

compassionate activism

Sandra: Hey folks. This is day 2, session number 2 for the online training of compassionate activism program. We are going to moving on to the fourth practice. The fourth practice being compassionate truth-telling and consciousness-raising inquiry.

Most folks, when they come into this program, this is the one one they want to jump to. They want to talk about how are they going to be able to have this conversation to make the other person agree with them, to make the other person stop what they're doing that's harmful, that's hurting them. It can be frustrating for people to have to wait until the fourth practice. Like I said, the first two practices are going to be good for where you are which is then the toxic swirl to moving into present current reality by the third practice and now we're going to start building. We're going to start creating from here. This is like a bell curve. Right?

I want to start out by, as always, choosing situations. This time I want you to choose something that is only lightly emotionally-charged for you. Right? Instead of doing the three to five. I kind of want you to do one to three. Something that's still charged for you so not zero but maybe a two. Two is probably ideal. The reason why I say this is because to engage in the fourth practice effectively, to engage in the conversation with somebody else without it being you dragging yourself through it, you making yourself have this conversation when you really don't want to which is all taking a toll on you. Right?

In order for you to be in a place where you want to have this conversation or, at least, it's neutral for you. Right? It's not taking a toll on you. Right? For you to at least be in that neutral or positive state or attitude to this conversation, it's important to have done the first three. If you find yourself still emotionally charged around the situation to the point it's going to be harmful, it's going to be stressful for you to have that conversation, that's an indication that there's some work that you need to do more with yourself. Right? Taking that time, paying attention, doing those affirmations that we've been practicing. That's what the red flag is for.

When you get stuck and you don't want to move forward to have the conversation, pay attention. Your feelings tell you where you are and what you need so if you feel stuck, don't try to force yourself to move forward. Right? Anytime you hear the word, make yourself, force yourself, those are flag words for trying to be controlling of yourself so let's not do that. You feel stuck? Then take that as a flag that there's some toxicity

happening to notice that, being stuck is one of the red flags for toxicity, to dig deep. Right? Red flag for going deep with mindfulness. From there you get in touch with your pain and then take care of it. Right? Then that's where you want to come to having this conversation.

Now, depending on what it is, you don't necessarily have to do all that work if it's something that's lightly-charged. Right? Some folks have been sharing that they've been able, just with some simple affirmations, they're already moving forward. Right? Great. Fabulous.

For me it can be a simple three seconds. I think about it. Do I want to or do I feel like I'm in a place to have this conversation or not? I listen to myself. If I feel like I'm not in a place ... It's not even necessary that I feel hurt around it, it's that I have low energy. I'm an introvert actually. People don't often realize I'm an introvert because I'm very social and I talk a lot. It's good if you're a trainer who likes to talk. I'm actually an introvert. I don't always have the energy and capacity as well as I have some illnesses that effect my energy levels. I listen to myself. If I feel like I have the emotional and energy capacity then I do it. Stuff's happening all the time. For some depression is pervasive. There's going to be other opportunities and so you have to, I think it's important to, pick and choose when you engage with other folks. Because, like I said, you have responsibility to take care of yourself. Right?

It's like when you're on the airplane and the flight attendants tell you, "Put your own mask on first. Then put your child's mask on." Right? You've got to put your own mask on first so you survive. Not just survive but thrive is what I'm trying to show y'all. You know you've got to take care of yourself first. Choose the situation that is two on the level.

I'm going to talk a little bit intellectually about this and I want you to just reflect. Think about this, about the situation at hand and remember that until you've taken care of why it's emotionally charged, it's hard to hold space for the other person and for their reality to be real. Like I said, there's no right or wrong to it, it's just a dynamic that happens. It's a very common dynamic. There's going to be some tension perhaps around what I'm saying and you believe this is possible. I'm just asking you to be willing to consider it until you get to the point where we do some of the exercises if you're feeling some resistance around what I'm saying.

Like I said before, this is not about you taking everything I say at face value and just having all this believe and trust in me. I'm showing you something that I want you to experiment with and see if it resonates with you and knowing that it something you're not going to be very good at in the beginning. That's all. You know, try, have questions, ask. Need some additional support, ask. That's why I provide email, coaching support,

individual as well as here. That's all I'm asking is for you to play around with that. Right?

What this conversation is about ... Often times when you go into these conversations, it's about making them wrong. It's about hurting them like they hurt us. Right? Yeah. That conversation is not going to go very well probably with the other person if you're out just to hurt them, make them wrong. I'm just saying. I understand why you feel like that because you're in a lot of pain. You want them to stop. When you get to a place where you take care of the pain at that point you've already handled your own pain. YOU've taken care, you acknowledge yourself. You're well grounded in your internal reality. At this point it's really about sharing your internal reality. It's not about changing their minds. Right?

Everything you do with other people is actually an invitation. You can't force them to change their minds. You can't force them to agree with you. You can invite them. You can invite them to consider it. It's really about you wanting to share your truth because that's what you feel called to do. Sometimes you won't feel called to share your truth with the other person. Sometimes it's not actually appropriate. It might not be safe. Right? It may not be somebody who you want to risk that conversation with because maybe they've been abusive or toxic, controlling in the past. Maybe it's been so many years, you don't feel like it's worthwhile. Right? You don't always have to have this conversation with them.

I want you to have the tools to know how to engage in this conversation to share your truth should you choose to do so. Like I said, your responsibility is to yourself first and foremost. Right? It's nice when you want to have a conversation with somebody else because then you can share your learning from them. You can [inaudible 00:09:00] this for them. Right? You're not responsible for other people's well being, other people's understanding. Right? You can choose to help out but you're not responsible. You're responsible for yourself. Imagine if everybody had that attitude that everybody was going to take care of their own house. Imagine what a world that would be like. Right?

It's not about changing their minds when you have this conversation. It's actually about wanting to understand what's going on for them. What is their truth? As much as you want them to understand your truth, they want you to understand their truth, their internal reality. Right? We're going to see how long my voice lasts. I don't know if it's going to make it to the third session actually. We're going to try. It's providing the opportunity for you to understand what's going on for them because they are where they are. We talked about resistance to reality. Their internal reality is also set. We may not like it. We may not prefer it. We may want them to think differently so they behave differently. True. That can be just a preference versus

coercive expectation. Right? With coercive expectations when we come at them making them wrong, wanting to punish them, wanting to harm them. That's not exactly the world we're trying to create. Right?

