



Compassionate University

University of Edinburgh

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Two fundamentals

Looking after yourself

- ▶ Relieving tension
- ▶ Meeting our needs
- ▶ Finding more inner spaciousness
- ▶ Making wiser decisions

Open mind, heart, will

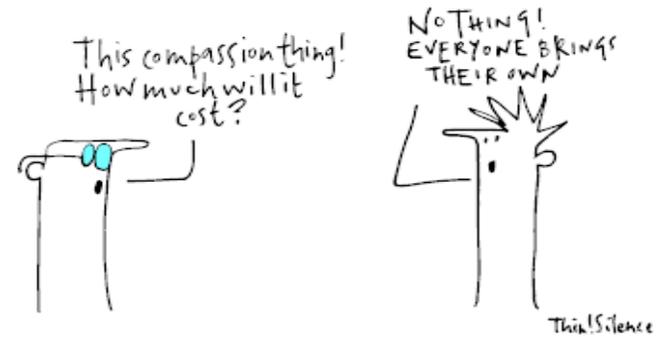
- ▶ The Learning State
 - ▶ a state of relaxed alertness
- ▶ Optimizes our learning abilities and enables us take in more information from our surroundings

Global Compassion Initiative:

Understanding compassion and its integration into the various domains of society.

- <http://www.whatstheuniversityfor.com/>
- <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/>
- <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/blog/developing-organisational-cultures-to-enable-kindness/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DP6G3y7EVJ8&feature=youtu.be>

THE EDINBURGH GLOBAL COMPASSION INITIATIVE



valuing, caring, and
acting with others to
navigate our complex
world and grow a
sustainable future



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
Global Health Academy





UoE Global Compassion Initiative

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/global-health/global-compassion-initiative>

Our ambition for the Compassion Initiative is three fold:

1. to ensure that students leave university with an understanding of the fundamental aspects and drivers of human existence and the relationships that hold people together, enabling creativity and innovation to flourish. At the core of this is compassion.
2. to ensure that business leaders understand and step into the challenges their businesses are facing by developing a leadership practice centred on the ethic of compassion with interactive learning workshops, exposure to key scientists and thought leaders in the fields of leadership, data science and compassion science, action learning sets and one-to-one coaching, supported by a programme-specific virtual learning environment, to support them and their organizations in navigating the age of disruption
3. to provide support for organisations and communities to utilise a Compassion Index which will set a benchmark for compassion engagement across all services.



WTUF?

WHAT'S THE
UNIVERSITY
FOR?

Current projects:

1. fostering a culture of compassion within the University
2. exploring the role of the UoE as a Global University, in addressing current global challenges.

Scottish Government National Performance Framework

- UoE Chaplaincy hosted a National Convivium on Compassion in Organisations in June 2019 with members of the Scottish Government and the Carnegie Trust.
- Our International Convivium will take place on 7 October.





Stanford
MEDICINE

THE CENTER FOR COMPASSION AND
ALTRUISM RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

Power of Compassion video

- ▶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=78&v=rUi40yTXrjY



We are developing practice and research with the following organisations:

- ▶ Scottish Government
- ▶ Carnegie Trust
- ▶ NHS
- ▶ Stanford, CCARE
- ▶ University of Helsinki
- ▶ University of Queensland
- ▶ University of Rwanda
- ▶ University of Sussex, Prof Robin Banerjee, Kindness in universities
- ▶ University of Derby, Prof Paul Gilbert, Centre for Compassion Research and Training



‘the ultimate value of every **institution** is its distinctively **human effect**’, and yet ‘the intellectual and emotional reaction of the forms of human association under which the world’s work is carried on receives little attention as compared with physical output’

John Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, Simon and Brown, 2011, p. 8



‘I will never forget a consultant physician gathering a group of students around the bed of a wizened old man and being forced to run through the differential diagnosis of his enlarged liver **as if he – the person – wasn’t there**. The consultant didn’t ask his consent, didn’t take any notice of his fear when one of us said the liver could be cancerous, did nothing to exhibit an iota of human sensitivity.... all too frequently one of the factors that underpins poor care is an attitude to care that is **task based rather than person centred**’

