

## 7\_8\_26 Talk\*

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[00:00:00] For this part, I've named it Coming Home, the Power of One Compassionate Connection. In the meditation, I invited you to bring to mind one person, someone who saw you, perhaps Someone who encouraged you, um, someone who perhaps... Recognize something in you that you had not fully recognized in yourself. And I want to stay with that idea for a little while tonight because I think there's tremendous power in one compassionate connection. And then of course, you can do that and then you can connect with another and connect with other and connect another. But I think sometimes people in the mindful field, consciousness field and sanghas and all of the work that I do to not only heal individuals but heal communities. We sometimes think really huge and then feel somewhat disappointed because how can I as one person influence the world, bring healing to the world.

[00:02:07] And so, well, that's a great vision and I think on some level It's what I want to do as well, but I'm starting to find on my journey that... There is power in one compassionate connection. I mean, one connection at a time. So we wanna make a difference and we want to have an impact. And I'd say those can be beautiful aspirations but sometimes The size of the need can become overwhelming because there's so much suffering and there's much division, so much that needs our care. Sometimes I've wondered and maybe you've wondered or we wonder what can I possibly do with these big gigantic challenges that are going on.

[00:03:24] So tonight I'd like to offer what I call a smaller question. And perhaps in some ways a larger one, it's how do I inhabit the encounter or opportunity right in front of me? How do I inhabit the encounter or opportunity that's right in front of me? So when we gathered last month, I talked about coming home to ourselves, about the stories we carry, about self-compassion, about the breadcrumbs that sometimes guide us back to parts of ourselves we may have forgotten. And I've continued thinking about that. Because perhaps coming home to ourselves is not the end of the journey. Perhaps the question becomes, how do we live from that place? How do we speak from that space? How do listen from that places? And how do we disagree from that space? And how to we care from that place? And then for me, this is where slowing down becomes important. Because when I am exhausted, or hurried, or frightened, or overwhelmed, or reactive, I may still care deeply about people, but I may not always meet them from my most grounded place.

[00:05:49] Sometimes the most compassionate thing I can do begins before I say anything. Take a breath. They're all my feet. Move my toes, get grounded. Notice what's happening inside of me. And just sit with that for a moment. Because one of the things I've discovered is that the more honestly I look at my own life, the more humble I become. I can see the child I was. I can see and feel the dreams I carry. I can sense into things that hurt me. The things I misunderstood? In the times I played smaller, or the times I was courageous. The person I am now and the person I'm still becoming. And when I really sit with all of that, I'm reminded I'm unfinched. I'm Still learning. I'm, still discovering. I'm ,still opening doors. I'm .still coming home. And I want you to join me in thinking about that. What does that mean when we come home within ourselves? Because when you get in that space, the way you respond to other people is lifting. It's unique. It's special. It may be simple, but it's a way to connect in a real way with other people. And I think sometimes perhaps remembering my own complexity can make me a little less certain that I have

everyone else figure it out. Because maybe the person in front of me is carrying a story I don't know or I cannot see. Maybe even that I can't relate to. Or I don't understand. Maybe they're standing in a doorway I know nothing about. Maybe they're trying to find their way home too.

[00:09:35] And I've been thinking about this in a particularly personal way recently. I lost my cousin a few days ago, and she was my cousin, but in many ways she was like an older sister to me. And as I've been grieving, what keeps returning to me... Are not grand events. Their conversations. One-on-one conversations, moments when she listened to me. Encouraged me. Supported me. She saw gifts in me when I was a little kid. She, and then as I got older, she saw my ability to touch other people. I started as an artist, singer, songwriter, creative, then went into education, but she saw ability to touch people and... Sometimes she seemed to see things in me I was still learning to see in myself. And I've been thinking. Did she know how much those conversations mattered? Did she know how far they would travel? Because perhaps when one person truly sees us, something happens. We carry that seeing forward. Someone believes in us or takes the time to be present with us. And perhaps we become a little more able to believe in ourselves. Someone listens to us, and perhaps we become a little more able to listen to one another. Someone makes room for us and perhaps one day we make room for someone else. So we begin to touch ourselves and get in touch with ourselves, and then we widen it.