Instead if we invite them to share their truth with us then we can actually engage in a conversation of inquiry with them to help them unpack. Just like we have been learning how to unpack for ourselves what's underneath, they also for them it's the tip of the iceberg. They don't really know oftentimes because they're just parroting what they've been taught, what they've seen. [inaudible 00:11:10] these are all the messages they've been hearing growing up. They're just repeating it.

The point is not to push them to be different. The point is just to be with where they are. Just how you're learning how to be where you are now. Right? This is the hard part. There's no right or wrong to where they are and there's no right or wrong to where you are. It just is. Right? If we can just be like, you are where you are. Let me better understand where that is. That's a very different conversation when it's like I can't believe that you think that way like you really shouldn't like you need to not do that. Right? You can ask them to not do something. Right? I'm not saying you can't.

There's a difference between a preference and a coercive expectation. Right. That's what I'm going to try to get you to shift around. That really comes from a place of having taken care of your pain. If you have a lot of pain, what you want from the other person is going to feel a lot more like a coercive expectation because you're in pain. That makes sense. Someone's hurting you. Stop. Right? Unless there's actual physical violence happening in that current movement or there's a danger of eminent physical danger then there is some space to have this conversation. There's some space to to have the conversation with yourself particularly. Right? Now if there's actually physical danger that's a different situation where you do need to do what you need to do to get that physical violence to be stopped. Right? If it's more emotional violence there is some space and time for you to take care of yourself. Right?

That's why often times it's about making them wrong. It's about forcing them to change their minds. It's about making them stop. That's how we enter these conversations. When you come at somebody like that, regardless of what it may be, they may intellectually agree with your point but when somebody comes at them ... When somebody comes at you, think about it. When somebody comes at you denying your humanity, your experiences, they don't care where you're coming from. They don't care why you think the way you do. They just want you to think differently. They want you to stop what you're doing. What does that sound like? It's sounds like someone oppressive tries to do for folks, they try to police you

and negate you. Right? What they do to marginalize folks, women, people of color, trans folks, non-binary folks, disabled folks, fat folks.

This dynamic is what's problematic. It shows up with different people but it's the dynamic of dehumanizing folks, not allowing them to be who they are. Which doesn't mean we let them off the hook for their actions. They're actions they're still responsible for. There's an impact that their actions have. Right? If we want to help people understand that we've got to help them look at what's going on in their internal reality. Right? It's an indirect method. The same thing that you've been doing with yourself. It's the same thing with other folks.

I have a lot more to talk about on that but I want people to get really present, get really in touch with how they've been being in this conversation or the conversations in the past, conversations they want to have with this person in this situation. Right? What is your intention? I want folks to write this down for themselves and then put it in the chat box obviously.

What is your intention in this conversation? With this intention, if you were to take it and spread it, what type of world are you creating? Right? I don't know what your intention is. It could be anything. I don't know what it is. Maybe you're already feeling very compassionate toward them. I don't know. Normally, think about it, your normal reaction to it. What is your intention? What are you trying to have them do? What is your energy around it? If that energy was spread, what kind of world is that creating? What would be different if your intention was to be compassionate toward yourself and focus on what you need from yourself.

When I say compassionate truth telling, it's not about being compassionate toward the other person actually. It's about being compassionate toward yourself. You're sharing your truth. You're sharing your internal reality. You're sharing your perspective because you feel called to do so to relieve your pain and suffering. Right? That's why if you don't feel called to do so then you don't feel called to do so. So don't do it if you don't want to do it. If you feel called to do so go ahead and do it. Right? This is really about yourself not about the other person. If that was your intention is to have a conversation that's really about taking care of yourself, giving yourself what you need. What would be different? What kind of world does that create? Right? I'm going to give people a minute just to think about it and write it down and when you're ready to share you can also put it in a chat box.

I know there's four questions. If you want to share what's the distinction between your typical intention and world you create versus a compassionate which is self compassion remember focusing yourself.

What's the difference between the two. Sam there's a question I want you to make sure to flag later so you see it for [inaudible 00:17:48].

You want to start reading Sam? You need the exercise too. Wait let me keep it up. I'll keep the questions up for now. Intention, a more addressed and intelligent world where everyone can focus and have the privilege to grow themselves to reach their highest potential.

One thing that would be different is that I would think about self-care before trying to be the one who's right. I think that it's hard to do but I'd like to get better at letting go of that need to be right.

Folks are talking about where they're struggling in their situations. One is seeing the distinction between focusing on myself and on the situation. Where my focus is, where I get stuck. Okay. Whoever is struggling with this exercise, the focus of making this distinction, if you want to elaborate on that question.

Speaker 2: Hi. It's [inaudible 00:19:10]

Sandra: Hey.

Speaker 2: Hi. Hold on. I have a fan on. It might be causing noise so I'll turn it off. The reason why I'm struggling is I'm thinking about my relationship with my sister but more than that it's my sister's relationship with our family and how there's a lot of struggle there. It's hard. I know you're always telling us don't think about changing men, think about ourselves. I think that's really where the crux of my struggle is because I feel like if she was going through this course ... I wish she could because there's so much that could be remedied or at least addressed if she were to sit and think about this.

I'm having a hard time distancing myself from that concern because she is my sister and also my friend and also somebody that I love so deeply and her relationship with my family impacts my own well being too because the stressors that my mom goes through because of it or X, Y, or Z that are going on in our family right now. It all impacts me. It's because I want everybody to just be the better potential that we all could be and have the better relationships that we all be so we can all be better. I'm having a hard time making that like shifting and seeing how just thinking about ...

Then I think about, for example, just like this week I was trying to talk to her about something. I'm the youngest so like my family is always taking care of me and I'm always the one that made the mistakes and so that's a lot of like the attitude and how I'm talked to from my family. Actually my sister, who is five years older than me, has taken it to help me fix my messes. The way that I was addressing my needs this week in my relationship with here was that I just stopped calling her as much because

I knew that if I tried to talk to her about X, Y, or Z, especially after work, she was just going to like chastise me or give me attitude that wasn't supportive or helping me so I just called her a lot less or not at all. That was my way of like thinking okay what do I need in this moment? There's more. That's what I need in this moment but that doesn't completely satisfy me as to what I really want in terms of how to make this relationship function better.

