



35 THINGS YOU CAN DO NOW TO BUILD MORE COMPASSION

Compassionate Diversity® integrates concepts from the fields of intercultural communication, emotional intelligence, leadership, science, and more into powerful tools for change.

Compassionate Diversity® uses three interrelated concepts - Comprehension, Connection, and Collaboration - to build inclusion and resilience in organizations and in our world.

We live in a very polarized world, and it seems as if everyone is stressed out, angry, frustrated, and exhausted. We seem to have lost "the human touch" in many areas of our lives.

In today's environment, it's more important than ever to connect with each other in compassionate ways.

Compassion isn't a soft skill.
It's proven science that can lead to
positive results in all areas of our lives.

This is where Compassionate Diversity® comes in. Compassionate Diversity® is a comprehensive approach to seeing different perspectives, understanding others, and building bridges in understanding that incorporates both the head and the heart. We develop compassion and affect change through understanding what others truly need *from their perspective - not what we think they need.*

At its most basic level, Compassionate Diversity® is not just about others. It's about ourselves, too. We have to be able to comprehend, connect, and have compassion for ourselves before we can begin to understand how to do it for others.

Compassionate Diversity® is based on 7 Principles grounded in concepts and research from the fields of intercultural communication, emotional intelligence, leadership, science, and more. Through embracing these principles, we can learn to better connect at the heart and be more compassionate, resilient, and inclusive in all areas of our lives.

This checklist will help get you started.





AWARENESS

In any situation, awareness is always the first step. How do we see a situation? How might someone else see it differently? What do we have in common? What are our differences?

5 Things you can do to increase awareness

1. Be present - stop multitasking!
2. Listen to hear, not to answer. (Literally bite your tongue if you have to!)
3. Take a few self-tests to identify your preferred styles and biases. (Try Project Implicit, Myers-Briggs (MBTI) or any other assessment you find helpful.)
4. Cultivate connections with people who are different from you.
5. Develop a mindfulness practice. Just 5-10 minutes a day is enough to reap great rewards.



AUTHENTICITY

Diversity is not just about how we see other people. It's about how they see us as well. Authenticity is the action we take based on our highest values.

5 Ways to becoming more authentic

1. Be real. Don't "try" to be authentic.
2. Examine your values and the behavior you think demonstrates those values.
3. Understand that values and behaviors are different things, and recognize at least 2 different behaviors for each of your values.
4. Don't use authenticity as an excuse to act the same way all the time. Recognize that different behavior may be appropriate in different situations.
5. Recognize when and why you feel inauthentic, and take steps to correct it.



VULNERABILITY

Vulnerability is a willingness to show who we are by letting go of our egos and allowing our authentic selves to come through. It means we're OK with our mistakes, and we allow room for other to make mistakes, too.

5 Ways to open up to vulnerability

1. Face your fears. Where in your life are you unwilling to be vulnerable and why? Are your fears based on past experience, or are they just excuses?
2. Practice discernment, and learn how to balance openness with management. You don't always have to be a completely open book.
3. Practice humility. Ask for, and accept, help. Readily admit when you're wrong.
4. Be willing to learn. Say, "I don't know, but I'll find out." (Just make sure to follow-up when you do find out.)
5. Share something about yourself with someone that they might not yet know. This doesn't have to be a big revelation – in fact, smaller is probably better, especially if you are not used to being vulnerable.



OPEN-MINDEDNESS

In order to be truly compassionate, we need to be willing to see things from other perspectives, even if we don't agree with them.

5 Ways to develop open-mindedness

1. Withhold judgments, especially those that come from your own biases, fears, and inexperience.
2. Get curious about what's being said rather than trying to refute it. A simple, "Help me understand" or "Can you explain further?" will move you to greater understanding.
3. Proactively seek out different perspectives.
4. When you experience a tough situation, ask yourself, "What can I learn from this?"
5. Research the counter-points to your usual stance on a subject like politics, religion, global warming, etc. Get educated around the arguments for the other side.



EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Our emotions are our internal guidance system. They let us know when things are going along according to our beliefs, values, and expectations, and when they're not. It's really that simple.

5 Ways on how to practice emotional intelligence

1. Connect to your emotions. What are they telling you about your own expectations and beliefs in any situation?
2. Pause before reacting. (This is easy to say, and very difficult to do. Practice it anyway.)
3. Understand the nuances of emotion. Some people show emotion freely; others do not. Neither way is right or wrong. Do not tell expressive people to “calm down” or non-expressive people to “get excited” just because you aren’t comfortable with how they are reacting in any given situation.
4. Watch nonverbal communication. Become an expert at reading people... and, be aware of the signals you’re sending.
5. Maintain a positive outlook. This doesn’t mean faking happiness when times are tough. Instead, show some vulnerability, admit how you’re feeling, and find the silver lining.



LETTING GO

The most compassionate thing we can do is not to treat others like we want to be treated, but to treat them as *they* want to be treated. This may mean letting go of preconceived notions of "right" and "wrong."

5 Ways on how to learn to let go

1. Release any ideas about "right" and "wrong" ways to succeed, and adjust your expectations that others will be successful in the same way you were.
2. Let go of ideas of "colorblindness", "gender blindness" and any other "blindness" that minimizes our differences. Allow yourself to see the differences that make a difference, and understand the real, systemic issues that need to be addressed.
3. Think of a situation that is a challenge for you right now. What do you need to let go of to ease the challenge?
4. Treat others as they want to be treated. This means letting go of things like: preconceived notions of ourselves and others; long-held beliefs or ways of doing things; a particular path that's no longer working.
5. Forgive. Forgiveness simply means letting let go of the anger that you're holding inside over some past, perceived wrong.



CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Continuous learning means we are engaged with life and with others. We are committed to valuing our similarities and differences, and living in a world with more compassion.

5 Ways on how to commit to continuous learning

1. Try one new thing each week. It doesn't have to be big. Any new experience changes you.
2. Practice both/and (versus either/or) thinking. Two answers really can both be right at the same time.
3. Engage with people. With each encounter, you will learn more effective behavior for connecting with others.
4. Embrace new challenges. Each new solution gives you a fresh way to look at the world.
5. Continually practice what you learn.



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Susan McCuiston is a cultural practitioner and creator of Compassionate Diversity®, which integrates concepts from the fields of intercultural communication, emotional intelligence, leadership, science, and more into powerful tools for change. Compassionate Diversity® uses three interrelated concepts - Comprehension, Connection, and Collaboration - to build resilience and inclusion in organizations and in our world.

Susan offers 25 years of human resources speaking, consulting, and facilitating experience, together with specialty skills in national culture and subculture and diversity best practices. In addition to helping many Fortune-500 clients hone their diversity and inclusion strategy, curriculum, and measurement, she has:

- Designed and built diversity and inclusion learning solutions and strategies for global organizations;
- Provided intercultural competency coaching to C-suite and senior leaders, helping them improve business efficiency and effectiveness through a better understanding of their approach to cultural commonalities and differences;
- Developed and facilitated enterprise-wide cross-cultural competency training in North America, Asia, Europe, and Latin America.
- Analyzed data, using her proprietary process, to provide companies with specific insights and recommendations for targeted improvement in their D&I initiatives.

Throughout her career, Susan has amassed a variety of credentials. In addition to being certified in multiple cultural tools, such as Barrett Values Centre Culture Assessments, the Intercultural Development Inventory® (IDI) and Cultural Detective®, she is a HeartMath® Certified Resilience Coach and Facilitator. She has presented at conferences and on webinars for The Conference Board and Human Capital Institute. Her quotes and insights have appeared in articles in The New York Times and for publications by the Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM).

Susan is a #1 Bestselling Business Author. She writes about Compassionate Diversity® and related topics on her blog, Compassionate Business Connections™.

Susan holds an M.S. in Statistics from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She is a member of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin.

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