

compassionate activism

Sandra: All right folks so this is the third session of day number 2 of the online compassion activism training program. Right. It's been a long day as you can tell from my voice. Today what we are going to be talking about is the fifth practice. The final practice. This is where we get to create.

It's called the Fifth Practice of Shared Envisioning and Non-cooperation. This is really something that happens after you do the first four. Most things are not linear in this world. This practice, this journey, it is linear. There's a reason why I've first, second, third, fourth, and fifth practices.

I say this because a lot of people jump to trying to do something with the other person before they've gone through the first four practices. I keep emphasizing when it's emotionally charged for you that means something. It's something that needs your attention. It's pain, right, pain and fear. When that is there you're stuck, in that emotional charge, you're ability to hold a space for somebody else and where they're coming from is very small.

You can try, and people do try, people drag themselves forwards, people whip themselves into doing, people make themselves, people try to drag the other person into that conversation. As you can imagine that's not very acceptable. You can just think about your own experiences, how well did that go? How well did you feel in your own body? Not just the other person whether they were "cooperating" with you. Think about the impact on yourself. [inaudible 00:01:58] some knots, right now, it sucks, it's hard on you too, so there's a toll.

It wasn't constructive was it? So it's really important for you ... There's nothing right or wrong about you not being able to hold the space for the other person unless you're trying to do that. Because it's not going to work out, so the impact of it is not going to be positive. If you can't hold the space in that moment for the other person, their reality exists and being valid and take up space, if you can't do that right then and there, take care of yourself. You've got to go through the first three practices and then the fourth. The fourth practice which is really about starting that conversation inquiring and holding the space for both your reality and the other person's reality to co-exist at the same time.

As we talk about this fifth practice, because it requires you to have gone through the first four steps to really be able to engage in, shared envisioning and non-cooperation means just like when you weren't able to

create something. I want this to be a lightly emotionally charged situation or something that you've already done some work with. Maybe its the same situation of the fourth, but something that you've already processed a bit.

Because really this practice, it sounds complicated because there was five and like I kind of made it a little tricky and I put two practices in each practice. Really all it is is the first three happening twice. You want to really apply the first three practices to yourself and then bring it to the other person.

What happens, so once you brought it to the other person, that's what practice number four is about. Compassionate truth-telling, consciousness-raising inquiry. What happens is that you get connected. As opposed to doing this business where it's like you trying to push your reality on them and them trying to push their reality on you, and you're just like butting heads and everyone's getting frustrated and angry and pissed off, and that's non-productive.

It's hurtful and you don't want to do it again. Who wants to do that. Instead what the fourth practice, of having this conversation, is really be like hey this is my reality, what's your reality. Then you get to shake hands, you get to be together now, because you're actually offering and you're receiving, you're joining together. That's when you get connected. You're actually acknowledging each other's humanity.

This is fundamentally healing. Because systemic depression, violence, violation, happens in relationships, happen in community. We are transforming that. When you stop trying to push your reality onto somebody else and you create the space for them to exist as they are, and you have given yourself the space to exist as you are, and you're able to come together to share what your experiences have been and you validate as being legitimate.

Not that it didn't have an impact, not that it didn't cause harm, but that they exist. You just acknowledge that that's where people are coming from and they're able to acknowledge that that's where you're coming from. You have this great opportunity, you're connecting now. So you can, if you're listening to what they're saying, you start to identify shared goals, some shared values of theirs, interests.

What was driving each others realities. I want to give you an example of that ... well I'll continue talking. Once you have this understanding of each other's realities and you understand what is actually behind them and what is something that you have in common together, you can start to build from those shared values or shared goals or interests.

This is actually a negotiation tactic I read. Instead of fixating on the position somebody's taken, which is a hard position and maybe it's not something you want to do, instead of fixating on the position look at the interest. Look at your shared interest. This where the yes-and and the yes-but come together. From there it will flow.

I'll give you an example, as I shared at one point, I take considerable care to be a caring, good, supervisor. To create a workplace where people feel really, feel free to show up as their full human selves. To feel acknowledged and feel like their contributions are really valued and they're treated like human beings and not work drones. I guess as an incredibly important value, I'm very very intentional about it.

A couple of years ago, when we were first starting out, we had no money, it was all bootstraps from savings. I wasn't getting paid. I didn't get paid for the first year or two. When we did get funding we put it into hiring some folks. One of the persons was an independent contractor and so we needed more money. I created a full-time position and absorbed that independent contractor's work into that position. It wasn't quite making sense for that person to get the full time job.

I talked to them, because if I'm going to let somebody go I still want to do it as humanely as possible. It's the best decision for the organization, and you want to be kind about the way you do it. So I talked to her and made sure that she understood where we were coming from, understood that that was emotionally hard for me because this person had been very loyal to us and worked with us for less pay than really I thought she should be getting. When we made more money I increased her pay. Then it got to a point where we could hire a full time staff.

She understood and it made total sense to her, and came back later and she's like "you know what, actually I felt like I got played." My initial reaction was like "what? Really?" She shared that it was because she was with us when we didn't have money and then when we got money we paid her, but she was paid less than deserved. She feels like now that we have more money we don't want her. My initial reaction to that was like "I did my best. I wasn't even getting paid" how do I create a space for you to have feelings? You say you're fine now you come back you have feelings.

