

## VI. Practice Nonjudgement & Compassion

### Affirmation:

*The fires of my judgments, insensitivity, indifference, pettiness,  
and harsh criticisms are doused by the waters of my  
heartfelt compassion and acceptance.*

In India there is a story about a monk and a scorpion. The monk sat by a stream under a tree. A scorpion crawled out to an overhanging limb and fell into the water. The monk rescued the scorpion by placing it back on a limb and was bitten. The scorpion then proceeded to climb back out and plopped back into the water. Again the monk rescued it and was bitten. A simple villager stood nearby watching this event repeat itself over and over again. “Why not let the rascal go — he keeps biting you,” said the villager. “Brother,” responded the monk, “the fellow cannot help himself. It is his nature to bite.” “Agreed,” said the villager, “but knowing this why don’t you avoid him?” “Ah, brother,” replied the monk, “you see, I cannot help myself either. I am a human being; it is *my* nature to save!”

Compassion begins to appear when we question our behaviors: “What is worth doing?” If reverence is an ethical path, then compassion and non-judgment must be our walking shoes. Our behaviors, therefore, must be monitored by the degree in which we respect another’s sovereignty. Compassion is life enhancing. Judgments are life destroying.

Circle of Compassion, like the layers of an onion. Self at center, loved ones/family, friends, others, cultures. Superimposed is nature: pets, houseplants, yard/garden, local nature (park, boulevard trees), community, region.

“Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.” Plato  
Plato’s words could never be more true than today. Perhaps the greatest obstacle on the path of reverence is our lack of compassion for the ills of the world. Instead, we see around us, and feel within ourselves, a tremendous amount of judgement and insensitivity. Sanctuary work, however, is an effort to relieve ourselves from negativity so that we can live in our heart.

Dr. Michael Fox: “compassion is total embracing of all living things; otherwise it is a masquerade of sentimentality and patronage.”

Normally, we equate energy with an expression of power. But few know that very subtlest energy, that which is most powerful, comes through non-assuming and soft things like compassion and humility. You cannot be compassionate unless you are really strong. It’s a sign of greatness.

It is the illusion of separateness that creates the tension that houses mistrust, fear, anxiety, and the need to control or defend the boundaries of oneself. This tension can explode as anger, rage, but the trigger is always judgement.

Listening is perhaps the first step in cultivating compassion. Listening *with* your heart. Listening *to* your heart. This takes attention. Evoke compassion for yourself and others and you will find your heart will relax, you’ll be more kind, you’ll be softer.

The heart is our connection to the world. It allows us to find emotion in and toward life. Emotion as empathy can only lead us toward compassion and service. Then our efforts become devotional, bringing our heart to that other-worldly sense of love that has no conditions. We may call this simply devoted love, compassionate love, serviceful love, reverential love. When we find our heartfelt emotion-devotion-love has a bond with spiritual wisdom, then truly we feel and know a spiritual love as a God-force binding all of creation.

Jesus to Gabrielle, who entered into her diary simply, “September 11: I was weeding in the garden.” “Of course. Instead of thinking that you are working for yourself, why not think that it is for Me all day long. My meals, My walks, My garden, My room, My mending. Won’t that be more tender? Won’t it be balm for you?”

The hope of the world lies in the survival instinct of an enlightened humanity that realizes its humility, and that embodies respect and reverence for all life. The awakening of compassion necessitates a life of gentle simplicity so that one has the time and resources to extend loving kindness to all beings.

Compassion starts with oneself. Be gentle and patient. Both positive and negative thoughts and feelings arise in the mind and heart. We are all too eager to beat ourselves up. And when our spirit is adequately bruised we look for a scapegoat nearby. A spouse or other family member or pet will do. So will the driver too close behind you. Let compassion wash the negative away in a wave of love and understanding.

“That I feed the hungry, forgive an insult, and love my enemy — these are great virtues. But what if I should discover that the poorest of the beggars and most impudent of offenders are all within me, and that I stand in need of the alms of my own kindness; that I myself am the enemy who must be loved — what then? Carl Jung

To claim sanctuary for yourself is a compassionate act. It is loving yourself anew by respecting your needs and heart’s desires. But whether subtle or grand in its effect, sanctuary opens the heart. This is not just sanctuary work, this is sanctuary *at* work. And what arouses is compassion for life. The greatest obstacle in extending compassion is judgement — forming harsh opinions and criticism, even adopting attitudes of insensitivity and indifference that keep us separate from others. To practice this principle of sanctuary work assures us that the sacredness and well-being of all is in our best interest.

To embrace compassion is to *think with your heart and feel with your head*. Acting with compassion is not doing good because you think you ought to. It is being drawn to action by heartfelt passion, a feeling of affinity with other beings and nature, an awakening to your love for Creation in all its diverse expressions. In fact, our compassion for others is in direct proportion to our interpretation of the amount of their sacredness. (story about saving scorpion) Compassion is about bringing our deepest truths into our actions, no matter how much the world seems to resist. Gandhi exemplifies this the most in the principle of *ahimsa* (nonharm, nonviolence), “noncooperation with evil.”

The heart, like a vast bottomless chalice, has a tremendous capacity for compassion. But we treat it as if it were a shot glass.

People run from what they fear rather than live for what they love.

In the order of healing, it is human consciousness that first must change.

Make your observations about life not that of survival of the fittest but flourishing of the most cooperative.

The purpose of life is not be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well. Emerson

“Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing, there is a field. I’ll meet you there. When the soul lies down in that grass, the world is too full to talk about.” Rumi

God does not judge, so why should you?

The Earth forgives us because she knows that we are part of her, experiencing herself learning and growing.