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# How to Cultivate Compassion as a Tool for Everyday Leadership

Paula Webster

Lesley University, preardonwebster@gmail.com

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How to Cultivate Compassion as a Leadership Tool For Everyday Leadership

Paula Reardon-Webster

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## How to Cultivate Compassion as a Leadership Tool in Everyday Leaders

### **Abstract**

In this two-party thesis study, the need for compassion in our world is presented up front. Upon this foundation of the need for compassion, the building blocks which together comprise compassionate everyday leader are placed: leaders and leadership, mindful leadership, defining the everyday leader, mindfulness, compassion, and how to cultivate compassion. The evolution of broad concepts of leadership are reviewed, from control-based to a more mindful leadership, social-intelligence based approach. In a mindful leadership approach, qualities of self-awareness are cultivated within and then manifest in relation to the leadership process. Everyday leadership is a more expansive and inclusive definition of leadership and takes a wide, personal view of leadership . Alongside this view of everyday leadership are everyday actions we might take to develop as a leader, by adding value to ourselves and others.

These expansive notions of leadership, require a mindful presence; an awareness of self and others. Current research and scholarly literature indicate that there are physiological and psychological values to cultivating a mindfulness practice, which is shown through research to relate well to leadership skills. In addition, research points to the benefits of compassion, and indicates that it can be cultivated through training. An examination of three major compassion cultivation programs provides documentation of compassion cultivation practices from which to build, as presented in Part II., an eight-week Cultivating Compassion for Everyday Leadership Curriculum., for use in community, education and business settings.

## How to Cultivate Compassion as a Leadership Tool for Everyday Leaders

### Introduction

*“It is well to remember that the entire universe, with one trifling exception, is composed of others”* John Andrew Holmes, former U.S. representative and senator (Grant, 2013, p.61).

### Overview

How can we cultivate compassion as a leadership tool? In this two-part thesis study, I delve into that question: Part I consists of a Literature Review and Part II presents a Curriculum for Cultivating Compassion for Everyday Leadership. In the first part of this study, I examine the need for human compassion, for compassion in leadership, and for everyday leadership in our lives. I also review current behavioral and neuro-scientific data in support of our ability as human beings to cultivate compassion. In order to speak to these topics, I conduct a literature review of scholarly journals, other literature and media, and recent scientific research studies. This literature provides a framework as to how I define leadership, the notion of everyday leadership, compassion, and the human capacity to cultivate compassion. I also include personal communications with several experts in the field of leadership and social engagement.

As we move towards the curriculum I developed, the Literature Review includes an overview of existing programs for cultivating compassion, including program outcomes. Next, in Part II, I present an overview of the curriculum designed to cultivate compassion in everyday leadership. In this curriculum I utilize practices linked to outcomes cited in the existing trainings examined in this study.

## **Why This Matters**

Our nation has become more ethnically diverse. Our society is faced with escalating levels of violence, often rooted in the lack of acceptance of racial, religious, and political differences. The number of deaths globally from terrorist attacks have increased fivefold from 2000-2013 (Global Terrorism Index Report, 2014). Human lack of compassion and absence of compassionate leadership fuels growing conflict, and this growing conflict, whether one resides in the midst of it or hears about it in a constant stream of news reports, barrages our brains with negative, violent images, activating the fight or flight response. Many of us live in a state of high alert, which makes us unavailable in the present moment to be attuned to others with empathy and act with compassion.

As a meditation practitioner and as a teacher of the healing arts, I care deeply about compassion. As a citizen of the United States, and of the world, I am privy to the steady stream of divisive political and societal conversation, the tone of which often borders on hatred; I need only turn on Face The Nation, Bill O'Reilly, or coverage of one of the numerous political debates to get a sense of the underlying tone of "us versus them". We are a world at war, throwing bombs and killing masses of people for no apparent reason. In our society, we are agitated and anxious, and it shows in our actions and in our words. We add to this agitation as we cut each other often while driving and while talking; I am disheartened by this way of being. As a long-term professional in the business world, and a servant in many community forums, the pervasive mindset of getting things done at any cost leaves the concern for people out of the equation; it is dehumanizing. I reflect on these experiences and see a compassion-sized solution in how we work, and how we move through our daily lives.

As a mother, I have grave concerns for the quality of the human relationship, long-term or fleeting, professional or personal, available to my daughters and the society they are growing up to become members of. Everyday leadership shows up in how we influence each other, which starts with how we communicate with each other. Our ability to relate to each other is compromised by constant attachment to electronic devices, thereby diminishing the capacity for compassion in relational interactions. Sociologist Sherry Turkle states “We are being silenced by our technologies-in a way-cured of talking. These silences, often in the presence of our children-have led to a crisis of empathy, that has diminished us at home, at work, and in public life” (2015, p. 9). The age of *Let me take a Selfie* and similar technology-related behaviors is breeding narcissism and deleting the empathy app we humans come equipped with. I believe this erosion of empathy is like the climate change of compassion, diminishing the capacity for our society to come from a place of compassion. Empathy is the pre-cursor to compassion, for as empathy allows us to feel the feelings of another. “Empathy is feeling for (or with) other people and understanding their feelings” (Jinpa, 2015, p.11). From empathy arises compassion, the motivation to help another and alleviate their suffering.

With great hope, I report that as a student of mindfulness, there are techniques and practices, studied by neuroscientists and contemplative tradition experts, available to cultivate the compassion we as humans have the innate capacity for. As a leader of the everyday variety, the kind who is a citizen, a teacher, an organizer, a mother, and a friend; the kind who influences and is influenced by others, I wish to share this message of cultivating compassionate leadership.

Leadership theory evolves in keeping with the changing times; I look at this evolution of leadership concepts in the Literature Review. Current leadership theory looks to the setting of intentions and resonating with each other to live out those intentions. Daniel Goleman, best known for his introduction of the emotional intelligence model, looks at leadership in relation to neuroscience and psychology, noting that “gifted leadership occurs where the head and the heart-feeling and thought meet”(Goleman, 2013, p. 26). The proliferation and mainstreaming of mindfulness programs, mindfulness-based interventions, and mind-body disciplines are indicators that many people are hungry for a new way of living- a new way of doing-a new way of being.

Our influence over each other is one way of looking at leadership; this is a *personal* leadership view. Traditional leadership concepts (Sinclair, 2007, p. 18) suggest that the leader exerting influence has some form of power and control over others. The traditional leadership discourse, moving across a continuum from purely authoritarian to collaborative, consensus-building and emotional-intelligence based philosophies, describes a high-level leadership, generally in the business or political arenas. Sinclair states “the business and corporate worlds have taken leadership to their hearts and made it their own”(2007, p. 55). Academia and the world of leadership development give little attention to the notion of everyday leadership.

What do I mean by everyday leadership? Everyday leadership is a term I use to describe the concept that most people influence each other throughout their days, their weeks, their years, and their lives. The everyday leader has influence stemming from some form of authority. As an everyday leader, we are in a position to add *value* to each other’s lives; we help others bring out the best in themselves. The everyday leader may be positional, or not, as in the case of the committee member daring to express some innovative or game-changing ideas. Most leadership



is of the everyday variety. This study contributes to the leadership discourse by taking a wider and more inclusive view of the leadership concept, with the specific agenda of how to cultivate compassion in the everyday leader.