Sandra: Right.

Speaker 2: That's the whole topic.

Sandra: Right. I'm going to throw out a guess of mine. You tell me how right or not it is. What I'm hearing is the pain. The pain of having a sister who's struggling and wanting to be there for her and struggling to know how to do that. Potentially? Something like that?

Speaker 2: It's partially that but the problem is that I believe she's struggling but she doesn't even see it or acknowledge it. She's just like coasting.

Sandra: Why is that hurtful to you?

Speaker 2: It frustrates me because I want my sister to live a good full life and a healthy life and I feel like the way she's living her life ...

Sandra: What does that mean about you?

Speaker 2: The way that I can connect that is that I want my sister ... I'm this person who's like working really actively to do this kind of work and one part that's frustrating is that my family is not there with it. It's hard to watch because I wish they could be because then they could suffer so much less than what they are. If they would think about how X, Y, or Z is impacting them. If they would realize that taking care of ourselves is important. Right?

Me, for example, choosing to live up here as opposed to where my family is and all these things has sometimes been viewed by my family as me being selfish. I feel like all of my work has been unlearning what my family taught me about being humble and good catholic and all this and that. That I'm supposed to care about other people and not worry about ourselves to the detriment of ourselves.

Sandra: Do you feel like you're being selfish, that you're failing your family?

Speaker 2: I did for a long time. I think that my ... I don't feel that way anymore but I think that my family partially still sees that. I don't. I'm learning to allow myself to take care of myself. I've done so much work on this and I'm really working on it to continue to love myself. I'm doing so much better

than I have ever in my 30 years of life to be honest. There are so many changes that have happened in my life even in the last seven months that prove that I've made so many changes but some of it is, again, difficult for my family to process. Being the Latina catholic family that they are, it doesn't make sense with their worldviews and it is frustrating because it's like not only do I think that I'm living a good life but I wish they could see it so that they could live a good life too.

Sandra: Do you want to do some coaching right now?

Speaker 2: Yes. I really do. Thanks.

Sandra: Let's. Because it's very hard to move into this phase before you've done the first three. That's why I said take a lightly charged thing but you did not pick a lightly charged thing.

Speaker 2: I know. It's just that it's like happening right now. A lot is happening and it's hard for me to get out of that space.

Sandra: It's where you're stuck. It's where you're at. I get that. Let's do it then.

Speaker 2: Thank you.

Sandra: Just FYI, she's part of the other program as well. She knows what to expect. I want you to take a couple of deep breathes. breathe in. breathe out. Thinking about the situation, your sister and your family, where do you feel the sensation strongest in your body?

Speaker 2: My neck.

Sandra: Tell me more about the sensations are like for you and keep your hand there. Keep your hand on it.

Speaker 2: I just feel like tight and like I'm choking on all of these things on my feelings.

Sandra: How big is the sensation?

Speaker 2: Like literally like the grip like this like a big metal cuff on my neck.

Sandra: A big metal cuff on your neck. How tight is it.

Speaker 2: I can't really ... It feels like this tight metal cuff around my neck that causing tears in my eyes because it's squeezing so tight and also because I have feelings and I'm crying but yes.

Sandra: From a scale of one to ten, how strong is it? Ten being most severe.

Speaker 2: Right now it's like a constant six.

Sandra: Is there anything else? Is it moving? Is it actively tightening or just kind of always tight?

Speaker 2: When I think about the situation I know that it's ... It's like it's always there but when I think about it and acknowledge it, it's just like oh there it is and I just like feel it. You know it's a little tighter right now because I'm thinking about it.

Sandra: Is it doing anything else or is there anything else about the way it feels or looks that you want to share?

Speaker 2: No not right now.

Sandra: I want you to use both hands actually because it's a vice around your entire neck. Is it? Yeah so try to hold as much as you can in your hands and I want you to just kind of breathe with it. breathe in. Slowly breathe out. Just breathe. Just notice how it feels not try and change it. Just center with it. What do you notice now?

Speaker 2: I just feel stuck and I feel paralyzed right here. It's stopping everything.

Sandra: How are you relating to it?

Speaker 2: Can you ask in a different way?

Sandra: Right. This vice it's not fun. It's like I don't want this to be here. How can this be here? Is it like resentful that it's here? What?

Speaker 2: I feel like normally very frustrated and powerless that it's there and I can't move. It's like I know that I could move more comfortably if it wasn't there.

Sandra: I want to try saying, I feel frustrated and that's okay.

Speaker 2: I feel frustrated and that's okay.

Sandra: breathe in. I feel frustrated.

Speaker 2: I feel frustrated.

Sandra: breathe out and that's okay. breathe in. I feel frustrated.

Speaker 2: I feel frustrated.

Sandra: breathe out and that's okay.

Speaker 2: And that's okay.

Sandra: breathe in.

Speaker 2: I feel frustrated and that's okay.

Sandra: breathe in.

Speaker 2: I feel frustrated and that's okay.

Sandra: One more time.

Speaker 2: I feel frustrated and that's okay.

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

Speaker 2: It's like a release.

Sandra: What else?

Speaker 2: I almost feel like I've constantly felt like disempowered by that frustration and now it's like, okay, it's there. That's ... Let's see what we can do with it.

Sandra: Okay. What sensation are you feeling strongest in your body now? Is it the same or is it different?

Speaker 2: It's like loosened. Not that it's loosened up. It's like it's there but because I'm not resisting it, it feels looser.

Sandra: I want you to go visualize going inside of it. Can you do that?

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Sandra: Okay. From the inside, I want you to take a look around. What is it like? What are you noticing?

Speaker 2: I can see just like a hallway with like a really tall ceiling.

Sandra: What else?

Speaker 2: Really long.

Sandra: You want to try walking down it?

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Sandra: Are you noticing like the walls, painted, a doors?

Speaker 2: Yeah there's no doors. It's just really tall walls and I'm picturing images but I can't see them.

Sandra: If they come up, they come up. If not, let them go.

Speaker 2: I can see like a light on the ceiling but it's so far away. I'm tiny in the hallway.

Sandra: Do you want to make yourself bigger in the hallway?

Speaker 2: Yeah. I could maybe get out if I see the light if I could reach the light.

Sandra: Well grow. Envision yourself getting taller, bigger. What are you noticing?