[00:13:27] And I'm encouraging you to start with one, one person. One conversation, one moment of attention. One opportunity to see. And maybe as I'm saying it, it doesn't sound like much. And yet think about your own life. Who was one teacher who believed in you? Who is one friend who stayed? One family member who encouraged you. One person who said something you still remember years later. And then I would say one compassionate connection. May never remain only one connection. Why? Because you pass it on. Because we carry people with us, their words, their insights, their open-heartedness. They're jesters. The way they make us feel. I mean, it's happening right now. I realize that I'm speaking to you now from what Jeannie, my cousin, planted in my memory as a child, as a teenager, as young woman. And now as an elder. She planted seeds and words in my heart and soul. She helped me remember myself without doubt because she didn't have any doubt. There are people that we will encounter in our lives who can help us remember ourselves. And sometimes what they gave us enters rooms they will never see. I'm here talking to you this evening where I am, different time zones, different locations, And I'm speaking something to you that... Someone recognized in me. I'm bringing Jeannie into this Zoom session, into this talk.

[00:17:22] Sometimes what people give us, what they gave us, enters rooms they will never see. My cousin enters this classroom through me right now. My friends, things they've planted in me, enters my teaching, my grandmother. Long left this physical plane, enters my compassion work. My former teachers enter my doctoral work. People who loved me and who love you. Enter rooms they never physically enter. That is the ripple. So... I do want to say that you don't have to save everyone. I want to be careful here because compassionate connection does not mean that we have to be available to everyone all the time. It doesn't mean abandoning ourselves. It doesn't mean having no boundaries. It doesn't mean becoming the savior of everybody. In fact, I think... Self-compassion matters precisely because it helps us notice our own limits. Sometimes I need to rest. Sometimes I need to say no. Sometimes I need to take a breath before I respond. And sometimes the person who needs compassionate attention is me. From a more grounded place. Perhaps I have greater freedom to ask who is actually in front of me. Not everybody, but this person. This conversation. This moment.

[00:21:14] So I think tonight I'm speaking a little, potentially shorter time than usual, because I would love to have a bit of a conversation with you all. But I do want to say, I'm not. Asking you to save the world. Well, maybe underneath it all, I do want us to save world. But I'm more saying, don't feel any kind of way if you can't save everybody and everything. Right? I'm not asking you to become someone new. I'm really inviting you to notice because that's what I'm doing. I'm starting to notice. And to think who helped you remember who you are and who in your sphere, when they're in your midst, whether by phone, text or in person, helps you to remember who you are. And who are you helping to remember who they are? What of that connection still lives in you? I know that my cousin Jean has passed from this physicalness. But the fact that I'm talking about it now means that it's carrying forward because of several conversations that she had with me over her lifetime. And we can do that, each of us. We can have real moments with people. People we know, people in our families. I've had some real. One-on-one conversations with strangers in a grocery line. Not all the time. I'm just saying there are opportunities to connect heart to heart in just places we might not think of as valid places to bring more love and compassion. Into the world. So it can be one person. One conversation. One moment of listening.

**Speaker 1** [00:24:44] One opportunity to see because perhaps compassion is not only about what we feel, maybe it's also how we inhabit the encounter in front of us. There's really an opportunity often, more often than we might think. We may never know how far one compassionate connection will travel. Let me say that again. We may never know how far one compassionate connection will travel. We may ever know what rooms it will enter. We may never know whose life it will touch. But we can begin with one. So before. We move into our conversation. First, some people have sent me nice little notes. I so appreciate you. Some privately. Expressing sorrow for my loss. Thank you so much. It means everything. And some of you are also writing in the chat. I feel you. I thank you. And for, just you bless me every time and I so appreciate you. And I'm somebody who's going to... Teach me again how to save the chat so that I have that and can take that with me. But. I did want to say before we move into our conversation that I just love to pause and simply hear from you. After our meditation and our time together, and me a little bit rambling but coming from my heart. Yeah, I just really got that notion of what one person can do. The impact of one person's attention or love towards you can do a lot. And so what's present for you now, what's resonating, or perhaps lingering? Some of you are already putting things in the chat. Wondering also if you have a question. Or if you have something you're willing to raise your hand and say out loud, would love to hear it. I see Elaine.