I sat with that, right, thankfully, I got to live this. I got to live this model. I wasn't there for very long, I was there for maybe five minutes. Then I sat with it, I said okay what's going on. I paid attention, I was like I'm upset at her not because about her but because she feels like she got played and that hurts me because I don't want people feeling like that. I don't want to be doing something where people end up feeling like ... I had to take care of that pain, that I had hurt her. Because it hurt me to know that I had hurt her.

Then I was able to heal that pain just by acknowledging it. Nothing more than that. Just acknowledging it. Then I was able to see, okay I see her point. I could have held space from her perspective now because I'd already taken care of my perspective. I held space from her perspective and I was like you know that kind of makes sense. I wanted to essentially give her back wages. It flowed very easily.

I could see we both wanted a situation where she feels like her work was fairly financially compensated and we were actually in a place to do that, whereas before we weren't. I went and I gave her the equivalent back wages, which I didn't need to do; legally speaking I didn't need to do anything. It's just from a values thing for me.

Then, actually, I made it a policy so somebody else in a similar situation, she was not [inaudible 00:11:42] person who was going to come to me asking for anything. I still did it for her anyways because that's a values thing. This is where you can create, but it really comes from having gone to a place where you're already in touch with each other's reality. Because you can't create when you're disconnected. You can't create something together when you're disconnected from each other. You've got to get connected first.

That's why you've got to engage in the fourth practice, having the conversation. I want to take a moment and I want you to first think about a situation and create the yes/but sentence for yourself. You know yes X but Y. Usually it's going to be like "yes she thinks she got played, but I was doing my best as her supervisor."

Then in the chat box I want you to share how you feel about creating something with this person. Just address the conflict that you have. As you do that I'm going to close my window, I'll be right back.

What I want you to do, to repeat, is I want you to create the yes/but sentence for yourself and then think about how looking at co-creating something, creating a shared vision, how do you feel about that. Is it easy, hard, struggle, flow, resistance, chill?

Sam if you want to share?

Sam: I feel like the yes/but formulation allows me to feel defensive against the other person's experience. I'm dug in with my position, not going to happen.

In a conflict I had, I didn't trust the other person. But I did acknowledge his reality so I was able to say how about this. This was a conflict over pay. I didn't get exactly what I wanted but I got the best deal I felt was possible.

Sandra: All right, so when you create, the but creates a disconnection. Right? It's fundamentally different actually from yes/and even though you're actually dealing with the same content. I just wanted to do that little exercise for people to get that this is ... People keep asking what's the perfect way to do this? What's the perfect formula? Obviously, I've got some formulas, I've got some hacks for you all to try out. This is really a way of being. I kind of do a riff off of Yoda who says "there's no try, only do." I say "there is no try, only be" it's a way of being in the world

That's why I ask you about your energies you're bringing. What are your intentions were you trying to create?

Oh okay, somebody's fixing the Yoda quote. I'm miss remembering it, "Do or do not, there is no try" Well I guess mine would be like "There is no try, be."

In order to be there, you've got to do the work. Do these practices. I want folks to close their eyes, practice that. Close your eyes. Take a big breath in, breath out. Breath in, breathe out. In thinking about the situation, I want you to notice how you're reacting to it. What's coming up for you in your body? As you remember the situation, as is alive in this current moment.

Just kind of notice, breathe in, breathe out, notice how it feels in your body. Not trying to change it. I want you to put your hand where you feel it strongest in your body. Maybe it's your shoulders, your stomach, your chest, your head. I want you just to kind of notice what it feels like. What does it look like? Explore it. How big is it? Is it moving? Is it shifting? Does it have a density to it, like light or heavy, thick? Just notice what's coming up for you.

Keeping your hand on it, where you feel it strongest, say to it, to the feeling, "I see you." Breathe in, I see you, breathe out, I see you, breathe in, I see you, breathe out, I see you. Just notice what's coming up for you. Maybe the feeling shifted, maybe it's still there. May it's tighter. Maybe it's looser. Whatever. It's all good.

If you feel ready, you're going to say "I see you. I care." If you want to continue to say just "I see you" you can. Breathe in - I see you. Breathe out - I care. Breathe in - I see you. Breathe out - I care. Breathe in - I see you. Switching it out, and you matter. Breathe in - I see you. Breathe out - You matter. Breathe in - I see you. Breathe out - You matter. Just kind of notice what's coming up for you. Maybe it's the same, maybe it's shifted to somewhere else. Maybe it's releasing, maybe it's releasing, maybe it's tightening. Just notice.

Keeping your hand there, where you feel it the strongest, I want you to look at it almost like you're giving it a wash of being, of just

acknowledgement. Just gentle loving acknowledgement. Whatever color that may be for you. Just say you matter. You matter and I care. Breathe in - You matter. Breathe out - I care. Breathe in - You matter. Breathe out - I care.

Now I want you to ask it, does it need anything from you. Is there anything I can give you? I want to. Maybe it said something, maybe it didn't. I want you to acknowledge is that what it asked you is something that you had not done before. That it had hurt it. I didn't so what you're asking. I didn't take care of you and I'm sorry. I didn't take care of you and I'm sorry. I didn't take care of you and I'm sorry. I'm going to do what you asked me to do now. Thank you for sharing. I'll be back.