Speaker 2: I get taller I can see that it's not closed, the ceiling, it's open.

Sandra: Oh.

Speaker 2: I could get out.

Sandra: Okay. Do you want to get taller and get out or do you want to stay and explore?

Speaker 2: I want to explore.

Sandra: Okay. Let's walk around. Tell me more about what's inside. Is it empty? Is it dark other than that light from the top? What's it like?

Speaker 2: It's empty and there's light. They're not blank walls. It's full of pictures. I can see them but they're blurry so I can't really tell what's happening.

Sandra: Okay. Why don't you just shrink down to whatever size so that you can just stand in front of some of the pictures and let it be blurred if it's blurry. Just kind of stand in front of one and then what do you notice?

Speaker 2: My sister as a little girl feeling frustrated with my parents. I wasn't there. I just know the stories about all the things that made her cranky when she was a little girl. [crosstalk 00:34:49]

Sandra: What do you notice coming up for you as you look at this picture of your sister being cranky and frustrated with your parents?

Speaker 2: I'm sad.

Sandra: Yeah. Tell me more about that.

Speaker 2: She's like this ... She's throwing tantrums and crying and sad. My parents are just there looking at her not doing anything.

Sandra: What's coming up for you about you?

Speaker 2: I just want to hug her and tell my parents what she needs. I just want to be able to fix it, make her feel better.

Sandra: You're watching the picture.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Sandra: What else is coming up for you?

Speaker 2: I'm just thinking, "If only I had been there." I'm younger. I wasn't even a thought.

Sandra: You weren't born yet.

Speaker 2: Not anywhere close.

Sandra: Where do you feel that wish that you had been there?

Speaker 2: My heart.

Sandra: How strong is that feeling?

Speaker 2: Very strong.

Sandra: Scale of one to ten?

Speaker 2: Nine.

Sandra: Do you want to shift to there?

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Sandra: Tell me more about that feeling in your heart.

Speaker 2: I just like want to hold everybody in there. I put my mom and my dad and my sister, everyone in there and just be like okay. Everything's okay.

Sandra: What's behind that?

Speaker 2: I think ... I feel like I'm remembering pain I've had and joy that I've had. I know how good it can feel to feel good again. I want other people to feel that. I want my family to feel that. I feel like ... I think about that that is the role I've often played in my family and in life. [inaudible 00:38:34]

Sandra: As you struggle to do that now, where does that come up in your body?

Speaker 2: I just feel like my arms and legs are paralyzed when I can't do that.

Sandra: Tell me more about that.

Speaker 2: I literally feel like I'm out like this and I can't move. Everything else is like moving and functioning but my hands and my feet are like stuck somewhere and I can't. It's like why am I like this if I can't do anything with it.

Sandra: Tell me more what it feels like. Does it feel like something's is tying you down? It just feels like you're stuck? How is this manifesting for you?

Speaker 2: It's almost like my hands and feet are in some kind of contraption that doesn't let me move.

Sandra: What's that contraption look like?

Speaker 2: You know those things that they have sometimes at the fair where you turn? Like a big round metal thing and you get in it and then you move, twirl all over the place but can't actually move your arms and legs is kind of what I mean. It's like my feet are in this thing and I can't move and I can't control the movements or get out of it.

Sandra: You feel powerless. How would name this feeling? How would you name this sensation?

Speaker 2: It's like frustratingly powerless. Right? It's like I'm aware that I know I can do some things but I can move out of these things.

Sandra: Okay. I want you to hold your arms and your legs. I know. It's a lot of things to hold. [crosstalk 00:40:45]

Speaker 2: My arms.

Sandra: Okay. We'll use one arm to hold the other arm maybe.

Speaker 2: Okay.

Sandra: Around the wrist. You're still holding it right?

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Sandra: Let's just say, "I feel powerless and that's happening."

Speaker 2: I feel powerless and that's happening.

Sandra: Breathe in. I feel powerless.

Speaker 2: I feel powerless.

Sandra: Breathe out. And that's happening.

Speaker 2: And that's happening.

Sandra: Breathe in. I feel powerless.

Speaker 2: I feel powerless.

Sandra: Breathe out. And that's happening.

Speaker 2: And that's happening.

Sandra: Breathe in.

Speaker 2: I feel powerless. And that's happening.

Sandra: Breathe in. I feel powerless.

Speaker 2: I feel powerless and that's happening.

Sandra: One more time.

Speaker 2: I feel powerless and that's happening.

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

Speaker 2: It's like tired but kind of like okay. What are you going to do?

Sandra: I want you to also say ... How are you feeling toward this sense of powerless now? Do you feel like it's there? What are you noticing about being there for you?

Speaker 2: It's almost like I'm ... I'm like, all right, that's happening. I'm just going to wait till it passes.

Sandra: Yeah. What's coming up for me right now, tell me if this works, I feel powerless and that's important.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Sandra: Try that out for you then. I feel powerless.

Speaker 2: I feel powerless.

Sandra: Breathe out. And that's important.

Speaker 2: And that's important.

Sandra: Breathe in.

Speaker 2: I feel powerless and that's important.

Sandra: Breathe in.

Speaker 2: I feel powerless and that's important.

Sandra: Breathe in.

Speaker 2: I feel powerless and that's important.

Sandra: Breathe in.

Speaker 2: I feel powerless and that's important.

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

Speaker 2: I think that changing that language made me feel and realize that I'm important and the experience I'm having is valid and I should pay attention to it, that frustration and that powerlessness.

Sandra: Do you want to?

Speaker 2: Yes.

Sandra: Okay. I want you to say, I see your frustration and I care.

Speaker 2: I see your frustration and I care.

Sandra: Breathe in.

Speaker 2: I see your frustration and I care.

Sandra: Breathe in.

Speaker 2: I see your frustration and I care.

Sandra: Breathe in.

Speaker 2: I see your frustration and I care.

Sandra: Now I want you to ask the feeling, what is it that you need? What can I do for you?

Speaker 2: I think it wants me to acknowledge it to my family too. Which I guess you can see from the reactions on my face that's not an easy thing to do.

Sandra: Right. Can you acknowledge that you have not done that and you take responsibility for not having done, having not shared your truth which is the pain and frustration.

Speaker 2: Yeah. No. I know I haven't.