**Speaker 2** [00:28:42] I'm so sorry for your loss, um...

**Speaker 1** [00:28:45] Thank you so much.

**Speaker 2** [00:28:49] Um, yeah, I've had a number of losses lately also when it does put you in a different place. Yes. Um. I do have a question, and maybe it's personal and you don't have to answer it, but I'm just wondering because the way you speak, your cadence is so thoughtful, and I'm wondering if that is if you always spoke that way. Or if it develops from your studying compassion, because I'm trying to describe the feeling I have from it. And all I could think of is it almost stops time. You know, running around all day and being distracted and screens in my face and having to think fast. This is so totally the opposite. It's almost as if time has stopped and whatever like the opposite of distraction is. And I'm

like, did you consciously do that or Does that develop or? And again, if that's too personal, it's fine, but it just. I'm wondering about that.

**Speaker 1** [00:30:16] Thank you so much for that. Wow. Question, Elaine. Thank you, so much. You know, um. As a child, I was kind of, what would they call, like a deep thinking child. I was that child. But I would say by the time that I got in my teens, I was a seeker. I was seeker, And I always felt deeply, you know, at a young age. And it didn't seem like people around me were thinking deeply. So I spent a lot of time in libraries and places where that... Part of me could be fed, and I think it's developed over time. I certainly wasn't as thoughtful as I am when I was 13 and speaking this way, but I have tended to, because I'm Receiving and thinking and talking kind of thing. That's going on. I'm I'm I'm almost I'm listening and speaking and perceiving so there's a lot going on that potentially slows me down because I'm trying to receive something and I'm trying to embody it as well. And am I answering you Elaine?

**Speaker 2** [00:32:24] Yes, yes, I was going to put in here, very grateful to catch my breath.

**Speaker 1** [00:32:29] OK.

**Speaker 2** [00:32:30] That's what it does.

**Speaker 1** [00:32:31] Okay, okay, I think it yeah, so but I will say I think now that here's the thing Elaine I'm so glad you asked I think that now that I'm an elder right I feel more at ease being this way. When I was younger, I wasn't as at ease with it, I don't think, because everybody was so quick. Fast talking, fast thinking, there was a lot going on and I was a little bit under energetically, which I then put in creativity. And I think also... Because I started out as a creative artist, singer, songwriter, artist, dancer. So I was able to kind of be it, be manifesting my knowledge, my heart, my spirit through creative arts. And I discovered that I could teach and through teaching. I also became able to access my own wisdom and kind of tap in. And so I'm kind of tapping in and talking at the same time, which can be a good thing and not so good thing, because some people like you to get right to the point. And sometimes I'm telling a story before I get right the point, so I've learned where I can do that and where I have to go a bit faster and Rick lets me be myself. So in this setting, I can share that part of me without feeling like I have to rush or that I have hit every point. What a great question, Elaine.

**Speaker 3** [00:34:48] Yeah, looks like we have three more hands.

**Speaker 1** [00:34:51] Would love to hear from you.

**Speaker 3** [00:34:52] Yeah, Roy, you should be able to unmute yourself.

**Speaker 4** [00:34:58] Thank you so much and I'm so sorry for your loss.

**Speaker 1** [00:35:01] Thank you. Thank you

**Speaker 4** [00:35:03] I am so touched by the talks that you gave because it feels like your heart is right there. When I fail to be compassionate is where I'm running away from my own pain. And when someone brings something that is painful for me too and I'm having a hard It's time to be without pain. It sounds like you're very brave and you're able to be with your own pain and pain of others. How do you grow that?