Take a couple of deep breaths. Breathe in, breathe out. Breathe in, breathe out. Breathe in, breathe out. Now wiggle your hands, your toes, stretch, open up your eyes.

I'd like folks to share, what was that like for them. What did they learn? Maybe nothing happened. Like I said, it's a group exercise so I've got to go at a certain pace, but maybe that wasn't the pace you were at. There's no right or wrong to that. I hope that you were able to adapt it to where you're at. If not, there's always coaching one on one where I can do it one on one with you.

Sam if you want to start reading.

Sam: I started with a fairly surface issue, but found myself going to something incredibly deep.

Sandra: Right that's the nature of this. The initial reaction is simply that. It's the tip of the iceberg folks.

Sam: I found emotions about the situation that I hadn't realized were still there.

I lost sight of the situation but I could still detect the feeling behind it.

Sandra: Right, the situation is oftentimes, if there's not an actual violation happening that moment, it's not about the situation, it's about the thing that you're carrying from the past still in your body, so that makes sense.

Sam: When I don't stand up for myself, when I allow myself to start in a failing position, I'm wounded and I've wounded myself.

I learned I need to not feel alone.

I had mixed emotions around caring, knowing what the other person wanted, but had trouble giving the person what they wanted or needed.

Sandra: Yeah, and if people also got in touch with the need, something they wanted to share, a need, people could also share that as well.

Sam: Someone said anger, protecting the pain.

Sandra: Most of the time. Most of the time anger is stuck, because there's anger that propels you into action that is like a righteous anger, like that sometime bad's happening and you're going to intervene. That's appropriate to the situation. Some shit's going down you want to intervene, do it. At the same time if it's the type of anger where you get stuck and like frozen and like emotionally charged and it's just really toxic to you, right, it's not leading to action, it's not leading to be appropriate to a situation, necessarily. It's more just like you hurting yourself underneath that is usually pain. Because the anger distracts us from the pain.

Sam: Another point about anger. My feeling was anger. It felt validated and told me I did my best and that's [inaudible 00:26:53].

Yesterday I was at a place where I felt listening to other people and seeing their realities makes me lose touch with my pain and my reality, but today I found my heart and my universe to be really big and that I have the strength to hear other people's pain and care for them more mindfully. I'm really thankful to you, Sandra.

I feel like it was pain I had felt for a long time and came back to through different situations repeating patterns.

Someone listed their needs. I need to sleep, work out, take care of myself physically.

Sandra: Okay, so I'm going to pause that. Now I want folks to close your eyes again. Breathe in, breathe out. Breathe in, breathe out. Breathe in, breathe out. I want you to get back in touch with your truth. Get back in touch with your internal reality, what is true for you. What do you need? What are your feelings? Acknowledge them. Either with words or maybe just an emotional hug or a physical hug.

Then I want you to envision the other person in the situation. Envision yourself saying I want to talk to you about the situation that happened. Will you listen to what I have to say? I also want to know what you think about it. They say yes and you share. Tell them. Tell them what you want them to know about your internal reality. Use I statements.

Now, hopefully you're done, if not keep talking in your head. If you're done, ask them will they now share what's real for them and where they're coming from. This is where you get to speculate. Speculate where they're coming from. What's behind their reaction? What, is it pain, is it fear?

What are they scared of? Just make something up. That makes sense though.

Now I want you to think of something that you have in common together, something you both care about. Maybe it's just that you want each other to be happy, or you don't want each other to be in pain. What can you co-create together based on that shared value? Don't force it, whatever arises. Just notice what comes up for you. Maybe nothing. That's okay too. Offer it to the other person and tell them they can say yes, no, counteroffer.

They say yes in your head. The counteroffer is another solution. So they can say yes or no to your solution and a counteroffer is well maybe something else, and they offer a different solution. Now you're thanking them for sharing. I want you to take a couple of deep breaths. Breathe in, breathe out. Breathe in, breathe out.

Wiggle your toes, your feet, your hands, open your eyes, stretch a little bit.

That, obviously, was just all in our heads. However, I think it's useful. I still think it's useful. I want folks to just kind of let it sit there and marinate a little bit. What happened. It looked like a couple of you went some places. Maybe you didn't. Group exercise. Doesn't always work.

When you feel ready I'd like for you to share. What was that like for you? Where did you go? If you went anywhere. Maybe you got stuck somewhere, that's okay. It just means that where you got stuck needs a little more attention, that's all. It's about noticing. Have you noticed that that's the game here, always notice.

Sam: Someone shared that, When Sandra directed us to imagine they say yes, I had a sudden pain in my head and I felt I couldn't go further for a few seconds.

Sandra: Did you shift after the few seconds? Or did you stay there? I can't tell from that statement.

Speaker 3: Here. That was me. I don't know if you can hear me all right. So when we were instructed to like say yes, I like, I just felt like this hard pain against my head and it was really weird and so I just kind of like breathed and focused we're just, we're like working on our reality, like we're working through the next part, so I just kind of like blanked for a second, like okay, like this penis it's not like a physical thing like slamming against my head. So once I was able to do that, I was like pretend you're talking to who you're talking to.