Sandra: That happens. What was the impact on you?

Speaker 2: To acknowledge it?

Sandra: To not having acknowledged it with your family.

Speaker 2: That I continue to ... That I'm the ... I continue to diminish myself in front of them by not acknowledging my needs to them about this.

Sandra: I want you to speak to the feeling inside of you and take responsibility for it and for having had that impact or whatever language that feels good to you.

What are you noticing now?

Speaker 2: Like I'm building a truce with it. It's like, all right, you'll do better next time.

Sandra: How do you feel now about sharing with your family?

Speaker 2: I think I'm still scared but I feel better considering that I should talk to them, that I want to talk to them.

Sandra: That's a choice. It's a choice.

Speaker 2: Yeah but that I want to. I want ... I feel better knowing, understanding and acknowledging that I want but I can't expect my family to give me this respect as an individual if I'm not giving that respect to myself as an individual in front of them. I need to model it for them by honoring and accepting the feelings that I have, the frustrations that I have to them.

Sandra: I want you to close your eyes again. Put your hand where you feel that. Where you were just talking to, where was that? Your chest right? Say "I see you."

Speaker 2: I see you.

Sandra: I see your pain.

Speaker 2: I see your pain.

Sandra: And I care.

Speaker 2: And I care.

Sandra: And I'm scared to share this with my family.

Speaker 2: I'm scared to share this with my family.

Sandra: And you are important.

Speaker 2: And you are important.

Sandra: And I choose to share this with my family.

Speaker 2: And I choose to share this with my family.

Sandra: What do you notice now?

Speaker 2: Even just like holding myself like this it's like, hey, I'm there. I exist.

Sandra: Right. Okay.

Speaker 2: It's good.

Sandra: All right excellent.

Speaker 2: Thank you.

Sandra: Thank you. Awesome. Actually I want to continue. Do you mind? I know we normally stop there but for the sake of the fourth practice, I want to do the fourth practice together. I want you to envision having this conversation with them. Right? We're just going to speculate. That's all it is, some speculations.

You know the first part, compassion truth telling. You know what you want to share. Right? Can you hold the space of it to speculate about where they may be coming from?

Speaker 2: Yeah. I think about just my sister and my mom and they're both coming from their own spaces of hurt from their own and fears. I believe that my sister is the way she is because she's been hurt by her family and she's afraid and so she's focusing on what's worked.

Sandra: When you look at that pain in her and that struggle that she's been having. What do you notice coming up for you?

Speaker 2: Frustration and sadness for her. I want her to love herself better. I think a lot would change too if she could. Again, that's part of probably the result of things that have happened to her.

Sandra: What can you do to love her better?

Speaker 2: What can I do to ... I'm sorry?

Sandra: What can you do to love her better?

Speaker 2: I guess I need to ... Currently I have been very frustrated with her and so I think if I allow myself to also love and accept that she's coming from

frustration spaces then hopefully I can a little less frustrated with her about the things that she's done that I feel hurt me in the last few days.

Sandra: You feel pain and frustration from seeing her being in pain and frustration and she's feeling pain and frustration. What can you invite her to consider from your perspective to get that?

Speaker 2: Yeah. It's been really hard but I did have one moment in like the last few months where I was actually able to ... As a brief side note, she has this really bad habit when I call her where, instead of picking up and saying "hi" or "hello," she says "what." I'm like that's really hurtful. I had a moment where I was able to tell her in a non-attacking kind of way like listen when that happens it really hurts my feelings because it makes me feel like I'm just bothering you. I think I need to just expand that approach to these bigger things where I'm able to like explain to her and I hope talk to her about how different things make me feel as opposed to just like making it sound like "stop doing this or that because it's frustrating to everybody."

Sandra: That's the compassionate truth telling. That's you sharing what your internal reality is and inviting her to consider it. What can you do to inquire into her internal reality?

Speaker 2: That's my struggle because she's very much a "not touchy feely" kind of person. My approach would be like to check in with her and see how she's doing and what's going on and that feels like it can be a dead end with her a lot of times because ...

Sandra: It might be. It's an invitation always [inaudible 00:55:12] no counter offer that she can do.

Speaker 2: Yeah. Maybe ... Sorry go ahead.

Sandra: If you ask her and she says she doesn't want to talk ... You share your perspective, your truth. You ask her to share hers or how does hearing her ... How does her hearing your perspective feel for her? If she says no, what can you do then? What do you want to know?

Speaker 2: Why.

Sandra: So you can ask why? Why do you not want to talk about it? This is really important to me.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Sandra: I would really like for us to talk about it.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Sandra: Then she says no. What can you ... What do you want to know?

Speaker 2: Why does she really want to avoid engaging in these conversations?

Sandra: Then you can ask that. This is a conversation that's really important to me and I see that you say you don't want to engage in it. That's okay. You can not want to engage in it. I want to know why though. Can you tell me please? It's always an invitation right?

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Sandra: When you come at people with invitations and not coercive expectations it might be different. Just saying. [crosstalk 00:56:46]

Speaker 2: Yeah. No. That's great. The invitation part, I'm literally grabbing my notebook to write.

Sandra: Okay. I'm going to stop right now for this because I think you got some good ideas.

Speaker 2: Yeah. I did. Thank you so much Sandra.

Sandra: Okay. Excellent. Thank you.

Speaker 2: Thanks everyone.

Sandra: People learned a lot watching it too by the way. If you want to check out the chat box.

That was really great. That was really useful because she also knows that now I dissect it and talk about her like she ain't here. Don't mind that. What was tricky about this was Benita is very focused on the other person. She's a very caring person. It's very obvious, very caring, very generous, very loving. On of the things that often happens that we get out of that value, we get really focused on the other person. It's not always like a place of anger and like we want to lash out at that person. Sometimes it comes from a place that we wanted to help and we focus on that person a whole lot.

There's very limited power in that place. When you focus entirely on the other person because you don't have power over them. Right? That's why I kept listening and I kept trying to help her get back in touch with how she was feeling and the feeling was in relationship, obviously, to the other person but really focusing on her embodied experience. Right? Then when she started engaging in some toxic swirl ... I can't remember exact moments that came up but there are some moments of resistance. I remember one. When she said that the frustration ... She just wanted to skip over it or something like that. She wanted it to pass. That's what it

was. She was feeling frustrated and she was waiting for it to go away. Right? That's when I was like, oh, she's trying to make it go away. Okay, toxicity. That's why I said, I feel frustration and that matters. That's important because that was a way of countering that toxic message, the toxicity of resistance.