**Speaker 1** [00:35:43] Well, I have become aware, more aware of my limits, right? I can't just take on a... Overflow of pain. I can't do that. But I will say that I, I'll use this term, I practice daily.

**Speaker 5** [00:36:16] I

**Speaker 1** [00:36:16] I mean, I'm either writing, thinking, meditating, gardening, petting my dog, like I am. Almost 24-7, caring for my mind, body, heart, spirit.

**Speaker 5** [00:36:46] I

**Speaker 1** [00:36:46] I didn't always do that.

**Speaker 5** [00:36:49] But I'm...

**Speaker 1** [00:36:52] And I don't do it every day. But in general, I'm, I recognize that in order to do the work that I do, make the impact that I wanna make, I have to take care of myself.

**Speaker 5** [00:37:10] Hmm.

**Speaker 1** [00:37:10] I have to be grounded. I have take my shoes off and put my feet in the dirt. I have walk my dog every day, touch a tree, feel a flower, look up in the sky, feel the sun.

**Speaker 5** [00:37:28] Hmm

**Speaker 1** [00:37:29] There's a whole thing that I have to do in order to deal with the pain and suffering that's out there. And I, you know, I crash just like everybody else. You know, the truth. Yeah. But I know that you have to, you just have to take care of yourself. Yeah, there's the, when you're on the airplane, you have the oxygen mask on yourself first.

**Speaker 5** [00:38:06] Mm.

**Speaker 1** [00:38:07] I also use a metaphor of a vessel. I don't know if you can, can you see these? Yeah.

**Speaker 5** [00:38:15] Okay.

**Speaker 1** [00:38:15] One is empty, you can see that, right, and one has water in it.

**Speaker 5** [00:38:20] And

**Speaker 1** [00:38:21] It's not going to work if you're trying to pour from an empty vessel.

**Speaker 4** [00:38:27] Yeah.

**Speaker 1** [00:38:28] You've got to daily!

**Speaker 4** [00:38:31] Hmm Yeah

**Speaker 1** [00:38:35] And even when it's like this, you can still be shaken to your knees.

**Speaker 4** [00:38:42] Yeah, I find that the hardest part to give to myself

**Speaker 1** [00:38:49] Yeah, that's the thing.

**Speaker 4** [00:38:54] Mm-hmm. Yeah.

**Speaker 1** [00:38:55] So let's do so your homework.

**Speaker 4** [00:38:59] Mm-hmm

**Speaker 1** [00:39:00] is to maybe do some journaling about that. Yeah. What's going on there? Yeah. It could be how we were raised, it could be, we, some people sometimes feel selfish too.

**Speaker 4** [00:39:15] Mm-hmm. Yeah, absolutely.

**Speaker 1** [00:39:17] Think about themselves. But if I can be a witness for you, the more I take care of myself.

**Speaker 4** [00:39:29] The Mo-

**Speaker 1** [00:39:29] capacity, I seem to have to sit with someone who suffer. Yeah.

**Speaker 4** [00:39:40] Yeah, thank you so much. You're doing wonderful work

**Speaker 1** [00:39:45] Thank you. Thank you, thank you so much. Okay, let's, okay I forget the order.

**Speaker 3** [00:39:54] Yeah, well let's go to Liz. Okay.

**Speaker 1** [00:39:58] Hi Liz. Hi.

**Speaker 6** [00:40:01] Pleasure to meet you.

**Speaker 1** [00:40:03] You too, Liz.

**Speaker 6** [00:40:05] You don't think one person can save the world? I think one can save the world.

**Speaker 1** [00:40:09] Well, I'll tell you, Liz, I mean, I kind of said no, but underneath I do, you know, I'm doing what I can to save the world. But I more was trying to say... While you're working to save the world, save the one person that's in front of you and save yourself.