## **Applications**

There is little to no scholarly or even non-scholarly discourse directed to the topic of the everyday leader, the leader seated “in the middle” of society. This is the community leader, serving on the school board or leading the scout troop. The parents and the school teachers are also right there, seated in the middle, as is the small business owner, and the manager in the supermarket, the yoga teacher, and the volunteer at the church fair. We all lead at times, and being led at others. Sinclair notes that “..I see all around me, among friends, colleagues, leaders engaged in all sorts of important work-people struggling to find ways to do the work of leadership differently: more mindfully, more collaboratively, taking others with them in personally sustainable and satisfying ways”(2007, p. 262).

Training to support the everyday leader in efforts to do the work of leadership differently, more mindfully, is not widely available. Mindful leadership training programs are an emerging field, and currently available for those at the top positional leadership roles (see Appendix A). The distribution of this innovative type of leadership cultivation is, like leadership itself a “*top-down*” approach, and not as yet developed for the everyday leader. There are management trainings to develop time-management skills, planning and project-management and motivational coaching, but these do not address the cultivation of leadership qualities. Teen/student leadership programs involve joining forces to get a service project completed; while this is of value and

may foster collaboration, it is not the same as an intentional cultivation of qualities supporting leadership.

Drew Dudley, leadership development expert, uses the term “everyday leadership”, emphasizing in his TED Talk (Dudley, 2012), that we celebrate the gigantic accomplishments, while ignoring the good we all can accomplish and the value we can each add daily to the lives of those around us. Dudley proposes that the leader is seen as something way beyond us; something that we may aspire to when we perfect our imperfections. He believes that to call ourselves a leader is something we are, for the most part, not willing to do, as it is a title beyond the scope of how we view ourselves.

Dudley’s TED Talk on everyday leadership has created a shift in my perspective on leadership, pointing to the gap in recognition, appreciation, and cultivation of qualities to encourage people to lead. I have found that leadership teachings have been, by and large, a call to greatness. As Goleman says, “No creature can fly with just one wing. Gifted leadership occurs where the heart and the head-feeling and thought-meet. These are the wings that allow a leader to soar” (Goleman, 2013,p. 26). We are being coached to soar, to accomplish the near impossible. Leadership programs are directed to those at the top, on their way to the top, or intending to fly up to the top. Leadership training rooted in emotional-intelligence and mindful leadership is not as yet available to the everyday leader. It is my hope that this work will help to fill this gap. While cultivating compassion as a leadership tool applies to all people, this curriculum will be directed to the everyday leader, as it can be made available to those everyday leaders in the business, education, and community.

Upon reflection, a continuous forward movement has energized my own leadership experiences, always looking toward the next goal or benchmark. Whether one is the leader or

amongst those led, we have one foot poised to step into the next endeavor, leaving us ungrounded in the present. I have since entered into a joint venture with mindfulness: I practice meditation routinely and as a result, I get to be available in the present moment to experience things as they really are. Being present in the moment and being with what really is, as opposed to dwelling on how things “should be” has often opened the doorway to cultivating compassion in me. Gilbert & Choden speak of mindfulness practices as “..introspective and reflective psychology and an ethic based on compassionate insights, by which individuals can become very familiar with their minds..” (2014, p. 14). If simple mindfulness and compassion meditation practices have benefited me this way, I wholeheartedly believe the same benefits could be true for everyone. Fortunately, I do not need to base this proposition on my experience alone, and will provide, in the following Literature Review, academic and scientific data supporting the notion that mindfulness practices provide the foundation for cultivating compassion.

The literature that follows summarizes my examination of definitions of leaders, the concept of leadership, and the wider notion of the everyday leader. I review the evolution of leadership concepts toward a more mindfulness-based model. Next, I present an overview of current scholarly writings and research studies regarding mindfulness. Compassion is developed in mindful awareness; I look at this relationship, and again, some current scholarly writings and research studies regarding compassion, moving into the neuroscience and behavioral research on cultivating compassion. Lastly, I review three of the major existing cultivating compassion curricula, how they are structured, and what outcomes have been reported from these programs. The literature supports the course curriculum “Cultivating Compassion as a Leadership Tool for Everyday Leaders” presented in Part II.

## Literature Review

### Leaders and Leadership

In order to engage in this study of cultivating compassion as a leadership tool in everyday leadership, we need to set a foundation of building blocks that together establish the groundwork for compassion in leadership. The first block consists of leadership, and how current literature defines a leader and views what leadership means. Upon that we place the block of mindfulness, as current literature shows a move toward mindful models of leadership. Mindfulness is closely tied to compassion, and also provides the awareness needed to cultivate compassion, which is the next block to consider. What is compassion? How is it defined? How is it beneficial? And lastly, I examine our capacity to cultivate compassion. All of these foundational blocks constitute everyday leadership in our lives.

How has the leadership discourse defined leadership over time? First, it is meaningful to examine how society traditionally characterizes the notion of leader. Words that come readily to mind in are *in charge*, *get the job done*, *inspirational*, *powerful*, *organized*, *fierce*, *strong*, *influential*, and once in awhile, *benevolent*. One complimentary term the discourse on leadership consistently associates with leaders is *charismatic*; while this sounds attractive, in a discussion on the seduction of leadership, Sinclair writes, “followers often fall prey to the conviction, charisma or promise that the leader holds out” (2007, p.33). The term *charismatic* particularly elevates the notion of a leader from the day-to-day management realm into the sphere of greatness, which is another term frequently used with regard to defining leadership. Writings, trainings, and research so often are directed at being a *great* leader. While traditional leadership

dialogue has urged individuals to apply certain techniques in order to be elevated to become a *great* leader, more recent research indicates that leadership styles rooted in self-knowledge and evaluation of the situation—a more inter-relational and mindful approach—is evolving in current society.

There are many different ways in which people have defined leadership. For example, Bruce Winston and Kathleen Patterson (2006) conducted a study of definitions of leadership; their 2003 database search of academic journals yielded 26,000 articles using the term *leadership*. The researchers proposed that the problem with efforts to define leadership is that people study isolated variables relating to leadership, and do not arrive at a holistic characterization of leadership. Their study identified 90 variables, which together, comprise an integrative definition of a leader. A list of integrative leadership qualities that is salient to mindful everyday leadership includes such elements as the ability to influence and train others, to choose followers with diverse gifts and abilities, and to engage the followers to willingly and enthusiastically expend energy to accomplish shared goals.

In the field of leadership studies, there has recently been a shift in paradigm to a new emotional-intelligence based model, rooted in mindful self-awareness. The techniques employed by a leader as defined in the Winston and Patterson study (2006) would, based upon trust, inspire, cultivate, recognize the best in others and bring that out, allow and encourage creativity and innovation foster collaboration. The integrated leadership definition from the Winston and Patterson Study describe *a way of being* which is aligned with the emotional-intelligence approach to leadership developed by leadership scholar Daniel Goleman, where competency in self-awareness and relationship management need to be cultivated in order to develop as a leader (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2013). The emotionally-intelligent leader

holds qualities of vision, influence, working for the greater good, recognizing the strengths and weaknesses in others.

