

**Mindfulness of Feelings and Needs**  
**Compassionate Embrace/Transforming Core Beliefs**  
**(Adapted from Living Compassion by Robert Gonzales)**

The path to emotional and spiritual healing is through our vulnerability. When our guard is up, our ego engaged, it is nearly impossible to reach the heart. And the heart is where the wounding is. To heal we need to connect to that wounding. We need to open ourselves up to the pain. And then, with our gentle allowing awareness, we can start to heal.

Steps of the Compassionate Embrace:

- 1) Notice or recall a stimulus or trigger that causes a painful contraction or emotional reaction. It could be a thought, story, judgment or interpretation.
- 2) Feel the stimulus/trigger in the body. How does the thought/judgment/memory make us feel? What is the felt sense from the stimulus?

Connect to the bodily sensations and just stay with them exactly as they are with a gentle allowing. Do not try to change the thought or feelings, or judge them, or push them away. Just be with them for as long as they are in your awareness. You can even reassure the thought or judgment by telling it, "I will let you be as long as you want." Or "I'm not trying to change you or fix you or teach you." Or "It is ok to be exactly as you are."

- 3) After a while of gently observing the sensations a softening and vulnerability should start to become present. This is an opening to the heart. Be with this softening. Be with the vulnerability. Feel it. Connect to it. Hold it.
- 4) Once you can feel this softening, this connection to your vulnerability, ask yourself, as if you were talking directly to your heart, or to a young part of you, "What Am I Longing For?" "What Am I Yearning For?" "What Am I Aching For?" "What is dear to me?"
- 5) Wait for an answer or for mourning or both. The answer may lead to a need. Once we connect to that beautiful need, linger with it. Connect to it. Experience it. If sadness or loss comes up, be with that. Mourn the losses. If tears come, let them flow. Do not try to change anything.
- 6) After lingering with the beauty of the needs, you can circle back around to the original thought or sensation and notice how it may have changed.
- 7) A final step is to make a request of one's self if one arises.