**Speaker 6** [00:40:32] What I mean by that is, and I think you would agree with me. Yes. You don't have to, though. OK. Every word out of my mouth, every gesture, every action travels throughout the world, the universe. There's enormous responsibility. I love, late in life, I've come to the idea of responsibility. And I love it. I'm tremendously imperfect, even though I've

**Speaker 7** [00:41:08] I've had 60 years of therapy and 35 years of Buddhism. I'm so imperfect and shocking.

**Speaker 6** [00:41:14] But, but I know that every word out of my mouth and every action carries so much weight. Any kindness that I put out to someone else reverberates throughout the world. Goes from that person to the next person to next person. That's saving the world

**Speaker 1** [00:41:41] I believe that. May I be corrected?

**Speaker 8** [00:41:45] I believe that, because that's what I'm going to do. I'm sure you do. I'm sure you believe that. But thank you for speaking it out. All right. My pleasure. Thank you so much.

**Speaker 6** [00:42:01] Keep on keeping on.

**Speaker 8** [00:42:02] Okay, you too.

**Speaker 9** [00:42:06] All right, let's go to Bernie.

**Speaker 1** [00:42:09] Hey, Bernie.

**Speaker 9** [00:42:10] Hey, Lakita, thank you so much. And of course, condolences for your loss of your cousin, Gene.

**Speaker 1** [00:42:17] Thank you.

**Speaker 9** [00:42:19] I really appreciate your, this lesson. I'm an Eckhart Tolle fan, and I've been reading and studying him for 15 years. And I just heard the other day on a podcast, he just happened to say, every encounter you have with a human being is of vital importance. And that's what you're saying. It just kind of startled me. Even though I knew this vaguely, I wanna be nice to people and kind to people and bring peace and love to people. But the way he said it and just kind of hit me, I go, wow, every encounter, no matter how small. And you're taking this and expanding it.

**Speaker 5** [00:43:04] Uh.

**Speaker 9** [00:43:05] And I also, I'm in a mental health field. So sometimes I'm not feeling totally energized, but I see myself, Bernie, you have to give, because that's what you're here to do. If you feel a little empty, too bad, just give. Right, right. You're gonna feel better at the end. Let me tell you one small thing that's absolutely ridiculous. You're going to say, I was talking to a client of mine who's a teacher and I was talking about how. Anything that she can say to her students can have great impact. And I told her, I was gonna tell her a little story that she's not even gonna believe. And I didn't tell her this yet. I was in eighth grade and I'm walking, we're walking with, and I was taught by the nuns with the, I mean the nun's with the whole rigmarole, you know, the black habit and everything. And we're talking, and in eighth-grade, We're walking, I don't know, outside. And I was walking in front of her and I was kind of like bobbing back and forth. You know, like I was not in my lane. You know what I mean? And she says, Mr. Balicki, that's my last name, Mr Balicki walking three abreast. Or too abreast, whatever, she, you know, she was just made a comment walking and I was like walking back, like, you the message was you're walking, you're not walking in a straight line. Yes. And it dawned on me, I'm not walking and a

straight line, let me walk in a straight line. Now, what the hell, I, this is decades, you know, 50 plus years away. And why would I remember that? Because she did not insult me. She said something so small, but she said it in a respectful way that I can remember that for 60, 70 years later. Unbelievable. Wow. So, anyway, I'll shut up. Thank you.