Another leadership theory which is rooted in emotional-intelligence is George Kohlreiser's Secure-Base Leadership Theory; a leader under his definition cultivates "a way of being" (Kohlreiser, 2012, p. xix), acting as leaders who are both caring and daring, which embodies the concept of a trustworthy leader. The customary approach of a secure-based leader is "Stays calm, accepts the individual, sees the potential, uses listening and inquiring, delivers a powerful message, focuses on the positive, encourages risk-taking, inspires through intrinsic motivation, and signals accessibility" (Kohlreiser, 2012, p. 33). The leader provides a secure base of trustworthy caring in order to allow those led to engage in risk taking-behaviors that may be outside of their own box or particularly challenging- and develop the daring to move forward towards the desired outcome. A secure-base leader enables people to move beyond their comfort zones. The quality implicit in developing these emotionally-intelligent characteristics is self-awareness.

It is hard to separate discussion of leaders from leadership, but leadership is a distinct process. Michael Carroll, leadership expert, noted one client's of leadership as definition, which is in contrast to Goleman's ideas " Leadership is "getting from POINT A to POINT B as quickly, efficiently, and profitably as possible "(Carroll, 2008). Do what you have to do to get people to get the job done. Carroll continues his discussion regarding this traditional definition, noting that leadership is generally about certain competencies and access to sophisticated information; or it could be about developing a view in others, or perhaps changing their point of view. In contrast, Carroll notes that mindful leadership is about training your mind-that is the one tool we all bring to our lives and work, and we take it for granted. The training is mindfulness meditation (2008).

Sinclair (2007) has described the evolution of leadership. She begins the narrative of this progression by noting the control view of leadership, which solidified as an approach via a vis military leadership; the leader makes decisions and gives marching orders, which are obeyed. Leadership then evolved into a business leadership or transactional model; the leader supervises and organizes people to accomplish goals utilizing rewards and punishment as motivation. These two approaches are quick, efficient, and profit-oriented, and quite typical of the business world. Sinclair noted a movement towards the psychological-based approaches of the leadership with visionary style, where the leader inspires followers. This approach is taken a step further in the transformational approach, whereby leaders elevate others to cultivate the best in themselves (Sinclair, 2007).

As society shifts to a new leadership discourse, it is important to consider the journey to this more emotionally intelligent place. Author Daniel Pink (2006) notes that we need to bear in mind how history has encouraged society's evolution along the leadership continuum from complete authoritarianism and control-based towards a transformational, collaborative, and emotional-intelligence view. Pink (2006) alerts us to the need for a whole new way of doing things, and underscores the need for new skills needed to match the new way of doing. He looks at the progression of society's work characteristics and nature of the economy, noting that we have moved from the Agricultural Age (farmers) to Industrial Age (factory workers) to Information Age (knowledge workers). We are currently moving into the Conceptual age (creators and empathizers). Pink describes the skills needed in this new era as high concept-high touch, in other words, a mindful, emotionally-intelligent approach, particularly useful to everyday leaders.

Emotional-intelligent leadership theory postulates that there are six distinct leadership styles, which leaders may fluidly move in and out of, depending upon the situation, as indicated by Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2013, p. 55). The “visionary” style of leadership inspires people to work towards shared dreams, and is most effective when there is a clear path to follow; this leadership style generally creates a positive impact on the environment. The leader utilizing a “coaching” style will match the individual’s wants to the organizational goals, thereby developing employee performance and achieving goals, which creates a positive impact with regard to climate, meaning the collective emotional state or mood of the organization. The “affiliate” style leader will connect people to each other, thus promoting a very positive team-like environment, which is always helpful but particularly where there are interpersonal problems brewing. In a “democratic” model of leadership, the leader takes the time to obtain and hear everyone’s input, creating a positive, team-like, consensus-building climate. If a leader uses “pacesetter” as a style, it provides a clear idea of how to proceed, but can negatively impact the environment, as this style assumes that everyone is a quick study and will just hop in and *follow-the-leader*. The sixth style, according to the authors, is the “commanding” style, which is appropriate where clear instruction is called for, but is often misused or overused, and thus, can have a truly negative impact on organizational climate.

The authors noted the impact on climate of the various leadership styles through the emotional-intelligent leadership discussion (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2013); the authors include climate as a factor in their analysis, citing 1996 study linking positive climate resulting from various leadership styles to positive financial results. It turns out it pays to be respectful and considerate of others when leading.



## Everyday Leadership

*“When invited, most us can recall moments of meaning that made a difference to us, and when we recall them-really take them in-as resources to extend to others whose lives we may touch” Diana Chapman Walsh (2014).*

While everyday leadership may be positional in nature, i.e., someone has an official title of oversight such a board member or parent; it is rooted in the concept of personal leadership-personal influence in lieu of an emphasis on power. “Everyday leadership is locally situated and emerges within our ordinary lives. It is expressed within our small towns, through educators, human service providers, volunteer member, and non-profit organization workers” (Nolan, 2013, p. 6).

The emotional-intelligence leadership models examined throughout this study lend themselves easily to the concept of personal leadership-leadership in an organizational sense and in a communal sense. Leadership expert Susan Colantuono defines leadership as “using the greatness in you to achieve and sustain extraordinary outcomes by engaging the greatness in others” (Colantuono, 2010, p. 6). While this definition uses the term *greatness*, it implies a sense of right actions, a cultivation of desirable qualities. The strength of this definition lies in its appropriateness in all settings at all levels, to all types of individuals, contains an implicit ethical underpinning, and is specific enough to be an evaluative measure; outcomes may be measured against intentions.

To engage the greatness or the best from others, leaders need to recognize weaknesses in others, as well as in self, and to build trust, which was articulated in the secure-base leadership model. The practices of building competencies in others, and recognizing how our words and actions impact others, are practices to hold ideally at the top of the corporation, and in the family, and are just as true in the board room as on the soccer field. We start with defining the values we

want to define us, asking ourselves what are the words someone would use to describe us if they followed us around? The words we hope they might use are our intentions, and how we manifest those intentions with relation to others is how we lead.

Drew Dudley's (2014) everyday leadership theory is based upon adding value to others; he urges those wishing to develop leadership skills to ask themselves six questions everyday. The first question represents impact, asking ourselves if we have acknowledged the leadership or accomplishment of someone else today. Next, in an effort towards self-development-self-leadership-we ask what we have done to learn something today. Thirdly, Dudley suggests embracing the spirit of mentorship; we ask what have I done to make it more likely someone else will learn something? Next, what positive thing have I said to someone to their face today? In this way we cultivate the value of recognition.

Along the same line of thinking, Dudley notes that we ask what positive things have I said about someone who isn't in the room? This practice fosters relationship building, as folks assume we speak of them the same way when we are not around. Lastly, to embody self-respect, we ask what nice things have I done for myself today? If we ask these six value-adding questions every day and accomplish four out of six for 300 days of the year, we have added 1,200 pieces of value (Dudley, 2014).