I want you to pay attention. I was really listening to where she was and listening for toxicity. I wasn't trying to change where she was. A couple of your comments in the chat box like ... It's not about forcing a shift. If you are just with it and you listen hard, you listen real well and then you'll notice a shift and you just move with it. Started on the neck with frustration. Then it kind of shifted to pain to the heart then it felt like more stuck and frozen in her arms. That happened. It was actually frustration the entire time but it just manifested in different ways. That happens too. Right?

You've got to understand, there's no right or wrong. You just stick with it. You just go with it. The only thing is you've got to pay attention. Some of the things that we do ... We can do this out of love too. We can do this out of care. This something that happens with me. As a manager, I really want my staff, Sam can attest to this, I really want my staff to feel good at work. When somebody comes to me stressed, sometimes not always, but sometimes I respond to them in a way where I'm resisting. I'm resisting their experience of stress. I skip over the fact that they're feeling stressed and go straight to, "Well that's okay it's not that big of a deal." That's minimizing. I skip over and get to solution like it was real easy without really exploring it with them about why it was hard.

Even when it's not necessarily coming from a mal-intentioned place. I'm trying to make them well. It feels like that. I come at them ... I want to be a good manager so I resist their experience. I don't want them to be there. If they're being there, I'm doing a bad job. If anything still I'm making it about me. I'm not fulfilling my role as a manager, as a good supervisor, my self-concept as a good manager. That self-concept is what's tripping me up. I've got to get in touch with the pain of that and take care of it so I can just let them be. Right? How we relate to other people, same thing, we make them wrong as a person. We judge, shame, police, punish, dismiss. We try to make them wrong for their experience. We try to invalidate their internal experience because we don't like it. We don't want them to be there either because they're hurting us, they're hurting themselves, a combination of both. We don't want this to be true for the other person, whatever is happening with them.

We deny, minimize, should them, try to force them to agree with us which is really just pushing out their internal experience and trying to push in our own. Right? None of that is going to work. None of that worked when we

tried it on us. It's toxic when we tried it on us. It's toxic when people do it to us. It's toxic when we do it to other people. Right? You got to really get present to that.

This is one of the ways. I'll make this big so y'all can see it more. Hold on. There we go. What is that? Oh. Sorry. It's doing this thing. Okay here we go.

I want you to look at this list and on the left hand side we've got toxic swirl and make believe world. On the right side we've got mindfulness. We've got really in touch with their internal reality. I want you to go through this list and think about it. On the left hand side what do you do? Then note on the right hand side what else you could do.

One of the common things we do is that they should know better. It never should have happened. Well it did happen folks. You can think they should have done something different all you want but that's make believe because that's not true. What about just acknowledging that it happened? What happened happened right? Not that we like it. Not that we prefer it. Not that we want it to happen again but yo it happened. Right?

Other toxic swirl things, we assume that we know what their internal reality is. We assume we know why they did what they did. We assume we know where they're coming from. It's possible what you assume is right but that's still speculation. What happens when you get curious? We ask. We check in. We're like, "Hey, when you said that thing, I thought maybe it was because of this reason but I want to see is that true."

You saw what I was doing in the coaching. I would sense something and I would say sounds like maybe this is important. How does this land for you? Does this resonate for you? Does it work for you? I'm not attached to it. I'm not insistent. I don't have a coercive expectation that my speculation is true. I throw it out there to see if it works with them. They say yes, no, counteroffer. That's how we know it's an invitation. Coercion demands a yes and we'll punch you, will hurt you, will make you wrong as a human being if you don't agree, if you don't say yes. An invitation is a true invitation if they can respond with a yes, no, counteroffer and you're still go with that. Right? If you're not good with that then there's something going on with you you've got to take care of so get present to it. Pay attention to it. Get in touch with it. Right?

Obviously resisting their internal reality, making them wrong, we've been talking about this, by telling them they shouldn't be experiencing what they're experiencing. We don't like it when people do it to us. [inaudible 01:05:41] oppression to us too so why are we trying to do that to other people. Instead we can ask them a question. Like I said obviously she wants Benita wants her sister to talk about, to have this conversation with

her. When she says no or if she says no she can say ... I asked her, well what do you want to know now?

It's yes to her response. Her sister's response was no I don't want to talk about it. It's like okay. Yes my sister does not want to talk about and I want to know why she doesn't want to talk about it. Okay. Let me ask. Why don't you want to talk about it? Her sister says no I don't want to say why I don't want to talk about it. Yes you don't want to talk about why you don't want to talk about it and I want to know why you don't want to talk about why you don't want to talk about it. Can you tell me? It's important to me. You can then share why it's important to me. It's important to me because X, Y, Z reasons. This is what I want to have with you. I want us to be closer. I want you to be happy. It hurts me. I want to support you living the best life that you can have. I know you can do it. You deserve it. You can have that conversation. It's not about trying to change her. It's about you just sharing what's real for you and then inviting her to share what's real for her. Right?

As you're listening, like how I was listening in my coaching, also listen for her pain. She kept wanting to obviously focus on her sister. It's complicated because it's all very interrelated for her. I kept listening for her own pain, her own frustration, where that was coming from. Right? Because there is something that she can't be with. That's something that's in her power to control by taking care of that pain. That will allow her to be with her sister and have what her sister is and not make her sister wrong for it.

This is kind of a quick summery of what I've been talking about about sharing your truth. We only have 15 minutes so I just want to reemphasize that this is really about you. When you share your truth, compassionate truth telling is really about you. Right? It's really about you and asking and consider that your experience is what it is. They can acknowledge it. They have the right to say no and they may just say yes. Right? You come at them differently they may respond differently. Maybe not. I can't promise you that but you have a better chance of it now. I've expressed anger. I've expressed frustration. I've been very fierce and loud in the way that I've shared my truth with people before and I do not make them wrong for it. I say it in service of them freeing themselves from their pain. Right?

I've told somebody who I was in a relationship with that they were a selfish bastard. Right? I told them they were selfish bastard because ... I said that so they could do better in their next relationship so that they could be the loving spirit that they are. They knew that. They knew that so they could really hear it because I wasn't making them wrong as a human being. I said it with love. That person could really hear it and started crying.