**Speaker 1** [00:45:13] Thank you. Thank you so much.

**Speaker 3** [00:45:17] Yeah, and I think we have time. We'll push for one last person, Gaba, Linda.

**Speaker 10** [00:45:26] Oh, what happened? There you are. Oh, am I here? I lost the screen. I love technology. Okay, you're all back now. I want to thank you first of all for sharing so vulnerably and my condolences as well on your loss. It's always devastating to me. Like you said about yourself, I'm a very deep feeler. And I find that nowadays there's so much incoming information that I'm not seeking, but it's showing me the suffering everywhere, way beyond my locality. And, I do a lot of crying. I just cry every day. Off and on. Just hits me. My question for you is that because it's been so, I find that I've really been very much impacted by I guess I wanna call some of the mean spiritedness that is coming at us from certain sources. And yet there's still if you look glimmers and beauty and good people everywhere. And I'm trying to straddle that, and I find that when I meditate, when those feelings come up, I acknowledge them, but then there's a part of my brain that's like, you know, putting that aside to get back to my meditation. And then I started using that feeling that comes up, that compassion and empathy and as support for my meditation instead of resisting it. And I'm wondering what you think about that and also if you have any suggestions because I really wanna try to welcome whatever's present with acceptance.

**Speaker 5** [00:47:35] Uh-huh.

**Speaker 10** [00:47:36] Even if it's that, you know, you want to have a more peaceful, tranquil meditation. Yeah. Sometimes I'm just filled with emotion and I cry through the whole thing and and it does feel cathartic but you know I'm wondering what is what is the best way to integrate all of it without rejecting any of it so that I can show up more fully in the world. With kindness and, like you said, be filled up.

**Speaker 1** [00:48:09] I think that you have named a dilemma, right? You've named a dilema that I experienced myself. And I got a little bit of tutelage, I guess I would say, from Christian Neff. So I've studied with her, she does. A lot of research on mindful self-compassion. And when she first came out, it was kind of, you know, fling your heart open to all. I'm not doing a good job at summarizing, but it was kinda that. And then if you look at her recent work, the last five to seven years at least, She teaches something called fierce compassion, which means that you get to say no. You get to stand up. You get say, this is not right, right? This is really compassion where you're wishing that someone not suffer. But fierce compassion allows you an edge and allows you to have boundaries and allows you to protect yourself in your vision of what you're trying to, the life you're trying to create, and the hope that you have. So compassion doesn't really mean letting any and all things, you know. Go wild. You can put restriction on it, and I would say, or this is what I do, I get stuck in that same place that you're talking about, where I feel I'm trying to be compassionate, but I'm feeling... Not so compassionate. I'm feeling some anger or I'm feeling some judgment. Yeah, that part starts coming in. And I mean, that's really when I'm really digging in my garden, or I'm rushing out the door to go for a walk. So I would say I haven't totally solved it that I'm still working on it. But At least Christian did kind of- give me

the okay to go no separate all this bad acting um and remember again what is compassion compassion is witnessing well i'm simplifying is witnessing suffering and feeling this internal energetic heart opening desire to mitigate the suffering of the other person. So if that person did bad in my view, but they're suffering, I might have some compassion there. But that's a tough area for me. I'm still working through that myself.

**Speaker 10** [00:51:48] Well, thank you. That's affirming to me that I'm not alone in this and I'm really trying to parse out the pieces of it so that I can show up the best way I can to be a positive force in the world.

**Speaker 1** [00:52:08] You just gave me goosebumps by what you just said. Isn't that what we want to do? We want to be the positive force.

**Speaker 10** [00:52:16] Yeah, yeah want to be the superhero I want to become an Avenger and just get out there Yeah, well I appreciate that I'm I'm trying to walk that path and you know, I Mean, it's it's very it's a very tricky. I've I've never been I've never experienced it quite at this level before. I just turned 68 and I'm like, damn, I thought I might make it to the end without having to go through interesting times again, because I grew up. You're still in R. Yeah, yeah, I mean, I already had, I grew in the 60s, so it was all that turmoil and change and I was a kid. Yeah. And it really hit, I didn't understand it, but it really impacted me. So, being in this again, I'm feeling all that plus what I'm feeling now. It's like a two-tiered

**Speaker 1** [00:53:22] I understand, but I do think that songas like this, like finding other people that are trying to sort it out, work it out and learn, and we're growing together, that's part of it.

**Speaker 10** [00:53:37] Yeah, yeah, thank you. Thank you. That's helpful