Adam Rifkin, high-tech guru, is a model of value-adding and giving in everyday leadership. Adam co-founded the group "106 Miles", a professional network with the social mission of educating entrepreneurial engineers through dialogue, continuously helping others. Rifkin is governed by a simple rule: the five-minute favor. "You should be willing to do something that will take you five minutes or less for anybody"(Grant, 2013, p. 55). Rifkin may not use these words, but he leads intentionally by adding value with mindfulness and compassion

## **Mindfulness and Leadership**

In order to access the variety of styles as a leader, one must have the presence of mind to evaluate oneself, the situation, and those being led. Emotional-intelligence as a model for leadership has quite naturally evolved into a mindful approach to leading, bringing awareness and self-awareness to the situation.

The word *mindfulness* can mean a few things; in day-to-day conversation we associate it with a heightened level of focus and attention. In recent years, the popularized mindfulness movement has adapted Buddhist meditative practices into a secular format for mindfulness study. Jon Kabat-Zinn, professor emeritus of medicine and founding director of the Stress Reduction Clinic, and the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, describes mindfulness as "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally"(Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p.4).

Mindfulness is included in this study as a way of being from which to lead, and creating awareness, from which compassion may be cultivated. Mindfulness is a practice, and also a quality of presence resulting from practice; we become more aware of ourselves and the reality of the present moment, instead of leaning forward into the future, and backward into the past. Mindfulness also has been characterized as comprising five mindfulness skills: "acting with awareness...observing...describing...nonreactivity to inner experience. and nonjudging of inner experience"(Carmody and Baer, 2008, p. 24).

Michael Carroll, mindful leadership expert, believes it is fundamental leadership quality to be who we are, to be our authentic self, where we are (Carroll, 2008). Mindful leaders are

more aware of themselves, and, rooted in this self-awareness, have the capacity to be more aware of others. If we are able to hold awareness of ourselves without judgment, we will also be present in our awareness of others and have greater capacity to respond without a judgmental perspective.

## **Mindfulness**

While mindfulness may not be a magic elixir in our work and personal lives, current literature and research provides support for its utility in our lives. Through mindfulness, we develop our capacity for the non-judgmental awareness to attend to ourselves and to each other in whatever situations we may encounter. We cultivate a more authentic self, being who we are, where we are. Mindfulness practice gives us a way of being, with moment-to-moment awareness.

The burgeoning interest in the effects of mindfulness meditation on the brain has led to increased research on this subject by neuroscientists in recent years, linking meditation to positive, behavior-related effects on the brain. One brain region of particular note is the prefrontal cortical region of the brain, which consists of gray matter located approximately behind the forehead. The gray matter, or cerebral cortical areas of the brain are responsible for complex cognitive functions (Mindsmachine.com, p. 38, n.d.).

Daniel Siegel (2010, p. 26), refers to the significance of prefrontal cortical region (PFC) of the brain as being implicated in major functions, the first being regulation of bodily functions such as heart rate, respiration and digestion. The next function controlled by the PFC is attuned communication, where we are able to resonate with the emotions of another. Emotional balance regulated by this brain region keeps us clear and in emotional equilibrium.

The PFC supports response flexibility, so that we can create space to evaluate before acting. Fear modulation, our ability to come back to calm after fear-inducing events is controlled here. Of particular note in this study, the PFC has been linked to empathy, or the ability to sense the suffering of another being. The capacity to have insight, or self-perception, as well as the capacity for moral awareness, or reasoning and acting for the social good, also stem from this brain region. The last function Siegel attributes to PFC regulation is intuition, making connections between brain and body (2010, p. 26).

Neuroscience researchers have found a correlation between meditation and strengthening of the cortical areas of the brain (Lazar et al., 2005). One research study of note (Brefczynski-Lewis, et al., 2007), utilized functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) to compare brain activation in the attentional regions of the brain of fourteen long-term meditators (>10,000 hours of practice) to eleven novice meditators, who had no practice experience. A concentration meditation intervention was introduced; researchers found that expert meditators had greater activation in brain regions related to response inhibition and attention, and less activation in the areas implicated in discursive thoughts and emotions. This correlation between functional brain activity and hours of meditation practice supports the concept of neuroplasticity, which means that new neural pathways can be developed in the brain over time (Brefczynski-Lewis et al., 2007).

Hassenkamp and Barsalou (2012, p.1), conducted further neuroscience research on the effects of meditation experience on the brain. Similar to Brefczynski-Lewis (2007), their study utilizes fMRI imaging and found that the research subjects with greater amounts of experience in mindfulness meditation showed increased connectivity in the attentional networks of the brain attributed to development of maintaining attention and disengaging from distraction. This study,

although limited by small sample size, has significant implications; the findings link cognitive skills such as maintaining attention and disengaging from distraction in a resting state to the amount of meditation experience. (Hassenkamp & Barselou, 2012, p.1). In general, the data provided by neuroscience research has supported the growing popularity and demand for mindfulness training.

Psychological and behavioral scientists have also conducted studies of mindfulness outcomes relative to their disciplines. This genre of study utilizes primarily self-reporting mechanisms, and therefore the data may not be as reliable as findings based on sophisticated technology such as fMRI and MRI. Of course, mindfulness is a practice, which cultivates “heightened awareness of the present reality and gives focal attention to living in the moment”(Roche, Luthans, & Haar, 2014, p.476), so there is no specific behavioral goal per se. Behavioral researchers have found some noteworthy positive outcomes associated with mindfulness. The 2014 New Zealand research study (Roche et al.), utilized the self-reporting tools of Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS), which measures open or receptive awareness of and attention to what is taking place in the present, as well as the Psychological Capital Quotient (PCQ) , which measures desirable leadership traits of hope, resiliency, efficacy and optimism. The study surveyed four groups, in total 697 leaders at varying levels of business organizations. The researchers found a positive correlation between reported levels of mindfulness and the leadership traits tested. The findings have implications for leadership development.

In a 2012 study of character strengths (Niemic, Rashid, & Spinella, 2012, p. 245), the authors cite positive outcomes found in a variety of mindfulness studies over time, noting the correlation between the reported mindfulness outcomes and character strengths. Although

mindfulness practice is not aimed at *changing* what is here for us, the cultivation of mindful attention is infused by a friendly, non-reactive curiosity, and provides a pathway for getting to know our own mind; this may account for the positive trait outcomes reported. For example, they relate the improved attention and working memory mindfulness outcome to self-regulation and also a love of learning. The outcomes of reduced anxiety and adaptive attitude in dealing with a threat again correlate to self-regulation, and also to curiosity and perspective, in that a new situation can be calmly examined and analyzed rather than creating a sense of panic in the individual. The authors linked a mindfulness outcome of decreased negative, self-focused attention to the character strengths of zest and humor, responding by taking neither ourselves nor the situation too seriously. The last item of note in this study is the correlation made between decreased negative affect and the character strengths zest and hope; so in some ways, mindfulness fosters optimism. The behavioral and neuroscience data cited supports the attractiveness of mindfulness practice by leaders; mindfulness also allows one to be available in the present moment to cultivate compassion.