David Haslam, ‘More than Kindness’, *Journal of Compassionate Healthcare* (2015): 2-6



[an educated person] is one who never inflicts pain....[who] carefully avoids whatever may cause a jar or a jolt in the mind of those with whom s/he is cast....

tender towards the bashful, gentle towards the distant, and merciful towards the absurd; [they] can recollect to whom [they are] speaking...

never mean or little in disputes, never takes unfair advantage, never mistakes personalities or sharp sayings for arguments.

[they] know the weakness of human reason as well as its strengths, its province and its limits.

John Henry Newman *the Idea of a University*, Yale UP, 1996 pp. 145-6

What is compassion?

- Shout outs: Words that are associated with “compassion”.



Self-reflective activity

- Consider a situation in your own experience, in which compassion was significantly present or conspicuously absent.
- Which virtues or qualities were present or absent in this situation?
- How did you feel?
- What were the outcomes?





Tripping over terminology!

- ▶ Sympathy: an emotional reaction of pity toward the misfortune of another.
- ▶ Empathy: an ability to understand and accurately acknowledge the feelings of another, leading to an attuned response.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Ewgu369Jw>

- ▶ Compassion: noticing suffering, feeling warmth towards it, making sense of, and taking action to relieve it.
- ▶ Self-compassion / care of self: becoming aware of and alleviating one's own suffering; recognising yourself as among the company of those who need compassion

*KD Neff, 'Self-compassion: An alternative conceptualization of a healthy attitude toward oneself.' *Self Identity*, 2003;2(2):85–101.*



Some reasons people have for not wanting to act with compassion at work include:

- + being unprofessional
- + feeling too exposed
- + allowing softness into situations that need strength and toughness
- + taking too much time
- + not having measurable impact
- + allowing injustice, or unfairness
- + feeling put out of joint or being shown up in some way.

