

As we begin this lesson on compassion, pause to consider this quotation:

“Compassion is the basis of morality.”

~Arthur Schopenhauer

Thoughts:

Consider the times in which someone showed compassion to you. How did you feel?

What values of compassion do you hold toward others? Society?

What questions do you have about the topic of compassion and its connection to mindfulness practice?

Compassion is the desire to relieve suffering. It is a capacity that is deeply human. Compassion is a core and universal emotion. It is believed that the capacity for compassion extends from our innate biologically driven protection of the young.

Mindfulness cultivates presence and simplifies things to help us to embody who we already are. Even Albert Einstein pondered the importance of compassion to humanity in his words,

“Our task must be to free ourselves by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature and its beauty.”

~Albert Einstein

Thoughts:

How might we understand compassion and mindfulness?

Mindfulness gives us the space to let go, to explore and to embrace a widened experience that is shared by others. Jon Kabat-Zinn explains compassion and mindfulness in this interview:

Jon Kabat-Zinn Mindfulness and Compassion
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7E7FBSIB1U>

Notes from video:

Research has confirmed that meditation leads us to experience and express more compassion toward others.

The Qualities of Compassion

Consider how you may invite these qualities into your interactions with others in your daily life and in your teaching.

Curiosity - genuine interest in what a student is experiencing

Kindness - a hospitable, non-judging attitude

Warmth - a tender inclination of heart toward the individual

Respect - appreciating the uniqueness of each individual

Allowing - not fixing and allowing each person to be whole and complete now

Humility - assuming that one person doesn't know what is best for another

Mutuality - sense of commonality with others in struggles and aspirations

Curiosity - genuine interest in what a student is experiencing

Kindness - a hospitable, non-judging attitude

Warmth - a tender inclination of heart toward the individual

Respect - appreciating the uniqueness of each individual

Allowing - not fixing and allowing each person to be whole and complete now

Generosity - willingness to go beyond one's usual limitations

Attentiveness - ability to focus on the experience of another

Empathy - feeling another's world as one's own

Equanimity - perspective and steadiness in the midst of strong emotions

Wisdom - understanding complexity and seeing a way through

Confidence - inner strength that arises from goodwill

Humility - assuming that one person doesn't know what is best for another

Thoughts:

Just Like Me Meditation

Go to Mindfulness Exercises.com to the guided meditation, Just Like Me.
<https://mindfulnessexercises.com/course/day-18-just-like-me/>.

You will also find this meditation in the Appendix section of resources. Record your observations of your feelings and how they may have shifted through this exercise.

If you are seeking a Certificate of Completion, you will need to log your practice the Just Like Me exercise plus guide another on three occasions. Use the self-assessment tool to record evidence of your progress in teaching the meditation.

Reflection Questions

Reflect upon the list of compassion qualities. Begin your exploration of compassion by selecting 1 - 3 qualities that you intentionally plan to cultivate in your mindfulness practice and teaching.

Consider the capacity of our shared humanity that is expanded through mindful meditation. What are your insights and inspirations?