## **Compassion**

What is compassion and why is it essential today for leadership? The dictionary defines compassion as “sympathetic consciousness of others’ distress together with a desire to alleviate it” (Merriam-Webster, 1989, p. 268), or in laymen’s terms, we want to help someone who is hurting, and we are motivated to do so. Compassion is a foundational value in most world religions and cultures, a common thread in our humanity. The essence of compassion is basic kindness. We see signs of it everywhere, but we also notice the absence of compassion everywhere. Gilbert and Choden (2014) caution us that those acting from compassionate motives

are up against “opposing motives about getting ahead, securing power, destroying our enemies...up against conflicting motives that are propelled by powerful emotions”(Gilbert & Choden, 2014, p.34).

When exploring compassion, it is helpful to break it down into what it is and what it is not. Empathy is a term often used interchangeably with compassion, but it is not the same as compassion. Empathy is the ability to recognize the suffering of another, and is an underlying prerequisite of compassion. Empathy is different from sympathy. Gilbert and Choden (2014) tell us

Human empathy is different from sympathy because it involves our ability for awareness and intuitive understanding. Whereas sympathy is an automatic resonance with the feelings of others, empathy is much more about our insight and understanding. It is our ability to understand not just that someone suffers, but also why, to see into the causes” (2014, p.113).

This leads back to a discussion of mindful awareness. To this point, this review of mindfulness has referred to creating awareness and a new relationship with the present moment. In a state of mindful awareness, we are able to notice in others suffering and its causes.

Mindfulness is a form of mind training, and the practice of mindfulness in and of itself is an act of compassion; to explain this, let’s look at the Buddhist origins of mindfulness practice. In the Four Noble Truths, Buddha explained that there is suffering, it is caused by the impermanent nature of all aspects of our lives, as we mentally cling to what we desire and push away the undesirable, creating suffering; there is a way out of our suffering, which is through the prescribed Eightfold Path of awakening, where the teachings of mindfulness begin. To engage in



the process of finding a way out of the suffering-out of the chaotic mind-is acting with compassion towards self and others (Gilbert & Choden, 2009).

Current research supports a strong relationship between mindfulness meditation and empathy. A 2014 research study (Tan, Lo, & Macrae, 2014) investigated the impact of mindfulness on empathic understanding of others on seventy-four participants; the findings, while requiring further longitudinal study over a wider population, suggest there is a relationship between mindfulness meditation and empathic concern.

Starting with empathic concern, compassion can be characterized as a four stage process (1) the awareness of suffering (2) an affective concern for others (3) a wish to relieve that suffering and (4) a readiness to relieve the suffering (Jinpa, as cited in Jazaieri et al., 2012). This readiness to relieve suffering is where the ship of compassionate action is launched.

Compassion is critical for society to survive and flourish, due to our physical interdependence and emotional interrelatedness. The quality of how we relate to others has a substantial impact on our sense of self, our values, and the overall quality of our lives. Buddhist philosophy emphasizes the need for appreciation of and gratitude for others, and instructs in cultivating compassion alongside three other states of mind, which collectively are referred to as *divine-abodes* or boundless states. These states create emotional balance in relating to others. The first state, loving-kindness refers to wishing happiness to others, while the state of compassion is a result of the wish that others be freed from suffering and its causes. Sympathetic joy represents happiness at the good fortune of others. The last state of mind, equanimity, balances our experiences with steadiness of mind, and is important to provide balance compassionate action.

Equanimity supports compassion by preventing over-giving, which leads to compassion fatigue and burnout. Decker, Brown, Ong, & Stiney-Ziskand (2015) conducted a study of one hundred and eleven Social Work Interns. This study was designed to explore compassion fatigue, and utilized the Professional Quality of Life Scale, a measure that assesses risk for compassion fatigue, and the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire. While limited to strictly self-reporting measures and the absence of an intervention as part of this study, it is worth considering their findings, The researchers noted a correlation between reported mindfulness qualities , such as non-reactivity and non-judgment of inner experiences, observation, and acting with awareness, to reported qualities related to compassion-satisfaction, defined as the enjoyment one experiences from the work of helping others (Decker et al., 2015, p. 31).

In order to prevent burnout and feel satisfaction from compassionate action, we need to balance compassion with wisdom. Thanissaro Bhikkhu (2011) tells us that emotions cause us to act, but “your heart needs the help of your head to generate and act on more skillful emotions” (2011, p.7). As we cultivate the habit of mindful awareness, we develop the ability to pause, observe and inquire; then we may choose to act or not, but we are then able to proceed with intention in lieu of reactivity. Adam Grant (2013), renowned management professor at The Wharton School, cautions against the pitfalls of over-giving. Our inclination to give first and think later usually comes at our own expense (p. 193). Grant tells us that “the giver needs to use their skills of inquiry, intuition, and attunement to do a sincerity screening” (Grant, 2013, p. 193) in order to stay in balance. Unbalanced empathy can deplete the giver; wisdom creates compassion with equanimity. Therefore, efforts to cultivate compassion must be approached with wisdom.

## **Cultivating Compassion**

Can we, and should we, cultivate compassion? Thupten Jinpa, a renowned Buddhist scholar instrumental in developing Stanford University's Compassion Cultivation Training (CCCT), advises that many of us claim to be compassionate, yet unless we work at changing our habits to make compassion an active force in our lives, it will be something that only occasionally happens to us (Jinpa, 2015, p. 13). He goes on to convey the many benefits of compassion, such as a sense of well-being or euphoria known as a *helper's high*, a greater sense of purpose, feeling less stressed, improving relationships; and, it is contagious.

Research supports many of Jinpa's claims regarding the benefits of compassion, including that it is contagious. In a 2010 study (Christakis & Fowler, 2010) researchers examined correlations in giving behavior; the findings suggest that cooperative behavior spreads in human social networks. The contagious nature of compassion was further documented in a study related to elevation, which in this context refers to "a positive emotion experienced upon witnessing another person perform a virtuous act" (Haidt, as cited in Schall, Jean, & Daniel, 2010, p. 315). The results of this study provide evidence that elevation leads to increased altruistic behavior (Schall et al., 2010, p. 319).

Compassion increases our sense of well-being; in an effort to understand how this works, researchers (Weng et al., 2013, p. 1171) utilized a giving game to test altruistic behaviors as a result of a compassion-meditation intervention. In this online game, the participants made choices impacting a more equitable re-distribution of funds out a pool allotted to the participant; a dictator had inequitably distributed the funds. The study found that those who had participated in compassion training responded more equitably. This study also utilized fMRI screening to examine correlation between neural areas activated and altruistic engagement. The researchers

found that the compassion training positively impacted altruistic behavior of the subjects. The findings also linked altruistic behavior with heightened activation in brain regions implicated in social cognition and emotional regulation. These results suggest compassion can be cultivated with training, and that greater altruistic behavior may emerge from increased engagement of neural systems implicated in the understanding of suffering of others, executive and emotional control, and reward processing. The neurological and hence, physiological and psychological changes resulting from compassion training create a greater sense of well-being, not only for the recipient of the act of compassion, but also for the person acting out of compassion.

