

Compassion.. for yourself and for Mildred

I am thrilled to share this Coach's Corner with Guest Coach/Kits Rackstar/blogger extraordinaire Krista Huber. Below you will be treated to her latest blog that I thought gave an excellent perspective on Compassion for others as well as being totally hilarious. Be warned, it's a little cheeky...but so are we. ☺

Compassion for others is critical when we want the people in our life to feel truly loved but what about when the person who needs warmth and kindness is YOU? Often when we hear the phrase self-compassion we assume it's synonymous with self-indulgence or self-pity. Surprisingly, the opposite is true. Self-compassion is feeling what happened to you is unfortunate, whereas self-pity is feeling that what happened to you is unfair. Practicing self-compassion requires us to do three things:

1. Realize we're experiencing difficulties
2. Respond with kindness and understanding towards ourselves when we are suffering, rather than being harshly self-critical
3. Realize that whatever we're going through is commonly experienced by all human beings, and remembering that everyone goes through difficult times

So, how do we cultivate self-compassion and counter our inner critic's attacks? I looked to the person who embodies warmth, peace, kindness...WWTDLD? (What would the Dalai Lama Do?)...**Metta** is the answer, a millennia-old Buddhist compassion and self-compassion practice that roughly translates as "loving kindness". Simply put, Metta is the conscious practice of developing kind intentions toward all beings. It is a visualization exercise that takes advantage of two instinctive human tendencies: our absorption of images and our respect for authority. It may feel a little awkward or uncomfortable at first but I encourage you to do it anyways. This practice has saved me from myself many, many times.

Metta Practice:

- Sit comfortably, close your eyes, and take two or three deep breaths. As you inhale, imagine drawing in masses of clean air toward the top of your head; then let it whoosh through you from head to toe as you exhale, washing all concerns away.
 - Think of any occasion in your life when you performed a good deed, however great or small. Just one good action-one moment of truth, generosity, or courage. Focus on that memory for a moment.
 - Now think of one being, whether present or past, mythical or actual-Jesus, Buddha, Mother Teresa, the Dalai Lama- who could have great affection for you. This could be a person, a pet, or even a stuffed animal.

- Picture this being in your mind. Imagine their warmth, their kindness and compassion. See it in their eyes and face. Feel their warmth radiating toward you, enveloping you.
- See yourself through their eyes with warmth, kindness, and compassion. Feel them giving you complete forgiveness for everything your inner critic says is wrong. You are completely and absolutely forgiven. You have a clean slate.
- Feel them giving you wholehearted acceptance. You are accepted as you are, right now, at this stage of growth, imperfections and all. You are perfect. At this stage of development, you are perfect. At this stage of growth, you are perfect. At this stage of perfection, you are perfect. With everything that's in your head and heart, you are perfect.
- With all your imperfections, you are perfect
- For this phase of growth, you are perfect.
- You are fully approved just the way you are, at this stage of development, right now.

And now that you feel all warm, peaceful, and yummy...you deserve a chuckle...meet my Guest Coach, Krista Huber...

(from her most recent post at www.halfaglassblog.wordpress.com)

I recently finished a book study that I did for work. It's called "The Charisma Myth" and it's about how you can improve your interactions with people to get a much better result. Call it manipulation, call it magic. It's a fact of life and it was very informative.

One of the exercises we did was about perspectives. Long story short, it went something like this ...

Imagine you're on your way to an important presentation and you're a little bit late. No time for coffee and someone cuts you off. You're pissed. You hurl insults at the car you would never say in a face to face situation. You show up at your meeting, you're frazzled, off your game, and you can't get into the mental space needed to give a compelling presentation.

Now imagine the same situation. Someone has just cut you off. Instead of them being a faceless asshole, imagine they are a mother frantically trying to pull over because her child is choking in the back seat.

Or imagine whatever you would feel sympathetic for. The point is changing your perspective inside so that you show a more put together charismatic person outside. Whether you're into self improvement or you think it's hippy BS, it makes sense and it works. (unless you're an asshole who feels empathy for no one. I'm lookin' at you Kevin O'leary)

So, I had an opportunity to put this to the test.

I was working, (I'm a retail manager for a women's clothing store) It is a sales job, but most importantly, a customer service job. (Being good at the latter usually influences the former... and let's face it being nice to people is just good karma... which is bad news for Kevin.)

So there I was. working hard. A woman walked in the front door. Let's call her Mildred. Mildred walks through the door with her hair in curls. I instantly imagined Mildred at home that morning in a housecoat with a head full of rollers, because that's what I do.

and then I saw the bag.

It was one of our bags, which only means a return. When your job is to give the right product in exchange for money, it feels like failure when you do the opposite.

I'm so dramatic ☺. It's not that big of a deal, returns are a part of working in retail, and they happen, but it still sucks.

So anyway, back to Mildred. She was making a return. She handed me the bag and said she wanted her money back. In order to get into my frame of mind, it must be said that Mildred also came with 2 friends. Cigarette smoke and cat hair, and they were all over her. I don't hate many things, but I hate cats. They are little assholes that know I'm allergic, but they play stupid and pretend to love me. We all know cats are sociopaths that don't love anything, except maybe plotting revenge on humans.... we all know that right?

When I opened the bag to get the item, I could instantly smell the smoke, and I started to get a little bit more annoyed about the whole situation.

and then it happened.

My imagination took over, and my perspective started to change.

I pictured poor Mildred in her home at the mercy of a gang of cats. No, a mob of cats. A mob of chain smoking cats, and she was enslaved by them. I pictured her trying on her skirt in front of the mirror and the cats laughing at her, laughing with cigarettes in their mouths of course saying she would never have a need for nice clothes like that. (like a weird version of Cinderella, only with more smoking, no gus gus and lots of lucifer...)

As I pictured it, I almost laughed, but I kept it in, because Mildred wasn't privy to the scene that just went down in my head and laughing would have been weird. The point is, my demeanor towards her changed, I hated those underworld guarding assholes for her and although this was probably not the route the book had in mind... it still got me to the same empathizing, charismatic, customer serving destination. Success!