Allowing the 'miracle' of compassion

Compassion protects against burnout;
empathy may increase risk of burnout



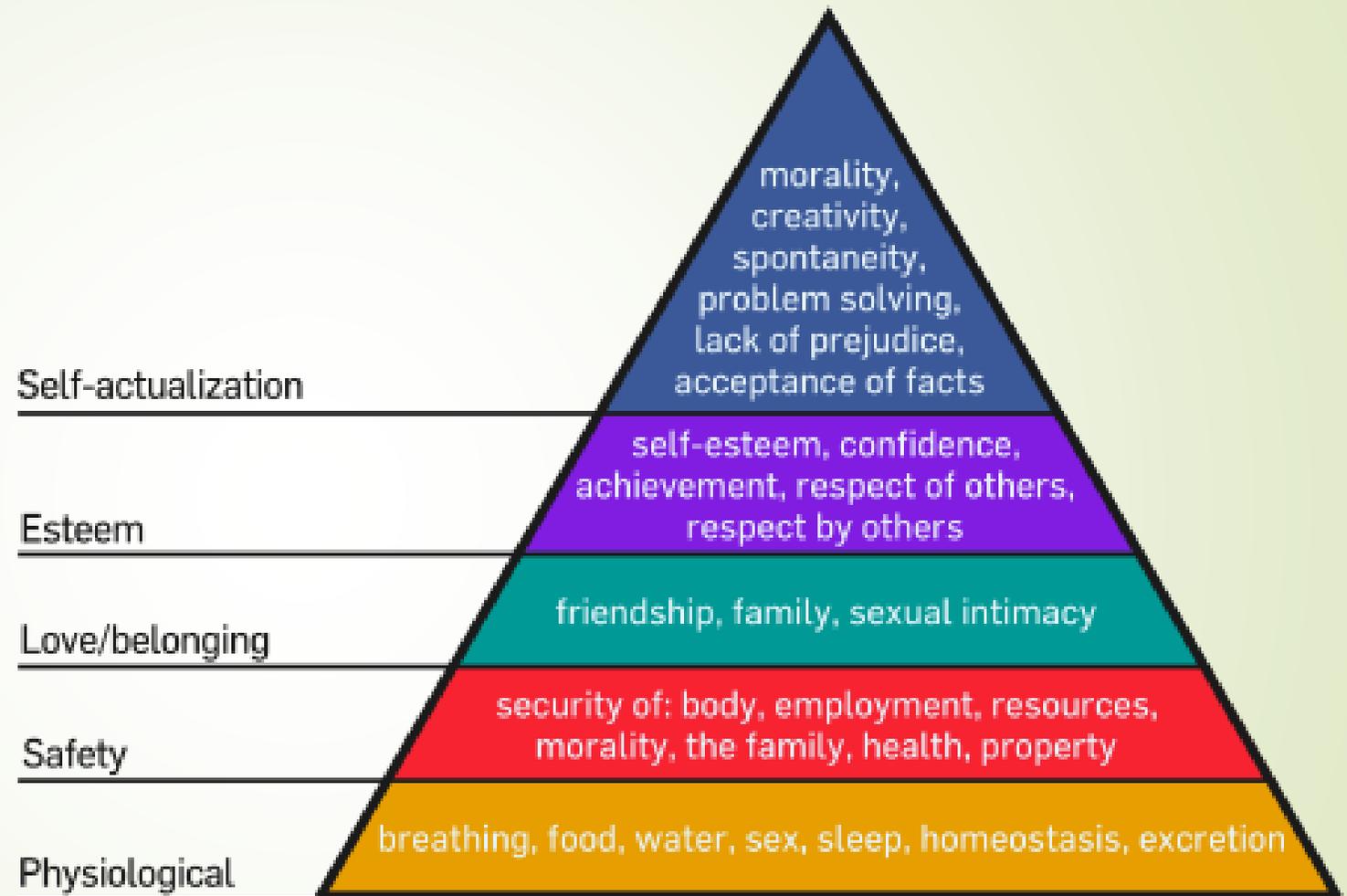


‘In contrast to empathy, compassion does not mean sharing the suffering of the other: rather, it is characterized by feelings of warmth, concern and care for the other, as well as a strong motivation to improve the other’s well-being. Compassion is feeling for and not feeling with the other.’

Tania Singer and Olga Klimecki, ‘Empathy and Compassion’, *Current Biology*, 24 (2014): R875.