You don't have to ... When I say you say things with compassion, it's compassion for yourself. Whatever you need. It doesn't have to come out

all sweet and gentle and quite. That's not necessary at all. Often times it will come out like that just because that's the place you're in. If that's where you're in, that's where you're in, go for it. If that's not where you in, then say however is real for you but make it about you. Use I-statements. Talk about use I-statements. That's a good little rule. Use I-statements. Keeps it grounded in your internal reality. Invite them to consider this is your reality because you're saying it is.

If they keep denying that your reality is not what you're saying, you can ask questions. Why are you trying to act like you know my reality better than you? Than I do. You know what I'm saying. It got confusing there. You can have that conversation. It comes down to asking really. I use the word ask because it's really not a demand. Folks want to demand people agree with them. Folks want to have a coerced demand to stop what they're doing. When you demand, when you try to coerce people it doesn't work. I keep repeating this over and over and over again because we all need to keep her it over and over and over again.

Inquire, invite, inquire to into their reality so you can meet them. This usually can only happen after you feel good about where you are in your internal reality. You don't try to check in to somebody else's internal reality before you're good in your own. That charge, that pain, that thing is going to be pushing at their internal reality so it's going to be really hard to do so, to hold the space for somebody else when you have not held the space for yourself. You cannot give to other people what you have not given to yourself yet. If you have pain that calls for compassionate care from you and you try to skip that step and try to see the pain of somebody else so you're compassionate to them, that's not going to really work. Everyone's going to be pretty unhappy. That's probably what you've been trying to do. It hasn't really worked has it? Right?

Take that moment for yourself. Right? Like I say, you'll get faster at this but you need a little time in the beginning. This is really where you're going to use your anti-pressure analysis to inform you how you inquire when you share your perspective. Right? This is where you start to create the world that you want to live in. I also want to jump to this little ...

Half of this conversation is really about staying focused on the three realities, your reality, the other person and external reality. Some tips. Whoever caught more in a toxic swirl goes first. Right? You know this. If two people are fighting just like a typical verbal fight if they ain't in a relationship, the person who's not as worked up, they're in the space to listen more. If the person is more worked up, it's very hard for them to listen to the other person. When you are the one who's more worked up and you're stuck in the toxic swirl, take care of yourself. Give yourself what you need. Right?

Also, like I said, this is not really about coming at folks all peaceful, all like quiet gentle, calm. A lot of times it happens like that but it doesn't need to. It's about one, are you sticking to your internal reality and expressing it and then inquiring into their internal reality. People don't like to be made wrong as human beings. People don't like to be forced, coerced, denied their humanity. Right? It's actually a healthy thing when people resist that. Right? That is often times what people are resisting.

How many times, think about yourself, when you agreed at some level with what the other person was saying but you were so worked up because you felt they were trying to push it on you and make you. Even though you actually, technically agreed intellectually but you just resist anyway because no one's going to make me do anything. No one's going to make me say anything.

When you come at other people like that why would it be any different? It's all about recognizing people's humanities at the end of the day. We have a right for their experience to be, to exist. We may not like it. WE may not agree with it. We may see the harm it's causing. True but it exists. Right? When we say "Yes and" instead of "Yes but" that's when we can have a conversation. Right?

We have just a couple minutes left. I want to go over a little bit just FYI, not too much. I want folks to look at this slide and think what are the common ways that you engage in toxic swirl? What's the impact? I say this because there's no right or wrong to what we do. There's harm sometimes to what we do. I want folks to get present to impact. Right? What's the common ways that I engage in toxic swirl? What's the impact? What are other ways that I can do that's coming from a place of mindfulness, being in touch with present reality and what might the impact of that be on the other person?

Just take a look at this. I'll make it big. I want you to take a look at this and notice on the left hand side what is the stuff that you do commonly? What's the impact of that? How's that turn out in your conversations? On the right hand side it's like here's something else that you can do. What might the impact of that be at least for you? You can guess, speculate what it might be for the other person. Please put that in chat box.

Sorry I keep making the PowerPoint big and small. It's because I can't do anything when it's full screen. Can you see everything though? Scroll it up a bit. Right there you go. Now you can see everything. The question is, I want you to identify what you commonly do from the left side of the toxic swirl list and then think about the impact on you and the other person. If you were to do the thing on the right hand side for the same, I lined them up for you, if you were to do the mindfulness practice instead in that conversation what might the impact be?

In the chat box, what I want you to talk about is the difference in impact. What's the difference in impact when you approach somebody from the common ways of toxic swirl versus mindfulness. Mindfulness being just acknowledging that it is what it is and being with it. There's no right or wrong answer to this. Y'all need to experiment with it before you can start to freely get the difference so they're all speculations at this point. Try it out and then you come back and share later at a bi-monthly Q & A session what it was like for you.

Sam if you want to talk.

Sam: Someone shared that they feel like they get a lot more toxic swirl and they just take it. They don't have any agency.

Currently I make my case in a way that makes them wrong as a human for their opinion. The impact is that it shames them which causes them to rage or to shut down and they either end up extremely defensive or coerced. The impact on me is that I carry the guilt of that, of knowing that I didn't really make a sustainable impact. In the future I'll make sure to take the time to acknowledge their experience and support them to unpack their experiences. [crosstalk 01:19:46]

Sandra: The one above. If you scroll up you skipped her.

Sam: Oh. The one about getting curious? Getting curious as opposed to assuming their internal reality would allow them to be honored and valued and share their experience as they understand it.

Down below. Mindfulness allows for understanding between us rather than remaining closed off to each other.

I assume this is sarcasm. I do the left side with my friends mutually and it's great.

Coming from toxic swirl shuts others down. Coming from mindfulness creates space for more to happen.

I think I get in a toxic swirl when I am seeking support from a friend to think through a problem and they are not able to come up to my expectations. I find their internal reality is imposing on my thoughts. I resist and deny their internal realities.

Sandra: I want to pause there because this often happens. We go to somebody for support, we try to share our internal reality and say what's going on with us, our feelings, and the other person, because they want to quickly fix us or they want to make us feel better, give us solution, tell us it's not important. Then it becomes this push shove game. They're trying to help

and they care about you. It's so unskillful. Like I said, this is what we've been taught.