When I was able to just remind myself that being present, like this isn't a real physical thing, where we're like working through a conversation, I was able to go and have a very awkward conversation, but I was able to have that talk and even though in my mind I couldn't like get yes from the person and we weren't really like agreeing we were still listening to each other and that's like a really big deal because this person's very anxious and very nervous and when asking like what are you afraid of it's like, Nah and I'm like okay I can see that.

Well okay, that's the reality, and so it wasn't like a yes and yes, it's like I can see where you're coming from now and that pain eventually did like shift and I don't have it now. It's like okay, I don't really know where that came from. Like I really don't.

Sandra: A lot of time that, there's obviously physical reactions of stress that show up in our body, and pains that are not emotional related, right, and there's also a lot of pain that actually related to our resistance of what we're experiencing. Sometimes in these sessions people say that they come in all tense and worked up and like physically feeling that and then as they do this work with us in this group session, they calm down, they're body relaxes.

That's possibly what's happened with you. It's great, I mean, what happened happened and like it's funny because you can't force these visualizations either. Even though I was like hey have them say yes, you're like wait they didn't say yes though. I'm like okay go with that. That's what's real for you. Stay with it, whatever comes up comes up. It was really great how you just played with it, you just danced in the moment with it. What did you learn from that?

Speaker 3: I guess I can try that. I learned that like both our realities is that I'm in a work environment where yes isn't always the answer, it's a lot of no. But the optimist part of me is like well there's always compromise. Not everyone gets what they want and gets what they get but there's compromise and it makes things a little bit more comfortable. It doesn't always relieve like the stress of it but knowing like okay we talked about it and for that I should actually be thankful of my self care that I'm in an environment where we can actually talk about it and speak openly about these things.

Sandra: Were you able to, I think you said you were able at least hear each other out if not a bit more, in your head.

Speaker 3: Yeah, like in our head it's like okay we're not, that's real reality, and in my head it's like yeah we're not going to be able to be like yes but we can talk it out. We don't have ...

Sandra: At least acknowledge.

Speaker 3: Yeah, like acknowledge. Like we don't have such a wall around each other that we can't like, you know, be comfortable with each other. I don't know if that makes sense.

Sandra: Right, right and that makes a difference, doesn't it.

Speaker 3: For me it makes a difference because in the other exercises where we have, where we're like imaging situations, like this is the one unique one where it's not like, it's not severely toxic, it's not severely harmful and it's not physical fear and violence. This is just kind of like a, I guess, like a hyper[inaudible 00:38:18] dynamic as well. Just because it's like your workplace and your job and your environment. You report to somebody.

Sandra: Which is financial. [inaudible 00:38:30] guy has power. It has a real impact. I had something to say but then I coughed. But I'll remember in a second. I think that's great you really listened to yourself and where you work. Just kind of keep practicing that and see where that takes you. I'm actually not, the reason why I can coach anybody anytime is really just because it's not about me, I'm just helping you get focused on yourself. That's it. So just keep that. People are often like am I doing it right, and I'm like there's no right, there's no right or wrong. It's like I mean like following my directions, in terms of listening, I'm trying. That's about it. I really appreciate that. Thank you for sharing.

Speaker 3: No problem.

Sandra: Sam, do you want to share some other stuff?

Sam: I didn't have my mic on, here we go. This kind of ties into what you were just talking about but someone had asked how do power dynamics enter into this equation? Do you want to approach that later?

Sandra: Can you one sec, I think my voice needs a break right now.

Sam: Yeah sure. I'll share some of the other comments and we'll come back to it.

Someone said they recognized another level of where his reaction may have come from.

Someone said they were shocked at how much self-loathing was stewing around and drove the direction. It was hard to imagine myself actually learning to have any success in this method.

Sandra: It's a practice. One you're getting, you're noticing in the first place. Before you didn't even notice. You didn't even know how much self-loathing you

had. It's just happening driving it. You can do anything about it. Now you can notice. Now you have tools to notice when it's happening. When you make it conscious it goes from behind here driving you and now it's hear and you can be a choice. You can sit with it, practice bringing gentle loving attention to it. Just notice and acknowledge that it exists. That's it. Keep doing that.

Sam: Someone said they had to forgive themselves before they could talk to him. He was unaware that they were feeling as bad as they were. They added, I blamed him for disappearing on me and not giving me job training and setting me up to lose but his dad was dying and I didn't give him room for that.

Someone said the exercise provided a starting point to get to the higher ground, where in the past I didn't think that would be possible.

Sandra: Right so this is just like a simple guided visualization. Like I said it worked out differently for every single person. Some people got to a point where they could see a solution based on shared values. Some people got to a place where they just got present to what their internal reality was. Some people could have a conversation but couldn't have it go further, there was a non-coopera... it wasn't ... they weren't able to create anything, but they were able to at least understand and acknowledge each other. That's just more practice. The important thing is that you notice that you're actually a step beyond where you were before. Do you get that?

This was a simple, like five ten minute, I don't even know how long, ten minute, got a visualization that I did and you're further along in it than perhaps you have been before where you were just stuck in a toxic swirl. The points not to beat yourself up about where you're at, the point is just to notice where you're at and acknowledge it. Look how far acknowledge it will take you.

Sure you need some practice, sure you need some support, but hey that's what we're here for, that's what this program is all about.