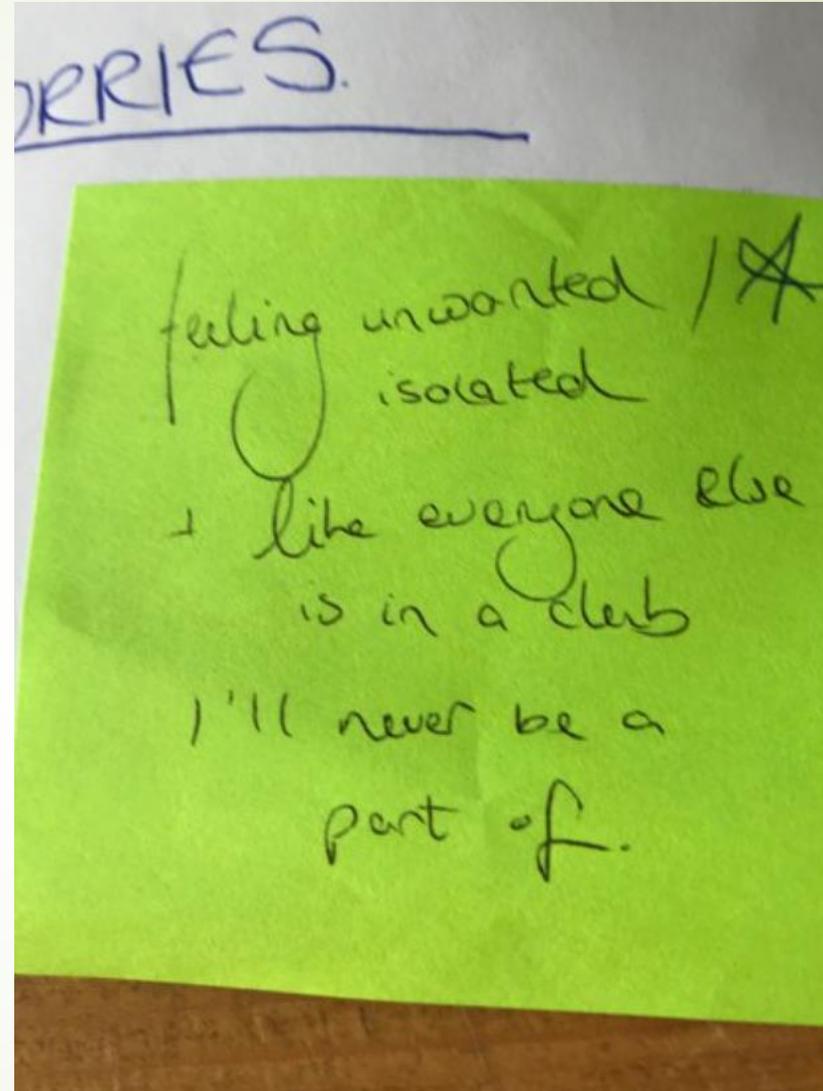
Self-compassion includes

- ▀ Learning from Maslow! Take care of your needs.
- ▀ Take the basics seriously: water, food, shelter, sleep.
- ▀ The need for connection is very real.
- ▀ The higher needs are still needs. They are not dispensable desires.
- ▀ Try not to meet your needs with desires – your needs will stay unmet.
- ▀ Notice and retune your inner voice and critic.
- ▀ Difficult emotions are not 'bad'; face, accept, and learn from them.
- ▀ Find your creativity, integrity, and joy: try not to compromise them.
- ▀ Know what is yours, and what is for others to do.
- ▀ Know that your greatest difficulties become your best assets.



What would be relevant forms of suffering?

- ▶ 'being at the whim of supervisors who didn't understand the difficulties of their work, or pressure of unreasonable deadlines and demands, and of feeling consistently devalued and disengaged when they wanted their work to be meaningful. These are pervasive forms of suffering at work. So pervasive, in fact, that they likely are taken for granted as part of the work environment and slip under the surface of everyday working life' (Worline and Dutton, *Awakening Compassion at Work*, p. 8).





Benefits to us when we are compassionate

- ▶ Increased happiness, and happier people are more inclined to help others
- ▶ More social ties
- ▶ Boost in creative and cognitive skills. A warm encounter with a stranger boosts cognitive skills; experiments in maths show this
- ▶ Pleasure, joy, dopamine levels
- ▶ Life expectancy, effect on vagus nerve and heart rate, buffer against pain
- ▶ Balance, physiological recovery from work is faster if we have good collegial support at work



Compassion within organisations improves (Worline, Pessi):

- Psychological safety, -> improved health and safety (oil rig example), and more innovation
- Culture of trust and positivity
- Client/member interaction, creating value, e.g, doctors who behaved compassionately were believed to have spent more time with a patient than they actually did.
- Recruitment and commitment, retention
- Wellbeing in a team, and less sick leave

Compassionate leaders were found to be those with greater expertise – perhaps feeling less need to be governed by rules and processes, or less afraid of criticism from above... Discuss!

Talking with people in your free time, or freeing your time to talk with people?

Cf Karen Phelan, *I'm Sorry I
Broke your Company*,
Berrett-Koehler, 2013

Oil rig experience





Awakening Compassion at Work, Monica C. Worline and Jane E. Dutton, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2017

Dutton and Worline report findings that:

- Medical teams with higher quality of teamwork report higher rates of medical errors. On further research, this was because such teams have the 'psychological safety' to report and learn from 'near misses' (p. 20);
- When physicians and administrators address and apologise for the suffering caused by errors, the number of law suits goes down (not up, as is often feared) (p. 84).

