

Compassion Practice

Summary

Empathy, as well as compassion, are often key components in what manifests in the social context as altruism. Both in ethical terms and on a practical basis they can become a conscious act by bringing immediate natural happiness into one's life. The key is to make it a habit.

Aims

- To promote awareness in a certain social context
- To develop mindfulness
- To explore and challenge one's own perceptions
- To become more sensitive in tuned person about the needs of others
- To understand and accept otherness and appreciate differences
- To find a compassion practice

Participants

Public officers, administration staff, volunteers in NGOs, adults from different social and cultural background.

Method

experiential learning, self-reflection

Source

Sonja Bercko. 2013. Znanje za ravnanje (Empathy). Velenje: Integra institute

Keywords

altruism, social context, conscious act

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Description

Empathy Practice:

The first step to cultivate compassion is to develop empathy for other people. Here is an example to practice: imagine that one of your closest loved ones is physically or mentally suffering. Try to imagine: see, hear, and feel pain. With more practice try to extend it to others who are not so close to you.

Oneness Practice:

Instead to think about differences between you and others, try to think about similarities.

Affirmations:

Chose one of the following statements and repeat it one week 5 times per day:

1. Just like me, this person has experienced sadness, despair, loneliness.
2. Just like me, this person is seeking to fill their own needs.
3. Just like me, this person seeks happiness.
4. Just like me, this person tries to avoid suffering.
5. Just like me.... (create your own sentence)

Act of Kindness Practice:

Every day choose one small behaviour and make it a daily practice: a smile, a kind word, a favour, an errand for someone else, take time to listen, etc.

Those who mistreat us practise:

The final stage in compassion practices is a reflection to those who mistreat us (your boss, stranger, family member, etc.) Did someone blame you about something that was not your fault? Spend a few minutes being curious about a person's personal history. Try to imagine the mood and state of mind as well the suffering that person must have been going through to mistreat you that way. Acknowledge that he or she was doing his or her best, just the same as you were when you may have mistreated someone else. The necessary ingredients for natural happiness are forgiveness and compassion.

Advice for Facilitators

If there will be a decision to do this exercise in a small group, then after a certain period it has the sense to an open discussion about group member's practice and outcomes. In this case, the trainer should have basic knowledge in group dynamics.

Category: Social Learning, Group size: Individual, Duration: 60 min

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