When I said in the third practice is pivotal, the third practice of gentle mindfulness and compassion and self-accountability is pivotal is because it's pivotal right. If it's emotionally charged situation for you, you've got to take care of yourself and then you'll think back to when you got to that point you've gotten in touch with the pain and you had a need. You knew how to take care of it. Take care of it. Sometimes it doesn't involve talking to a person. Sometimes it does involving talking to another person. Listen to yourself. If it involves talking to another person engage in the fourth practice. You don't have to talk to them, but if you chose to you can and you can engage in the fourth practice. You have the tools of understand first and then be understood.

Take turns sharing your truths, listening, inviting them to share their truth. It will flow, the co-creation will flow. I don't promise many things, but I promise you this, you get connected you can at least acknowledge you can at least brainstorm together. You may not agree with whatever potential solutions you come up with but you can at least brainstorm together. You're coming from a connected place.

You have more options than you did before. It may not work itself out fully but at least you have some options now and that means something. At least you acknowledge each other, you don't have to work together, play together, but you can acknowledge each other as humanities. That's [inaudible 00:44:33] up.

Someone asked about power dynamics. Power dynamics, you've got to ... This is coming from me as a manager, as a boss. Most folks get promoted into management without having any training and without having any support or initial capacity being given to them in order to actually properly supervise folks. It's an entirely different skill set than what they were promoted from doing. They're good at doing their programmatic work, then they got promoted to help other people do that programmatic work. Those are entirely different skill sets. Different personalities. They are not related. They don't know what they're doing. They're accidental managers most of the time. They have all of this power all of a sudden.

The problem I see a lot of times in management is that the pain of somebody, the person who suffers from poor management is the person being supervised. The person who has the responsibility to supervise well is the supervisor. The pain and the responsibility are in two different people. That's why managers are very hard for them to actually know how to adjust their management. Do they even know how to do it? Do they have the support from the organization to do so?

There's a lot happening on the other person, the managerial side. Which does not let them off the hook for it, but I'm just saying that there's lot of, oftentimes the pain of being poorly managed pushes out the managers reality. Managers for the most part want to do a good job. They just don't know how, because they're not mind readers. It's hard for us when we're being supervisory to share how the supervisor is poorly managing us because that's like a direct criticism of them. Yet if we don't share that, how are they ever going to know how crappy it is and what they can do differently.

Now this is a different situation than when you have managers who are just outright abusive or controlling or exploitative. Now that's a different situation. I'm hoping that most folks are not in that situation, they mainly are dealing with well intentioned poorly supervising managers. If it's the latter you have a lot of space to have this conversation. You have it by

inviting them, setting the context for the conversation, I've done this multiple times with past managers that I've had ... this was, these were folks who wanted to do their job and they weren't. I would set the context, I'd be like hey I've been struggling with something in our managerial, in our management relationship and I really want to talk about it, because I know that you want to do a good job with me and I want to do a good job too. There's some stuff getting in the way of that. Can we talk about it.

Really have that conversation, invite them, and then like place the pink elephant in the room, or you can just say I want to talk about something but I have some concerns about it because it has to do with you and how you're managing me. But I think that I could share some stuff that would really help. You can kind of set the context of the conversation I think that's inviting them in, being really clear how you want to invite them in.

Somebody saying referring to power dynamics, according to race and gender outside the workplace, a boy in a person to person relationship. I think this is the same thing. To be quite honest. It's like you set the context of the conversation. You invite them in to have this type of conversation.

Now if it's somebody who's being abusive, exploitative, controlling and they're not aware of it you can try having that conversation with them, possibly. Depending primarily how severe it is and depending on what kind of HR support you have around you, because that's really more of the HR issue than anything else. You might also be in a company that supports that type of behavior. I've had friends who do work in those type of environments and said that it's very limited by what you can do there.

That's why we're going to talk about compassion non-cooperation or just straight up non-cooperation [inaudible 00:49:29] in that situation. A lot of few people feel like cannot necessarily change jobs but I always encourage non-cooperation when it comes to exploitative, abusive, controlling people. That's not something everybody feels like they're in a place to do, financially sometimes, or job-wise, or industry-wise, market, job market-wise so that's kind of a different situation and was can talk about that on a one on one coaching session if you have one. That's kind of very specific. Yeah, you deserve to be treated with respect and people aren't mind readers so we can invite folks as to what that looks like.

Again, I understand the status quo is this going to make an impression, so that's why even in organization they're all about social justice. They've got some messed up dynamics happening there in terms of how they operate and that's real. You may be doing some of that too. Just FYI.

I want to make sure we cover non-cooperation. I don't want to be loving, I want to be compassionate though. When you get to the point where you're connected, you find the shared values, the shared goals and interests,

then you brainstorm. You go back and forth, you brainstorm and you weren't able to create something that you both agreed to do. Fine. There's no right or wrong for it. It's just not that time and place. You're going to say, like for romantic partners, it's like right person, wrong time. It happens too.

They're not right or wrong it's just not the time and place. You've got to understand that you cannot control other people's behaviors. You can't make them agree with you. That's coercion. You can choose how you behave though, in that situation. You can't co-create an agreement that feels good to both of you, that feels like it honors both of your realities, but you can choose to disengage.

