean by that, Brenda. I'm not sure what you mean, Sarah, by "Well fuck." I don't know what that means. It goes so many different ways, I'm not sure.

Josette: I think it was when you were talking about the society being "Oh you should love yourself", then you were like "Well fuck how do I do that?" Someone was like, "Well fuck."

Sandra: I know, I keep it real.

Josette: Yeah, Brenda adds, "I am accountable for how I feel."

Sandra: I want to speak on that for a little bit. How you feel is like the weather, it comes up. It comes and it goes. What you put your focus to effects, influences what feelings arise. You can shift your feeling sometimes by shifting your focus. That is what I'm teaching you. What you do with your feelings is completely your responsibility. Yes, this is why we talk about compassion and self accountability in this third practice. It is true, Brenda, what you're saying, "I choose to react in a certain way or not." Yeah. How do you react, how do you respond is definitely your choice, which is not something that people realize. People have their feelings was caught up with their actions, was all smooshed together, everything was collapsed and smooshed together. It is hard to figure out what didn't feel like you can choose.

This is what I'm showing you is how we can unpack things so we can actually have a choice. We're all doing our best and we're making our best better right now. I want you to ... We have 5 minutes left, I want you to think about ... Or 3 minutes left. We'll go over a little if I say 5 minutes. Maybe we can do it fast. I want folks to put down if there's 1 thing they want to make sure they learn from this lesson, what would it be.

Josette: While people write that we had a quick question come in about envisioning as yourself as the child and what resources one can look at to look at the inner child worth.

Sandra: I can't remember what it's called, but there is a workbook that I used when I was before inner child workbook. You can just look it up. I also do run the everyday self love course. I actually decided to not offer that anymore because of capacity. I'm rethinking that maybe I'll just offer it without the additional coaching and group discussions. I will let folks know if I make that decision to turn it on again. It is a really, really wonderful course. It has helped like over 1,000 people. One person even led to her healing to a point where she ran for office. Look up, "Inner child work" on Amazon and it'll pop up. I'll let you know if I start that course again.



Josette: Okay, we have some answers coming in. We have, "As takeaways, positive self talk. Next time I think I won't have to volunteer for help." Sure. "Welcoming the unknown. Start where you are." "I'm down to learn the welcoming self love." "Compassionate self responsibility." "It's okay to act hurt. It's okay to be stuck in a place, just got to go deeper." "Embracing your feelings and acknowledging them." "I need to research what to do around bears." Yes. That's so good. "It's okay ...

Sandra: Be prepared.

Josette: Yeah. "It's okay to not do everything perfectly." "Pace and presence." "Listen it "it". Don't be afraid to explore it further." "Sandra, what are your pronouns?"

Sandra: She/her. I am non-binary and I use she/hers.

Josette: "It's okay to feel all the feels. Breathe into the pain." "Acknowledging hurt, even if you can't describe the feeling emotionally." "Listen, be flexible and go where you need, not some preconceived destination."

Sandra: I don't know the journey method, but I can look it up. That was a question in the chat box, for the transcription. Why does Sandra randomly talk about the journey method?

Yes, yes. This is the acknowledgement that systemic oppression has denied you actively. You are giving it to yourself. That is what I'm showing you how to do. It comes from a very simple place of just sitting with what you're feeling in your body and listening. Taking that pause to listen, people find it hard to do. What you can do is sometimes it doesn't take very long, sometimes it really is just taking a couple of breaths. It will happen and you just notice. If it's a small thing, if there's not a lot of history behind it, that can be enough. Sometimes you need more time. Bathroom breaks, if you're at work and you don't feel comfortable, you may be having a meeting and something happened, bathroom breaks are great. That's what I always promote.

Take that time, even if it's only a minute to breathe into it. Then you can choose to dig deeper later. You can tell yourself that. Thank you everybody for showing up and spending half of your day with me. Let it percolate. Let it settle and sink in, think about it. We will get started tomorrow. We will start back again on this third practice and dig a little deeper. Thank you everybody for showing up. Thank you Mary for being so brave and vulnerable. We will be here tomorrow at noon, Eastern again. I'm going to show you the next one. Next session is noon tomorrow Eastern, 9:00 AM Pacific. All right, bye folks.

Josette: Bye everyone. Take care care. Have a good rest of your day.