



What can you expect in Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT) classes?

This brief overview summarizes the main theme and key points of each class. CCT is primarily an experiential learning process that is enabled by a series of daily meditations.

Written materials and a content related video are provided each week. Participants may have email and phone communication with the teacher throughout the training.

Please refer to the accompanying document “What is Compassion Cultivation Training?” for a concise general description of CCT and its benefits.

Class One: Settling the mind and body.

- Teacher introduces self and briefly describes purpose of compassion training. Very brief self introduction by participants.
- Summary of science showing the value of cultivating basic skills of intentionally shifting and stabilizing attention, including a wide range of benefits from informed mindfulness practices.
- Definition of compassion, its components, and value followed by a group discussion. Compassion as a source of strength.
- Reflective guided meditation. Dyad exercise followed by discussion. Description of experiential learning as a process, followed by a discussion.
- Description of setting intentions, followed by discussion. Interactive step-by-step practice of week one home meditation, followed by a discussion of home practice. Short closing meditation.
- **Main Points:** Science shows that cultivating compassion works; and is worth the effort. Anyone can do it. And, the value gained is dependent on the amount of practice.

Class Two: Loving Kindness and Compassion for a Loved One.

- Brief settling meditation before group discussion of home practice.
- Summary of science on neural plasticity and growing our natural abilities for compassion. Definition of loving kindness. Discussion. Guided loving kindness exercise. Dyad and then group discussion.

- How learning to look at others through the lens of compassion and loving kindness changes a person and their relationships. Group discussion. Learning to recognize the physical signs of compassion and loving kindness. Dyad discussion.
- The value of “informal practices” during the day as part of growing our natural capacity for shifting towards a compassionate perspective. Creating habits of the mind and heart. Group discussion.
- Guided practice of week two home meditation. Group discussion. Short closing meditation.
- **Main Points:** Intentionally guiding awareness is a proven method of increasing kind and compassionate perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and actions. Our perceptions guide our experience of life.

Class Three: Self-Compassion.

- Brief settling meditation before group discussion of home practice.
- Summary of science showing value of self compassion as source of well being, comfort, and empowerment.
- Self-compassion motivates better than the “inner critic”. It also reduces “burnout” for professional and family caregivers.
- Default mode defined with description of negative self-talk effects. The connection between self-compassion and compassion for others. Group discussion.
- Self-acceptance and forgiveness exercise. Dyad discussion of exercise followed by group interaction.
- The definition and value of a Compassionate Image. Guided meditation on compassion and non judgmental acceptance for oneself. Group discussion.
- Guided practice of week three home meditation on self compassion. Group discussion. Short closing meditation.
- **Main Points:** It is legitimate and safe to be compassionate and kind to oneself. Self compassion motivates better than the “inner critic”. “I am not my thoughts”.

Class Four: Loving Kindness for Oneself.

- Brief settling meditation before group discussion of home practice.
- Summary of science showing the aspiration for authentic happiness is a natural trait shared by all humans. It is legitimate, important, and useful to be a good friend to ourselves.
- Finding fulfillment in the life that you have. There is great value in learning to intentionally grow gratitude, self forgiveness, warmth, joy, and other positive emotions for oneself.
- It is useful to knowing the difference between suffering and pain; as well as the difference between authentic and superficial happiness.

- Guided self appreciation exercise. Dyad discussion followed by group discussion. Guided meditation on loving kindness for oneself. Group discussion.
- Guided practice of week four home meditation on loving kindness. Group discussion. Short closing meditation.
- **Main Points:** Loving kindness for oneself is not self indulgent. It reduces self absorption. And it is restorative. Being a good friend to yourself is good for everybody else. You can only give what you have got.

Class Five: Common Humanity

- Brief settling meditation before group discussion of home practice.
- Summary of science showing that “Just like me” all humans share the same basic aspirations to be free of suffering and authentically happy. Recognition of our Common Humanity is essential to developing compassion and empathy.
- We benefit from learning to appreciate our deep interconnectedness; and how the contributions of others enable us to survive and thrive. And that trust based connection with others is the foundation of well being and authentic happiness.
- Empathetic Attunement dyad exercise; followed by both dyad and group discussions.
- Guided meditation on embracing Common Humanity and appreciation of others. Group discussion.
- Guided practice of week five home meditation on Common Humanity. Group discussion. Short closing meditation.
- **Main Points:** “Me” does not exist without “We”. Common Humanity is one of the three essential elements of compassion. Informed practice and intentional appreciation can grow a sense of Common Humanity and improve relationships of all kinds.

Class Six: Cultivating Compassion for Others.

- Brief settling meditation before group discussion of home practice.
- Summary of science on the role of “intention” in growing compassion. Psychological, emotional, and relationship effects of compassion. What compassion is and is not. Separating compassion for another from judging their behavior.
- How “intentional” compassionate awareness of others reduces the role of the self judging “inner critic”.
- How intentionally extending the circle of those we see as part of our Common Humanity, can increase the range of people for whom we can feel authentic compassion.
- Guided “Eyes On” Exercise intended to grow heartfelt compassion and empathy for another person. Dyad interaction followed by group discussion.
- Guided practice of week six home meditation on extending Circle of Compassion. Group discussion. Short closing meditation.
- **Main Points:** The more you use compassion; the more compassion you have. Compassion benefits the giver and the receiver. Compassion is basically boundless.

Class Seven: Active “Giving and Receiving” Compassion.

- Brief settling meditation before group discussion of home practice.
- Summary of science on compassion as a process of transforming suffering. Compassionate intention and non-verbal communication.
- Definition and value of the Giving and Receiving compassion practice. Using the Giving and Receiving practice to reduce suffering for others; and oneself.
- The value of compassionate imagery and how to use it. Altruism as compassion in action. The importance of compassion for the giver. Choosing when and how much compassion to give.
- Guided Giving and Receiving compassion exercise followed by both dyad interactions and group discussion.
- Guided practice of week seven home meditation on “giving and receiving” compassion. Group discussion. Short closing meditation.
- **Main Points:** Giving and receiving compassion is safe. A person can learn to make balanced and sustainable choices with compassionate feeling and actions. Compassion lives in real world actions; within oneself, and with others.

Class Eight: Integrating Daily Compassion Cultivation Practice.

- Brief settling meditation before group discussion of home practice.
- Summary of main points from the entire class.
- Description of what enables the sustainability of experiential learning including the “tailoring” of personal practices.
- Guided meditation on integrating daily practice followed by group discussion.
- Offering of high quality resources for continuation of compassion related learning.
- Anonymous course evaluation forms completed.
- Closing circle in which participants can each briefly share a reflection on their experience in the class.
- Brief thank you from the teacher.
- Closing meditation.
- Open discussion time with light refreshments.
- **Main Points:** Meaningful and sustainable growth of compassion skills can be achieved by virtually anyone in eight weeks.