The reason why this is compassion is actually, as we've been talking, it's compassion for yourself. Because you're not going to be non-cooperating with them from a place ... you're doing it from a place of honoring yourself and what you want in the world. When you're in a ... What we often do instead of doing cooperation from a place of honoring our reality, taking care of ourselves, we do it usually from toxic swirl. Oftentimes when we try to disengage from people we do it from resisting where they're at, as opposed to just acknowledging where they're at and then treating it as an invitation where they can say yes and you counter offer to them.

Instead of that toxic swirl on the left hand side, we assume we know what's best for them at that moment. Like we know what's better for them, like we understand them better than they know themselves, right? If that doesn't really work, we tried that, that's what happens all the time, [inaudible 00:53:09] people are like people keep trying to erase your experiences and impose the dominant narrative upon you. That doesn't work either way.

Just kind of acknowledge that a perspective is what it is. It doesn't have to be the same as yours. Remember the three reality, their reality, your reality, external reality. They're all completely different. All different and that's okay. They all take up space, they're all important. We don't have to agree with them to acknowledge that they exist.

If you want to make them, force them to agree with you, and you're not willing to accept a no, meaning you're going to do something to punish them, I don't know, whatever, but make them wrong a human being, that's just more coercion. You've got to notice when this stuff is coming up, because when this stuff is coming up it just means that there's something in you that wants attention. When you approach a person like this it means that there's something with you. You've got to take care of yourself. Because when you come from a place where you're honoring your internal reality it's far easier just to acknowledge where they're coming from and invite them. It flows, you know. It's the whole Yoda thing, don't try, just be.

Don't force yourself, if you're not there then sit with yourself. In the chat box people were talking about how much easier it was just to breathe, how much space they felt there was. That's true. If you don't care where they're coming from or how they got to where they are, there's some pain inside of you for yourself. Oftentimes we get silent and resentful, we don't share with them. You can tell them. You can be like "hey, I don't even want to do any of the stuff we've come up with so, let's just [inaudible 00:55:14], and maybe later hopefully we'll figure something out. But right now it doesn't feel like it's working."

Maybe it's not working because you're still coming from a place of pain. Maybe they have some work they need to do with themselves. Or maybe they're just busy. That happens too. You can hope for the best for them, hope that they get the healing so they get more free. Hope they get to be in a place where they get to live their dreams out too. Then they can have the conversation with you again.

Compassion is really just about wanting to relieve the suffering of people. We can say no and grieve the fact that we aren't going to be together, take care of that pain, and wish the best for everybody. You can do that. You don't have to say no and make them wrong, and should them to death. You don't need to do that. You have another option. You can say no, I wish we could have worked together. I wished this would have worked out. I'm sorry it didn't. Maybe next time it might be different.

This is a fundamentally different way of actually being with it. I want to pause for a moment and take some questions.

Sam: Somebody asked could you also touch on things to keep in mind when taking this approach when you're in a position of more power [inaudible 00:57:05].

Sandra: When you have power, what you say has more impact than if you didn't. I know that in my meetings, I don't come to meetings stressed. If I come to a meeting stressed I make sure that I tell the staff that I'm stressed. Even then it doesn't go as well as I want it to. I kind of watch what kind of stuff I talk about because they'll come off real serious and I know that whenever I say something, positive or negative, is going to have a three times stronger impact than if they're co-worker said the same thing.

So you have to be much more cognizant and intentional about how your words are landing for folks. Now you don't control that. How people interpret your words is based on their own past, their own personality, their own filters, and you have a responsibility to check in. Check in with them. This is where you invite them. You say "you know what, I want to talk to you about something, but I'm concerned." Sometimes some of the staff when I ask them to talk that I want to talk to them about something, they

get ... there are like alarm bells that go off and they feel like they're getting called into the principal's office and they feel like they're in trouble and going to get fired.

I did not realize this. A couple of people, but there are a couple people on my staff that are like this because of past places they worked at, which is generally like fear of the principal's office, or the teacher, or your parents. When I found this out then I switched it around, and I was like hey I want to talk to you, but I'm like I'm very happy with you, I'm not going to fire you. It's just about this other thing. So I became very intentional about how I would invite them into a conversation.

That's the main thing when you have power, is that you ... and you've got to understand that everybody comes with baggage from the past and people that had power over them. It depends on ... I feel like I'm a therapist for my staff. It's true, and I can be because I actually am skilled in this, obviously, if I train people on it, but you don't really need to be a therapist, you just need to allow them to be who they are.

Create that space, and you can even state that as a manager. Because you do set the tone when you have more power, you set the tone for what's permissible. That's why I say you treating yourself like you matter, like your internal reality matters, and taking care of yourself, is the best thing you can do for the world, because you do it for yourself, you set that tone for the rest of your staff.

Do you think my staff would feel free show up like full human beings if I did not show up like a full human beings? No. They would notice that it was just lip service. They'd fear that I would secretly judge them and want to fire them if they took off time because they were sick or something.

You've really got to live it. You've got to model. People follow more what you do than what you say. That's the main thing when you have more power, you've got to be a lot more intentional. You've got to check in a lot. Check in a lot with how people are doing. Create the space for it to be okay for them to feel whatever they're feeling. Not that you're necessarily going to make all the decisions based on that but you want to know how they're doing about stuff. Be really clear about the intentional yes/no/counteroffer.