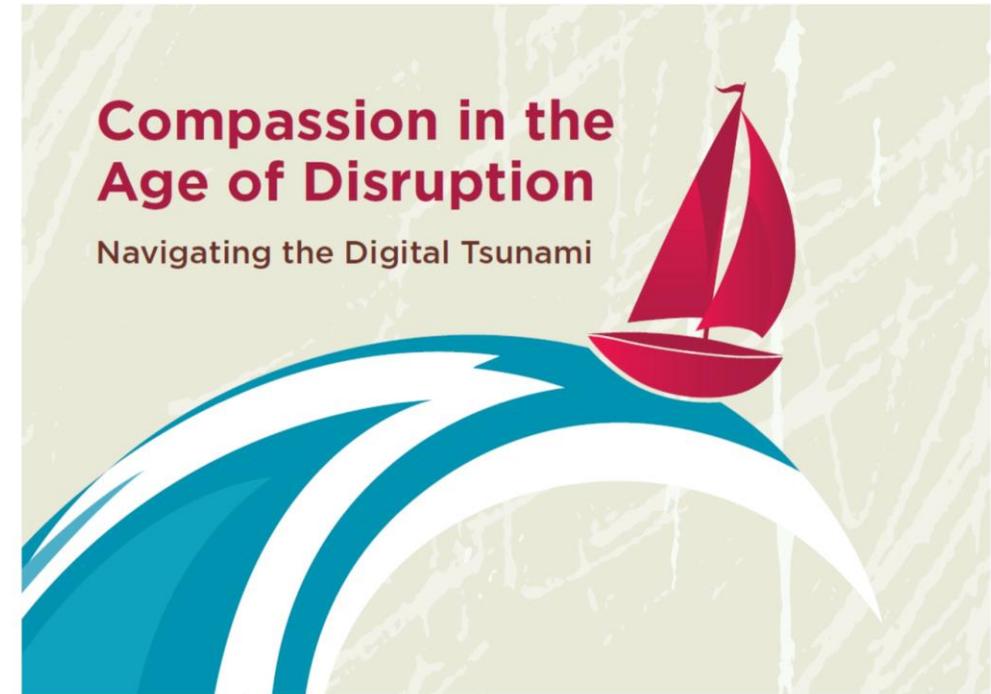


- ▶ **Time is restored to us** “The whole conversation took about 35 minutes, but I’m pretty sure the rest of my academic day would have been lost otherwise. When we were done I said, ‘now we need to get to work’ and we did. It was as if the clouds cleared”
- ▶ **And we can be restored to ourselves.** “For me this comes after a period of having really cut myself off from my feelings. I wouldn’t allow myself to feel anything bad, which had the unsurprising effect of not allowing myself to feel anything good either, despite a lot of good things going on in my life. I didn’t feel anything deeply because I pushed everything away. For years I believed that vulnerability would be scary – and to a certain extent it is – but it is also a real gift...This experience has helped me to manage that vulnerability and to experience it as a treasure.”

Tania Singer & Matthias Bolz, *Compassion. Bridging Practice and Science*, an online resource.

Some Compassionate University Activities

- Compassion for Healthcare Practitioners, Clinical Educator Programme, NHS
- Mindfulness and Compassion courses for students and staff
- Curriculum development and co-teaching
- Compassion Summit with Stanford, 'Compassion in the Age of Disruption' Dec 2017, further summit planned
- Partnering with Carnegie Kindness Innovation Network, research 2018-19
- Scottish Convivium, June 2019
- International Convivium, Oct 2019





Themes and Questions for our International Convivium

- ▶ What Compassion looks like: A Vision for the Future.
- ▶ Feeling the Impact of Compassion. We know we are a Compassionate University when....
- ▶ Why is Compassion so difficult in institutions and professions? What do we need from Managers and Leaders?
- ▶ How is compassion informing our strategic planning?
- ▶ How is it informing how we teach; how we run meetings; how we recruit...?

An outcome: a resource that develops Pathways for growing Compassion.