A behavioral outcome study (Condon, Desbordes, Miller, & DeSteno, 2013, p. 2) tested the compassionate response of offering a chair to an individual on crutches in a waiting room. The researchers found that those participants trained in meditation were five times more likely than the wait-list control group to help the person in need. This study provides further evidence of our capacity to cultivate positive compassionate behaviors after introducing a mindfulness-meditation and a compassion-meditation intervention. This study was directed at interpersonal impact of the meditation intervention, and found the subjects practicing either type of meditation responded with greater compassion than the control group. The researchers also noted that those practicing mindfulness meditation were as likely to help others as those practicing compassion meditation.

Several experiments reviewed utilized the compassion cultivation practice of Loving-Kindness meditation, providing further evidence of the efficacy of this practice, and its benefits. Research related to one theory of positive emotions, known as broaden and build theory (Fredrickson, Cohn, Coffey, Pek, & Finkel, 2008) asserts that people's experiences of positive emotions compound over time to build a variety of important personal resources. In this study,

participants practiced Loving-Kindness Meditation, at least five days per week, for an unspecified amount of time, over an eight-week period, and the research found that the participants experienced a wider range of positive emotions, including love, joy, gratitude, contentment, hope, pride, interest, amusement and awe. While future research of this topic needs to be longitudinal and across a more diverse population, it is significant that the results of this study indicate the positive emotional feelings remained long after the meditation event (Fredrickson et al., 2008). It is quite possible that everyday leaders trained in compassion cultivation will carry the benefits of this training forward and spread these benefits to others.

It is vital in any discussion of compassion to consider the concept of self-compassion, as treating ourselves with compassion is inextricably connected to treating others with genuine compassion. In our western culture, our view of our selves is incredibly achievement-oriented, and quite simply, leaves us constantly examining our imperfections and beating ourselves up. Self-compassion would have us put the bat down and treat ourselves with kindness and understanding instead of with negative judgment. Self-compassion provides a strong platform for compassion, as “with self-compassion training, we learn to reconnect with the part of us that still cares, purely, tenderly, and vulnerably” (Jinpa, 2015, p. 34).

A Pilot Study and Randomized Controlled Trial of the Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC) training program (Neff & Germer, 2013) evaluated the effectiveness of the eight-week MSC program, designed to train people to be more self-compassionate. The pilot program study administered a battery of self-report measures before and after the program, including the Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory and the Self-Compassion Scale. The researchers also re-tested participants six-months beyond the completion of the program, finding that participants demonstrated increased self-compassion and mindfulness at the end of the program and again

six-months later. The randomized controlled trial of the eight-week MSC program was similar to the pilot program study, with a couple of notable exceptions: first, a waitlist control group was introduced to the study, and second, the Compassion Scale was administered, in an effort to measure a correlation between reported levels of self-compassion and compassion. The randomized controlled trial found increased mindfulness and self-compassion as a result of this program, as well as reported increased levels of compassion for others. These results suggest that the MSC is effective at increasing self-compassion, mindfulness, compassion for others, and other aspects of wellbeing (Neff & Germer, 2013, p. 40). This is good news; we can learn to cultivate self-compassion as well as compassion.

Thus far in this thesis study, I have presented discussion and support for society's need for compassion, the evolving role of the leader and the gap in recognition and support of the everyday leader. In review of current mindful leadership concepts, mindfulness, compassion, and the scientifically documented capacity to cultivate compassion were addressed. All of these building blocks comprise the compassionate everyday leader, all in service of developing a curriculum for the everyday leader to cultivate compassion.

### **Review of Existing Compassion Cultivation Curricula**

In order to develop a curriculum for cultivating compassion in leadership for everyday leaders, it is critical to examine existing programs directed toward cultivating compassion, noting training tools employed in these programs, and where applicable, evaluating the efficacy of the programs in meeting their objectives. I have selected three prominent programs directed toward training compassion: The Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC), offered by the Center for Mindful Self-Compassion, the Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT) from the Stanford Center for

Compassion and Altruism Research, and the ReSource Training Protocol, from the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Science. Research studies have been conducted on all of these programs; outcomes reported supporting the programs' learning objectives will be noted in this review, which document the effectiveness of practices incorporated into the attached "Cultivating Compassion in Everyday Leadership" syllabus.

Initially, I looked at the Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC). Our Western culturalized way of being often yields a mindset of self-criticism, driving ourselves to get the job done at any cost. Self-compassion is commonly viewed as self-indulgent and counter-productive. We need self-compassion before we can have compassion for others, to tap into this part of our own nature in order to elicit a compassionate response from others.

The MSC Program was developed by Christopher Germer and Kristin Neff, and is primarily taught in local communities utilizing an eight-week class format, accompanied by a half-day retreat; it is also offered in long (six-day) and short (two-day core skills only) workshop formats. "Self-compassion is comprised three interacting components: self-kindness versus self-judgment, a sense of common humanity versus isolation, and mindfulness versus over-identification when confronting painful self-relevant thought and emotions" (Neff & Germer, 2013, p. 28). This curriculum teaches core meditations which are supplemented by additional meditations and exercises. The overarching objective of this training is to learn to treat ourselves with the kindness we would offer a friend, not to eliminate the suffering, but because we suffer.

In this program, specific objectives (Center for Mindful Self-Compassion, n.d.) are:

- How to stop being so hard on ourselves
- How to handle difficult emotions with greater ease
- How to motivate ourselves with encouragement rather than criticism
- How to transform difficult relationships, both old and new
- Mindfulness and self-compassion practices for home and everyday life
- Theory and research behind mindful self-compassion

- How to become our own best teacher

Over the course of the MSC training program, participants learn the core meditations of Affectionate Breathing, traditional Loving-Kindness Meditation, which uses a progression of short phrases sending wishes of happiness, peace and health to all beings, as the object of meditation, and a third core meditation on the intentions of giving and receiving compassion. The MSC's Affectionate Breathing practice instructs to add feelings of warmth and affection to the conventional meditation practice of following the breath (Neff & Germer, 2013, p.33). The MSC program also teaches nine other meditations and eighteen informal self-compassion practices, along with instruction on the rationale behind all of these practices. The primary question students learn to work with is: *What do I need now?* At the end of the program, group members evaluate which of the MSC practices work best for them, and make a plan to continue practice upon completion of the program (Germer & Neff, 2013).