I say this when I'm having conversations with folks and I want them to do something. I know I could just order them to do something because I'm technically their boss, and I can fire them at any moment. That's not how I want to be at work. Also, they're not going to be so responsive. If I force them to do something they might do it but are they going to be all into it. So I always invite folks and I check in. Because if they feel like they can't

do something or they're not in a place where that's going to be the best idea, I want to know why. It's all good information back.

I always say, I was thinking about you doing this, what do you think about it? If there's somebody that I know that feels like they have to say yes, they can't say no, I will say to them, and you can say no. We actually had a meeting once where somebody I know struggles with saying no, said no and we all burst out clapping. Because we knew this and we wanted to support her. You've just got to be more intentional. That's when you've got more power.

I've only got 15 minutes left so I can only take one more question.

Sam: Somebody asks can you talk about defending safe spaces from the standpoint of non-cooperation when people of privilege take it over?

Sandra: Yeah, so they can be dis-invited. Non-cooperation can be dis-inviting them from the space. You can explain to them why. It's just specifically about the behavior, and tell them we would like for you to be a part of this group and in order to be a part of this group there's certain norms that have been violated by you repeatedly. I'm assuming you've already had conversations with them, so they're not willing to change, they're not willing to learn and grow. Then okay, they're not willing, so they don't need to be part of this group. That's what the space is for. If they're not agreeing to be a part of the group as it was designed to be then they don't need to be a part of the group.

You can, if they do change their mind and agree and show genuine effort, they can come back. This is what it means by compassionate non-cooperation. You're not treating them like they're disposable, it's different. I hope you get that. It's not treating them as disposable and just kicking them out, but it's this conversation of acknowledging where they're coming from, you acknowledge it and you hope that, that it's just sad that we can't be together now. Maybe hopefully in the future something will shift and then we can.

I've got 10 minutes left and I know that this becomes very tricky. It becomes tricky when we haven't done the first four practices. So I'm really encouraging you to not jump to the fifth practice until you've worked through the four practices. Because when you've worked through the four practices and you're having this conversation with somebody else, all it does it becomes a simple conversation. It's no longer emotionally charged. It goes from being a conversation about privilege and oppression and marginalization to just being a conversation about what do we want to do together? Asking somebody is about as charged as being like hey can I get that recipe from you. It's the emotional charge in the mix that makes it so hard. Our resistance to the other person's reality and us running away

from our own reality and not taking care of our own [pay 01:05:07]. That's what makes it so emotionally charged.

All your specific questions, I ask you to try out going through the first four practices, and when you get to the fifth practice and you still feel like there's some questions and struggles, that's when you contact me. Because when you, like I said, when you go through the first four practices and you are connected there's no emotional charge, or there's very little, and all it is is a simple conversation. It's a basic conversation and you just keep trying different things out.

As you saw, as I was coaching folks, I just threw out different affirmations, see what landed. I offered different suggestions about where they may be going, where they may be at. It becomes a conversation like that. You throw it out see how it lands. Yes/no/counteroffer, that's about it. You keep going back and forth and you listen to each other. That's about it.

I want to pause for a second and have people just share what was the most, if you had one take away from this conversation what would that be. If you want to make sure you remember one thing.

Sam: Someone said listening, listening, listening.

Sandra: Right. I have another PowerPoint, in summary it could just be like breathe and listen and invite. Those three words.

Sam: Someone said what is it that we want to build together?

Engagement is a choice.

There's a way to do everything with compassion and respect.

Sandra: Yeah, I want to get back to that. It's really just about acknowledging each other as humans, acknowledging each other's internal realities. That's what this is about. That's why this fundamentally is healing the brokenness that is caused by [inaudible 01:07:41] oppression.

People once asked me what is inter-sectional feminism in every day terms? I was like it's just acknowledging the fact that everyone's experiences are real. That's a really simple way of thinking about it. It's just people's experiences are real.

Sam: Do you want me to read a few more?

Sandra: Yeah, so well let me just ... I say that because everything else is nice and optional. It's great if we can build something together. Just focus first on acknowledging each other's humanity things will flow from there. You focus instead on the building before you acknowledge it doesn't work

because you're disconnected. The status quo is just an systemic oppression which means that you're disconnected. You can't build when you're disconnected. Just focus on acknowledging your humanity and then their humanity. Get reconnected again.

Sam: Someone said, Honoring your place at reality.

It's important to stop and take time to go through the four practices before jumping into an emotionally charged situation.

Emotional charge is what makes it so hard.

Another person added the emotional charge the fear, those are the things that make healing and conversation difficult. Once we heal the conversation is simple.

Someone said, yes that one build together and also listen, be present and acknowledge others internal realities.

Even if you can't reach a common goal it doesn't have to end in hostility.

In all capital letters: INVITE

People follow what you do more than what you say.

Reducing the emotional charge by acknowledging the other person's humanity.

