

Audio Track 15: Discovering Common Humanity

[00:00:00]

Try this: Discovering common humanity.

Finding yourself in whatever posture feels right for you right now and taking a moment to reflect on one of the ways in which you feel you are falling short. Or suffering in ways that others don't understand. For example, maybe you got fired from your job and you don't know anyone else who's been fired. Or perhaps your boss just told you that you need to improve in something. Maybe your partner has let you know that you're falling short for them. Maybe your partner even left you or threatened to leave. Maybe you have a health problem or something that makes you feel less physically attractive to others. Or perhaps you've been marginalized by society for the color of your skin, your gender or sexual preference or your religion, for example. Take a moment now and acknowledge that thing that makes you feel isolated, alone or unlovable. Can you give it a name?

And now considering whether any of your friends or family have experienced something similar. For example, if you feel unattractive, is there anyone else in your circle of family or friends that isn't known for being attractive? If so, might they have also struggled with feeling unattractive? It's quite common, actually, not to meet society's expectations of attractiveness with its retouched photos and narrow definition of beauty. So, notice what arises in you in terms of acceptance and kindness when you think about the situation the other person was or is in.

Now broadening your circle of compassion to include acquaintances, have any of them experienced something similar, even if it was more or less pronounced? If so, notice what you have said or would say to them if you bumped into them and the subject came up. Would you give them the benefit of the doubt? Would you offer them kindness and understanding?

Now broadening your circle of compassion even further to include people you don't know; everyone in your neighborhood, city, state, country, and even the world. Can you imagine, even though you don't know them, how many others share your situation right this minute? Picturing or having a felt sense of all of you together, would they be surprised to discover they're not alone? Are you surprised to discover you're not alone?

Take a moment now if it feels right to notice, what it feels like to know you're not alone. What kind of wishes or words of encouragement do you have for them? Can you include yourself in that circle of compassion? Can you offer yourself the kindness you need? Take a moment now and notice the effects of recognizing that you're not alone and offering kindness to yourself and others.

And please remember to thank yourself for showing up. For practicing, for being curious. And most of all, for taking good care of yourself.

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