MSC sessions are generally two hours or more, and at the end of each session, participants are instructed in a weekly assignment, consisting of 40 minutes of daily practice. The daily practice outside of class consists of a combination of formal sitting meditation and informal practice. The MSC training sessions are sequential and build on each other. Session themes are as follows:

1. Discovering Self-Compassion
2. Objective-Practicing Mindfulness
3. Practicing Loving-Kindness Meditation.
4. Finding Your Compassionate Voice
5. Living Deeply
6. Managing Difficult Emotions
7. Transforming Relationships
8. Embracing Your Life (Germer & Neff, 2013, p. 627)



Two research studies, a pilot study and a randomized controlled trial, were conducted to investigate the efficacy of the MSC program. Both studies utilized self-report tools to measure self-compassion, mindfulness, social connectedness, life satisfaction, happiness, depression, anxiety, and stress; the second study, which also added a wait-list control group, added the measures of compassion for others and avoidance of difficult thoughts and feelings to the outcomes assessments. While the studies examine the overall value of the program and do not tease out individual MSC practices, “the results of the two studies of the MSC program suggested that MSC is effective at increasing self-compassion, mindfulness, compassion for others, and other aspects of well-being” (Neff & Germer, 2013, p. 40).

The second program I reviewed is the Compassion Cultivation Training Program (CCT) developed at Stanford University by Thupten Jinpa under the umbrella of the Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education (CCARE). “The CCT protocol is a multi-dimensional process comprised of four key components: (1) awareness of suffering (cognitive/empathetic awareness), (2) sympathetic concern related to being emotionally moved by suffering (affective), (3) a wish to see the relief of that suffering (intention), and (4) a responsiveness or readiness to help relieve that suffering (motivational)” (Jazaieri et al., 2012).

The CCT program is taught over a nine-week period, consisting of a two-hour introductory session followed by eight weekly two-hour sessions, with homework consisting of compassion-focused meditation practices for at least fifteen but up to thirty-minutes daily. Each of the weekly classes includes instruction with discussion related to the topic, guided group meditation, interactive exercises related to the weekly topic, and activities such as poetry reading and story-telling, designed to further develop feelings of open-heartedness and connectedness to others (Jazaieri et al., 2012).

I reviewed the two research studies conducted (Jazaieri et al., 2012; Jazeir et al., 2014), of the CCT program, both of which utilized the same research subjects over time; study participants either participated in the CCT program or were assigned to a wait-list control group. The first study examined compassion and self-compassion measures, while the subsequent study delved more specifically into the measures of mindfulness, affect, and emotional regulation, and notably included measures of participant home practice time for correlation to study outcomes. Again, these studies did not address specific mechanisms within the program but tested the program as a whole. The results of these studies indicate that the CCT program resulted in significant improvement in compassion for others, compassion from others, and self-compassion (Jazaieri et al., 2012, p.1), and in the case of the second study, increased mindfulness and happiness, as well as decreased worry and emotional suppression (Jazaieri et al., 2014, p. 1).

Lastly, I reviewed the ReSource Training Protocol (RST) founded by Tania Singer during ongoing investigation of neurological bases of empathy, compassion, and cognitive perspective taking; it was developed as a basis for a nine-month longitudinal study. Similar to the other programs examined, the RST Model breaks compassion down into three broad domains of underlying disposition and skills:

1. The first is Presence, or the underlying attitude of turning toward and staying with the present moment experience.
2. Second aspect is Affect, which is the ability to open towards feelings of warmth and benevolence for oneself and others, accept difficult emotions, and cultivate pro-social motivations.

3. The third domain, Perspective, is the cognitive ability to step back and take a wider view of thoughts, self, and step into other people's perspectives (Singer & Bolz, 2014, p. 775).

This secular program is taught over thirty-nine weeks alongside a three-day retreat, with the focus to a new domain changing every thirteen weeks. In each thirteen-week segment, eight weeks teach and refine meditation practices as well as experiential exercises; for the remaining five weeks, practice is deepened with no additional practice content introduced. The program teaches variations of focused attention meditation, compassion-focus meditation, both drawn from traditional contemplative practice, as well informal practices and exercises drawn from Western psychology. It is significant that the RST Protocol research study will examine key neural correlates associated with the psychological processes related to the cultivating compassion process.

I noted the significant commonalities amongst the three programs reviewed and summarized them as follows:

1. All three programs start with mindfulness training to build of awareness and presence.
2. The programs work through meditation and interactive or reflective experiential exercises to open the heart and cultivate feelings of warmth and kindness to ourselves and to others.
3. The programs then develop our own natural inclination to want to help (ourselves and others) and work to provide the underlying stability and wisdom from which to work from.

These are the strong pillars, which support the cultivating compassion syllabus attached.

### Compassionate Everyday Leadership

*“If you want to be happy, practice compassion. If you want others to be happy, practice compassion”* His Holiness the Dalai Lama

What does this mean in terms of leadership? What does compassionate everyday leadership look like? The building blocks I have laid out as the foundation of compassion in leadership are represented in Figure 1:



Fig. 1-Building blocks of Compassion in Everyday Leadership

There is an inextricable relationship between all of the foundational blocks in this Compassion in Everyday Leadership model, and these foundational blocks have the capacity to be cultivated; what might this all look like in every day life?

According to Drew Dudley’s everyday leadership concepts, we add value to others in our everyday interactions. I spoke with Mr. Dudley (personal communication, September 23, 2015) and he was very clear that we are discussing *personal* leadership as opposed to *positional* leadership, although we may happen to be positioned in some manner of (official) leadership role. In this regard, we are all responsible as personal leaders. While the drive to add value to others is useful, we must examine what the rewards are, for nothing changes in our society without being incentivized by rewards. We need to see what the values are that we add by

cultivating compassion in leadership, and then, how do we create action-oriented things we do every day?

Google's *Search Inside Yourself* program is a stellar example of compassionate leadership at a high-level and throughout with bottom line results. The founder of this program, Chade Meng-Tan, spoke of Google's culture of compassion in a TedTalk and boldly claims that "compassion is good for business" (Tan, 2010). He goes on to explain his view on compassion's benefit to business as evidenced by compassion developing highly effective leaders, and also in creating an inspired and inspiring workforce. Mr. Meng-Tan states that the neuroscience of compassion shows activation in the areas of the brain related to happiness, and then links the stages of compassion with attributes of leadership, noting that compassionate leaders are more effective leaders because they are happy, they are motivated for the greater good, and they inspire others (Tan, 2010).

Employees at Google show the initiative to start social action projects out of generosity, caring, and respect for others. The upper-positional tier of leadership listens to these employees, hears their message, and supports the generous projects Google employees have thoughtfully created. A recent research study (Grant & Berry, 2014) concluded that pro-social behavior and stepping into the perspective of others has a positive impact on developing creativity. People in this variety of culture become energized, by a multitude of cultural values, including the compelling vision created and participating in interactions where they can contribute meaningfully, with engagement; progress is made and hope is part of the equation (Cross, Baker, & Parker, 2003). To consider Google as an example of an organization led with compassion, one would expect to find greater creativity and engagement, heightened energy, vision, improved sense of connectedness, and even happiness. The Google case is an example of individual

leadership synthesized into a much greater vehicle for good; this vehicle starts with a collection of individuals acting with positive leadership.

Donald Rothberg, a leader in engaged spirituality, instructs that in order to lead, we cultivate the qualities of leadership, first internally, then relationally, and finally collectively. We bring mindful awareness to ourselves. We cultivate how we want to be in this world, clarifying and setting intentions. Intentions are often beneath the surface, hidden from our view. The practice of clarifying and setting intentions gives us a set of plans from which to build, against which we may measure our progress (Rothberg, 2006).