What you can do in that situation is just like ask. Ask, hold on, I need you to be with me right now. I don't need you to change it or make me feel better. I need to unpack this, explore this. Can you help me explore this with me? Right? Even with joy, I had my friend do this one time where she got happy about a certain thing related to a relationship with somebody I think is toxic. She thinks it's toxic too. She's still in this relationship. She was happy with this person and so I said a thing or two about kind of cautioning, warning, reminding. She was like no. Be with me in my joy. I was like, oh okay. I was with her in her joy.

Did that mean that later on when something else would happen, I'm going to be like it's kind of toxic? Did I stay quiet? I didn't stay quiet. I stayed with her where she was. When she was feeling joyful I acknowledged that because that's realized true too. When she was feeling hurt from the toxic ways of this partner, I was with her on that too. You can ask. People don't fulfill your expectations, they're not mind readers. Invite them. They can say yes, no, counteroffer.

Sam: You want me to read a couple more?

Sandra: Yeah, could you?

Sam: Doing things on the left seems to close down communications and make me feel guilty.

When I tell them my reality I never take into account to invite them to consider my experiences. When I don't invite them to the conversation it shuts them off. I have an easier time having conversations with people with shared experiences but when someone has a different experience there isn't any understanding. I don't invite them which does make it one sided.

Sandra: Right. What you can do in those situations, be like, hey I want to share something with you which you may not have experienced before and so I just need you to listen. Set up the listening. Set up how you want them to listen to you. If you know that this person ... You don't know. You speculate that this person may be coming in with some preconceived conceptions around it. Just kind of put that out there. Like hey, this might be difficult for you to hear and I want to have this conversation because it's important to me so can you just listen and hear my side of the story. Invite them how you want them to listen to you. Asking is one of the most powerful things you do in the world. If you want something, ask. Ask yourself. Ask the other person. They're not mind readers.

Sam: We've had a couple of comments just emphasizing the openness that comes from the right hand side. Earlier that was not a sarcastic comment. They just got the sides mixed up. That's my mistake.

Sandra: Okay. Right. Modeling some wording for invitation and so right. That's all it is. It's like ... It's actually a sharing of your needs. I would like you to do X. Can you hear me out? Do you want to hear me out? That's all. Ask for what you want. You've got to make it an invitation, a true invitation, otherwise it's a coercive expectation. You just demand them to listen to you without having checked in if that's something they want to do. You're imposing that on them. You might not do it intentionally. Right?

If you notice them resisting, they're not listening the way that you would like them, like they keep interrupting you or they keep trying to project their experience onto you. You can be like hold on. It's important to me that you don't interrupt me because I need to get this out or I notice that your kind of interrupting me as we talk, is there something going with you? Depending on where you are right? If they're projecting onto you, you can be like hey this ... I know that that's true for you. That doesn't mean it's true for me. I'm having a different experience actually in that. Can you hear me out? That's all it is. What makes it difficult to ask is not the ask itself. It's the pain behind the fear of rejection or something like that. There's some sort of pain.

All you're doing is asking. They can say yes, no, counteroffer. You're still good if they say no but it doesn't feel like that. It feels like all this other stuff. That's because you've got some stuff inside and need some attention. My voice is getting really horse. All right. I need a break. I want us to pause here and do the key takeaways. I want folks to if there's one thing ... Wait. Somebody has a question.

Wouldn't inviting them to listen just make them feel like robots? You can ask them. Ask them if it makes you feel like a robot what about it? Tell me more. If they're not ... If they insist on rejecting their opinions and judgments that ultimately leads to another sense of oppression because they keep overriding your experiences and they refuse to acknowledge. They said no. They said no to your invitation. You can ask them why. Why are they insisting on doing that? Do they like it when someone does it to them? You can inquire. If it's something you want to know, ask. You can also disengage if somebody repeatedly says no to you. It was your responsibility to ask. If you want something, that's up to you to ask for it. Right? That's your responsibility to meet your own needs. You ask.

If somebody keeps saying no to you, that somebody is not really interested in being with you. That somebody is not interested in helping you meet your needs. There's not right or wrong to it that's just where they're at. This is also, by the way, romantic relationship advice as well. If

you keep asking them and they keep saying no, then that's a sign, they keep saying no, that you do not need to engage with this person. You've taken care of yourself. You've asked multiple times. You've been quiet. They don't want to engage then don't engage. It's not a relationship.

If folks can just write down the most important thing that they want to make sure they remember from this conversation. What would that be? Please type it in chat box.

Sam, I think there's a couple of people starting to type in.

Sam: You want me to start reading them off?

Sandra: Please.

Sam: Just ask.

Invite.

It's your responsibility to ask.

Ask don't force yourself on others or on yourself.

Ask can I share my experience with you instead of trying to force my internal reality on them.

It's important to acknowledge the other person's reality even and especially when their points are contrary to your own.

I need to work on becoming more aware of the ways that I engage in toxicity.

Allowing myself to be with myself and my reality will create the space for me to be present with them in their reality and maybe even encourage them to be present with their own reality.

Try to understand the other person's reality.

It's not about getting them to stop but rather taking care of yourself.

It's important that I don't assume that I act like I know someone else's reality better because I definitely don't want someone thinking that about me also it's always okay to ask and invite.

When acknowledging my focus is on the other person but is the very moment to focus on what my feelings are and let them guide me through the situation.

Trying to force my internal reality on others is just as counterproductive as others trying to force their internal reality onto me. Neither gets us anywhere great.

Listening and sharing are both important.

The importance of checking in with me and with them.

It's possible to set up someone's listening without being condescending.

Sandra: Yep. All excellent. Just one more point that I want to make sure that I make is that you take turns. Right? It's not like both people can go like this. It's like hey. One person shares their side. The other person shares their other side. Otherwise, if you try to go at the same time, even if you're both trying to share from your own perspective, then it just feels too much like you're trying to push each others and you're like arguing points against each other's perspectives. You do one at a time. Stephen Covey's book "7 Habits of Highly Successful People" he uses one of them is understand first then be understood. That's another shorthand for this as well. It's a good little reminder.

We're going to stop right now. We have 20 minute break. The next session is going to start at 4 pm. Let me change screen. 4pm we'll get to the fifth and last practice. Thank you everybody.