Sandra: Right. There is incredible power in acknowledge as you have all been experiencing, when you've been giving to yourself. When we've been doing these short 10 minute exercises. Maybe 10 minutes, maybe sometimes I just do 5 minutes, I don't know. Do that with somebody else. Just listen, acknowledge. If you've ever taken like crisis intervention work, like hotlines, or you've done listening, been a care counselor or something like that, they teach you just listen and acknowledge. Don't try to diagnose. Don't try to problem solve. Don't try to fix them. Just listen. Acknowledge. There is tremendous, like they don't get that validation from other folks. Do you think you're the only ones struggling? You think you're the only ones who don't know how to do this before you came to have this program? A lot of people don't know this.

Even folks who practice mindfulness and Buddhism they don't necessarily bring that to their emotional reality and that's a whole other conversation at [why.sure 01:11:03] but with [inaudible 01:11:06] do that. A lot of them don't.

You've just got to really understand that folks are doing their best and their struggling, they're hurting. When they act out in ways that's when it's

[inaudible 01:11:19] a lot of times, just like with you. If you ask what's the best thing we can do for the world is for us to heal ourselves and model that for the rest of the world.

We have just a couple more minutes. Somebody asks, yeah, I'm going to do a guided mindfulness exercise as separate audio, that's a great idea. Sam could you also just email me that? To do a mindfulness exercise recorded.

Now we're at the very end of the two day training. You all had a crash course on the five practices and the model. I'm going to ask you as well. If there's one thing you want to remember from the two days that you've been with me, what was most important for you? What do you want to make sure you remember every single day? As you think about this, reminders are really really important. Structures to remind you, so I often times when I coach somebody individually whatever learning they have from that coaching session, I ask them to put reminders up. That could be a post-it note on their bathroom mirror, on their laptop, or maybe a piece of jewelry they wear that reminds them of it, or figurine, whatever it may be. Something that reminds them of this. I want you all to think about what's most important to remember every single day from everything that you've learned. That might change all the time, that's fine too, but think about it. Because I want you all to write it down, put it somewhere you'll see it.

Sam do you want to share?

Sam: Someone said breathe, the three realities, you don't know everything, invite others when you are ready and confront issues in the name of a common interest.

I definitely need more practice on the third practice.

Practice patience.

I want to remind myself that it is okay to feel the feelings I have and that any pain I feel is something I need to take care of before inviting anyone into a much bigger conversation.

To acknowledge my reality. To acknowledge my own pain in the context of the frustrating situation and to see how that allows me to see others realities more.

Feelings, they deserve to be honored and exist.

Being aware of one's own pain, seeing it and caring rather than running to the rescue.

Where I am now matters.

Being compassionate does not mean allowing abuse. I can have compassion towards myself for repeating old patterns.

The phrase I see you I care is very powerful in every corner of my universe.

I see you, I care, you matter.

To remind myself that I don't need to step in and engage all the time and for every single situation.

Sandra: Great. All incredibly incredibly powerful. Like I said if you want the shorthand it's breathe, listen, invite. Breathe, listen, invite.

Thank you everybody, we are finishing right on the dot. I thank you and appreciate you being so open and vulnerable and doing this work. It is not easy to dive into this. Because you all stayed with me and I thinking in the beginning we can heal your pain, and you kept being like how it's so scary and I'm like give me a little time though I need to get to practice number three first. You all stayed with me, you all believed. Try it out. See what works for you. Practice.

It's going to be tough in the beginning it's not going to work out so easily in the beginning. That's what this group is for. That's what the bi-monthly Q&A sessions is and that's what coaching with me individually. There's a Facebook group. So we really try and support you in doing this practice because it is a practice and we just need more of this. Think of every single person in your life that you cared about had the same model like knew, knew what this was all about, knew it was possible for them too. Then you could support each other. You'd have a shared language. All you have to Breathe, Listen, hey. That's all you need to do. Just be ... Do it, practice because you're worth it.

You're definitely definitely worth it. That's how we change our world. Our world is just our internal reality, because here's the trippy part folks, get so caught up in trying to change the whole world out there, we feel powerless as we do it. Guess what, our internal reality, our world up here, this is all we have access to. So if you change this world you actually have ... you've got to change you're internal reality, you actually change your whole entire world.

That's the trippy thing. Hey I'm getting all existential over here, so, just sit on that for a little bit. Like I said I've transformed my life a couple times already going from somebody who my never came to me when I cried as an infant so I learned really well crying will get you no where. Having

feelings, having needs will get you no where to right now, this is what I do. I do this because I come from a place of such pain and denial and diminishing of that.

what else I'm going to leave you with is that where you feel pain, if you learn how to heal it you transform that through healing into freedom that's your power because that's what you're going to do in the rest of the world. Who you care most about helping relieve their suffering, there going to be people who've been in the same exact situation you've been in. Now because you've healed yourself, you've transformed that, you're free in those areas, you can model that for them. Not that it is the same journey for them as for you, but it's possible and you have greater insight than somebody else who's got to have that journey, so this is where you get your power. This is where you get your life mission from. It's from where you heal.

If you don't heal that's where you get what you're in right now. But if you can heal it, that's when you become a bad ass in the world. Because that's what I am. That's why I created Everyday Feminism. That's why I create Compassion Activism. Just saying you do this work you can be like me. You can have as much impact, or more, I hope you have more impact than I do, but right now we reach millions of people every month. Just saying. You could have more. I hope you do, so keeping spreading them. Thank you everybody.

Everything's going to be up on the internet on the online portal. I'll send you emails telling you.