I spoke with Mr. Rothberg (personal communication, August 21, 2015); during our conversation he emphasized that compassion training connects deeply to inner practice; compassion comes to us through empathy. A judgmental mind has no empathy. To be compassionate in leadership, we need to take a long look at our speech practice, and the underlying causes of how we get triggered in conflict, because that is where empathy goes out the window. Rothberg advocates utilizing the principles of Nonviolent Communication Training (Center for Nonviolent Communication, n.d.), which assumes we are all compassionate by nature, that we all have the same basic human needs, and all of our actions are an effort to meet these needs. Mr. Rothberg suggests we pay close attention to the principles of communication taught by this group, where there is greater authenticity in communication, increased understanding, and deepened connection resulting from these practices.

Also, according to Rothberg, intentions are primary to leading; a group coming to agreement as to intentions is pivotal. To envision a culture of compassion, picture an organization with a focus on relationship, sprinkled with balance and wisdom; the organization

would hold regular retreats, and also provide forums for hearing one another's stories, thus supporting perspective taking.

Compassion as a leadership tool *can* be cultivated. Studies in the fields of neuroscience and psychology demonstrate that it *should* be cultivated; a more inclusive definition of leadership, leadership of the everyday variety *requires* that compassion be cultivated as a foundation for leading each other, adding value to each other, having a compassionate impact on each other, and thus, the world. This thesis study contributes to the discourse on compassion and leadership, and provides support to cultivate these skills in everyday leadership settings, for those *seated in the middle*, whether in community or at home, in business or in schools. I am talking about those who lead in small ways *and* in large ways, who lead, and are led. If we embrace the wider definition of leadership, the idea that leadership is how we impact and add value to others, then it is essential that we do so with compassion. The Curriculum for Everyday Leadership in Part II provides intentional compassion cultivation to be made widely available in support of the everyday leader.

## **II. SYLLABUS : COMPASSION CULTIVATION TRAINING FOR EVERYDAY LEADERSHIP**

### **Introduction**

This Curriculum for Cultivating Compassion in Everyday Leadership is a pilot program; as such, future study would include development of a tool for evaluation of program results to be used for evaluation by pilot program participants. There is room for additional study and discourse on the study of cultivation of compassion for everyday leaders. This curriculum has been informed by the review of current scholarly literature presented in Part I. where I looked at definitions of leadership, mindful leadership, everyday leadership, mindfulness, compassion, and cultivating compassion.

The programs I found which cultivate mindfulness and compassion in leaders are expensive, require travel, and therefore seem to be directed to those in high-level positions of formal leadership roles. This curriculum fills a gap by directing compassion cultivation training to locally situated leaders in business, community, and education; its availability will be communicated via professional associations, will be offered at community colleges, and eventually in an online format. This curriculum incorporates elements of leadership values and dialogue as well as compassion cultivation training.

As part of the Literature Review, I also examined three major existing cultivating compassion curriculum; these are the starting point for this program, utilizing their shared approach as follows:

1. All three programs start with mindfulness training to build of awareness and presence.



2. The programs work through meditation and interactive or reflective experiential exercises to open the heart and cultivate feelings of warmth and kindness to ourselves and to others.
3. The programs then develop our own natural inclination to want to help (ourselves and others) and work to provide the underlying stability and wisdom from which to work from.

This program will be offered weekly, conducted over eight weeks, meeting two hours per week.

**SYLLABUS : COMPASSION CULTIVATION TRAINING FOR EVERYDAY LEADERHIP****COURSE OBJECTIVE:**

This training will provide mindfulness tools to develop self-awareness, awareness of others, empathy, which is separate from but a precursor to compassion, and outlook, all in the service of promoting positive daily leadership behavior. In addition to mindfulness tools, the program will provide an overview of leadership concepts, and experiential exercises to promote the everyday leader within each of us.

The training will be conducted in the group setting over the course of eight weeks, meeting two and a half hours each week. Training participants will be given homework each week, including periodic readings, instructions for daily meditation., and journaling.

This training focuses on 4 areas of cultivation:

- A. Awareness: Work with attentional capacity and be with our experiences as they unfold.
- B. Outlook Work with conscious intentions & attitudes
- C. Empathy: Cultivate capacity for wishing friends and loved ones well, and then expanding the circle.
- D. Behavior: Natural shift in behavior resulting from transformation of outlook, awareness, and empathy .

Areas A., B., and C., are outcomes trained for in all three of the cultivating compassion curricula examined in the thesis study Literature Review; behavior transformation is a natural result of A., B., and C.

**SYLLABUS : COMPASSION CULTIVATION TRAINING FOR EVERYDAY LEADERHIP**

**NOTE: For proprietary reasons (this curriculum is being used as a training program and for a college course) the author has removed the detailed curriculum.**

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## **Appendix A: Sample of Mindful Leadership/Compassion in Leadership Programs Offered**

In an effort to find existing programs both available and affordable to cultivate compassion in the everyday leader, an internet search was conducted. This is not to say these are the only existing programs; there may be other programs in existence which support this type of leadership development, which are not publicized.

Internet search for relevant leadership training programs (mindfulness-based, compassion-cultivation) for everyday leaders yielded the following results:

1. Cultivating Leadership Presence through Mindfulness  
*Teacher:* Janice Marturano, Founder & Executive Director of “The Institute for Mindful Leadership, and former V. P. General Mills.  
*Format:* Four-day residential retreat, small groups, with meditation and reflective activity. Participants learn mindful leadership practices, with everyday applications such as mindful meetings, skillful decision-making, leading by inspiration.  
*Location:* Resort in the Catskill Mountains  
*Fee:* \$2,495 (includes room & meals)  
*Source:* <http://instituteformindfulleadership.org/cultivating-leadership-presence/> (Retrieved December 14, 2015)
  
2. Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute  
*Teacher(s):* Certified “Search Inside Yourself” instructors, trained by mindfulness, compassion and leadership experts such as Dr. Richard Davidson, Mark Coleman, Norman Fisher, Rick Hanson, Dr. Daniel Siegel, and Chade Meng-Tan.  
*Format:* Two-day workshop, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. each day; lecture on principles of mindfulness, neuroscience, emotional intelligence, and leadership, as well as directed practice in developing awareness and mindfulness.  
*Location:* Conducted in a variety of cities across the United States and the world.  
*Fee:* \$1,095-\$1,250 general admission. Room and meals not included.  
*Source:* <https://siyli.org/publicprograms/> (Retrieved December 14, 2015)
  
3. Mindful Leadership Summit



*Teacher(s):* Twenty-five plus speakers, including Bill George, Roshi Joan Halifax, Dr. Richard Davidson,

*Format:* Two-day workshop, with twenty sessions to choose from, alongside mindfulness meditation and mind-body practice. Optional day-long leadership institute.

*Location:* Washington, D.C.

*Fee:* Regular ticket \$899 (excludes room, meals, additional institute).

*Source:* <http://www.mindfulleader.org/schedule/> (Retrieved December 14, 2015)