



CONNECTED
BUSINESS

7 STEPS TO MINDFULNESS AND COMPASSION @WORK

MANUAL
Step 6: Compassion

7 Steps to Mindfulness and Compassion @Work

Step 6: Compassion

Today we will explore step 6 from our 7-step program: Compassion. As we shared before, we strongly believe that it is a time where we have to make a cultural shift from I to WE – looking into the areas where we can grow and at the same time support or serve others. Working with compassion is a way of looking for the benefit of all - through this you naturally become a leader with influence, no matter which position you are in - because people will follow your inspiration. Compassion in business also does not mean that you cannot make decisions. When we speak about compassion we always include self-compassion – it is so to say the first step.

Before we dive deeper into the content we invite to a short arriving practice....

Mindfulness practice

Arriving, connection with the present moment and the body: add any observation of what came up for you during the exercise. What is important for you today?

What is compassion?

Compassion does not mean that we cannot make any tough decisions anymore. It is more about your intention that drives your actions. The shift from I to WE means to have the best in mind for everyone in the team – it is a servant attitude

A compassionate leader is someone who puts himself into the service of the team and wants the best possible growth for everyone. He provides the full gift of listening instead of giving advice because he knows that this does not help and it also gives the wrong signal “you cannot handle it so I am doing it for you” or “I don’t trust you to figure it out for yourself”.

As we learned in authentic communication, there are ways to address difficult topics in a compassionate way but still saying your truth in a way that does not put any blame on the other person.

Compassion in business is connected to being a human at work, showing up fully with all there is including our emotions and the wisdom of our heart.

If someone acts with kindness and compassion, it has an impact not only on the others but also on themselves.

For real Compassion, we have to be brave and strong – because we have to face difficult situations and feelings.

We feel the feelings of others – this is hardwired in us as humans – we all can feel this but our first reaction is very often to not want to feel it because it creates a sensation of discomfort in our body. Through compassion, we become more resilient and able to face difficult emotions and situations.

Very often in a moment when someone shares a pain with us, we try to find a solution right away – why? Because it makes us feel uncomfortable – so our intention when we give suggestions to people to how they can feel better or get the pain away – is to release our own pain.

In business, what we do a lot as leaders: someone comes into our room and shares a problem with us and we try to fix it. But what the person would actually need is to be listened to. Very often if we just do that and give the person the feeling of being understood they come up with their own solution. This reaction needs us to be resilient enough to be able to be with discomfort, so our intention becomes the real will to support others.

Compassion also means letting go of the focus on ourselves and start focussing on others – but this does not always mean to sacrifice yourself but to give from a place of fullness.

That is why self-compassion is the crucial first step.

Self-compassion

Self-sacrificing: many people do a lot to support others, be there for friends, family, the team, or the company. Because of the responsibilities we carry, we sometimes forget about ourselves. We start sacrificing our health, our resting time and put the needs of others on top of the list. We sometimes even believe they cannot make it without us.

To be there for others we have to be there for ourselves first and allow us to be as we are – this is the compassion practice at its best.

The other part of self-compassion is that we actually criticize ourselves all day long to such an extent that we internally feel bad about ourselves, get depressed, think we are not enough, or believe that everyone else is better than us. Failure is normal. Being human means to fail and also that there is no perfection. Allowing ourselves to be exactly as we are, with all our strengths and weaknesses and rest in it, making peace with it – in this moment we are resilient in our own core and we can really open to others, as we can allow them to be as they are. Perfect ;)

Angel: *For me it was very touching when I read the book “Radical compassion” from Chögyam Trungpa” where he said:*

“The path of compassion starts with generosity and openness - giving and openness - the surrendering process. It is the way of ultimate bravery: because you are not afraid of hurting yourself and of anyone else because you are completely open.

You do not regard the situation outside as separate from you because you are so involved with the dance and play of life. To be completely open, to have that kind of absolute trust in yourself is the real meaning of compassion.”

Mindfulness Practice: Compassion practice

Already a short compassion practice can help us to shift the way we see others and create a habit to shift our attention which if we do it often enough will become the way we think.

This is the quick version that you can do anytime you have only a little bit of time:

*May I be happy
May all beings be happy
May all beings be free from suffering
May all beings be loved
May all my words and action
contribute to their happiness*

Compassion is a place where we can get challenged the most and where we want to be the most. If the long practice is too hard for you at the beginning, start with easier steps like compassion to an animal or a little child or just a short practice like the one below – allowing this feeling of wishing well to your heart.

We want to give you a short overview but really, this is a practice that develops the more you do it and it can have a totally different angle for you than for us – so find your very own way to start with it.

Why is compassion so helpful in the business context? Having an open heart to our colleagues will help us to understand them much faster so we might have to communicate much less and we might have better access to the inspiration, insights, and innovations of other people. So in a way, it helps us to be more effective.

At the same time it can help us to support people grow – even if we cannot follow their steps yet, it gives us great intent for our role as leaders. “I am supporting and serving the team” vs. “I have to tell them what they should do”

Try it out, open yourself to the other, put yourself into someone else's shoes. The more we make it a habit the more this becomes the way we think.

Homework Exercise

- *Practice 2 times compassion this week – you can use the attached recording or the short version above or any other resource you like*
- *Arriving meditation: find 10 minutes twice this week to do a meditation, you can use either this file or any of your choice*

Thanks for sharing your time with us and we look forward to our next session.

