

Coaching at Work Annual Conference

Maintaining Momentum:

Coaching and Mentoring in a VUCA world

6th July 2016, London

Coaching
at Work

Mindful Compassionate Coaching in a VUCA world: developing coach and client compassion for self and others

Liz Hall


lizhallcoaching
coaching & mindfulness

Mindfulness practice

Awareness of breath



Coaching at Work Annual Conference

Maintaining Momentum:
Coaching and Mentoring in a VUCA world

6th July 2016, London

Coaching
at Work

This session

- **Intro:** why my interest, why me?
- **Setting the scene:** why now?
- **What is compassion** (and mindfulness) and what is it *not*?
- **Mindfulness & compassion:** two wings of the same bird
- Research: **benefits** of cultivating compassion (with mindfulness)
- **Relevance/application** to coaching, particularly in relation to VUCA- turning towards difficulties
- **Putting into practice:** how we can develop (self-) compassion, some practices & potential obstacles
- **Resources**

*“Nothing is more powerful than an
idea whose time has come”*

Victor Hugo

“The cure for the pain is in the pain”

Rumi

The climate

- Growing evidence base for compassion & mindfulness
- Psychology falling out of love with self-esteem as marker for +ve mental health ... and into love with compassion
- Goal-setting culture: blame self when fail
- “It’s crazy out there”- VUCA, BREXIT, refugee crisis, climate change ...
- Rise in depression & anxiety.... and shift taking place: speaking out
- High exposure- social media, e.g. ‘hot or not’ app; FOMO

And now compassion

- Building on **Mindfulness Revolution**
- Growing **evidence base** for Compassion Focused Therapy (CFT) showing promise for mental health conditions e.g. social phobia, excessive self-judgment, PTSD...and **Compassionate Mind Training** - group therapy for people with severe shame
- CFT given birth to **Compassion Focused Coaching**
- **Compassion Cultivation Training** at Stanford University CCARE (Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education)
- Compassion in **education** (e.g. Saltash Community School)
- Growth in compassionate **leadership** (e.g. Compassionate Mind Foundation)
- Goes hand in hand with **mindfulness** - can be missing ingredient
- Perfect for our times - **VUCA, high stress levels, lots of self-criticism**

No mud, no lotus



Coaching at Work Annual Conference

Maintaining Momentum:
Coaching and Mentoring in a VUCA world

6th July 2016, London

Coaching
at Work

What is compassion?

- *“I try to treat whoever I meet as an old friend. This gives me a genuine feeling of happiness. It is the practice of compassion”* (Dalai Lama, accessed 2015)
- Com...pati....but with ACTION
- Compassion is *“a sensitivity to the suffering of self and others, with a deep **commitment to try to relieve it**”* (Dalai Lama, 1995)

Two wings of the bird of awareness



- **Two wings** : compassion and mindfulness are inter-dependent
- **Mindfulness training** increases compassion to self and others
- **Mindfulness core practices:**
 - i) single-focus; ii) open awareness, iii) loving-kindness & compassion (e.g. Germer & Siegel, 2012)
- *Without compassion:* Aware yet self-critical
- *Without mindfulness:* Self-indulgent

Compassion: 3 elements/flows

Three elements (Neff, 2003)

1. Having compassion **for others**
2. Receiving **compassion from others** or being the object of compassion
3. Compassion for oneself - **self-compassion**
(for multiple selves)

Self-compassion: 3 elements

- Mindfulness (vs. Over-Identification)
- Common humanity (vs. Isolation)
- Self-Kindness (vs. Self-judgment)

(Neff, 2003)

Guided self-compassion practice

Bring to mind stressful scenario

- **This is a moment of suffering** (mindfulness: naming, turning towards)
- **Suffering is a part of life** (common humanity)
- **May I be kind to myself in this moment?** (self-kindness) E.g. *Hands over heart...what would you say to friend?*

Letting go of practice, noticing how you feel, allowing yourself to be

(Neff's Self-compassion break)

Coaching at Work Annual Conference

Maintaining Momentum:
Coaching and Mentoring in a VUCA world

6th July 2016, London

Coaching
at Work

What compassion is *not*

“Don’t run toward pain and suffering. Just don’t run away from them” Sufi saying

- Self-esteem
- Self-indulgence
- Self-pity
- Passivity
- Egotism
- Empathy

Empathy

- Gateway to compassion
- Compassion activates brain circuits associated with positive emotion & reward, empathy doesn't necessarily do so
- Compassion leads to prosocial behaviour (= voluntary behaviour intended to help another) more systematically than empathy
- Compassion= empathy with action?

Goodbye self-esteem... hello self-compassion



- Different picture emerging around self-esteem
- Self-esteem= evaluating yourself positively,
self-compassion= relating to oneself with kind & forgiving attitude
(Neff & Vonk, 2009)
- High self-esteem can create lots of problems (Baumeister et al, 1996)...we can't all be above average!....Thich Nhat Hanh: superiority, equality, inferiority complex.....Trying to maintain high self-esteem...narcissism, self-absorption, self-righteousness, anger, prejudice, discrimination

“Self-compassion provides the same benefits as self-esteem without its drawbacks”

Kristin Neff

Coaching at Work Annual Conference

Maintaining Momentum:
Coaching and Mentoring in a VUCA world

6th July 2016, London

Coaching
at Work

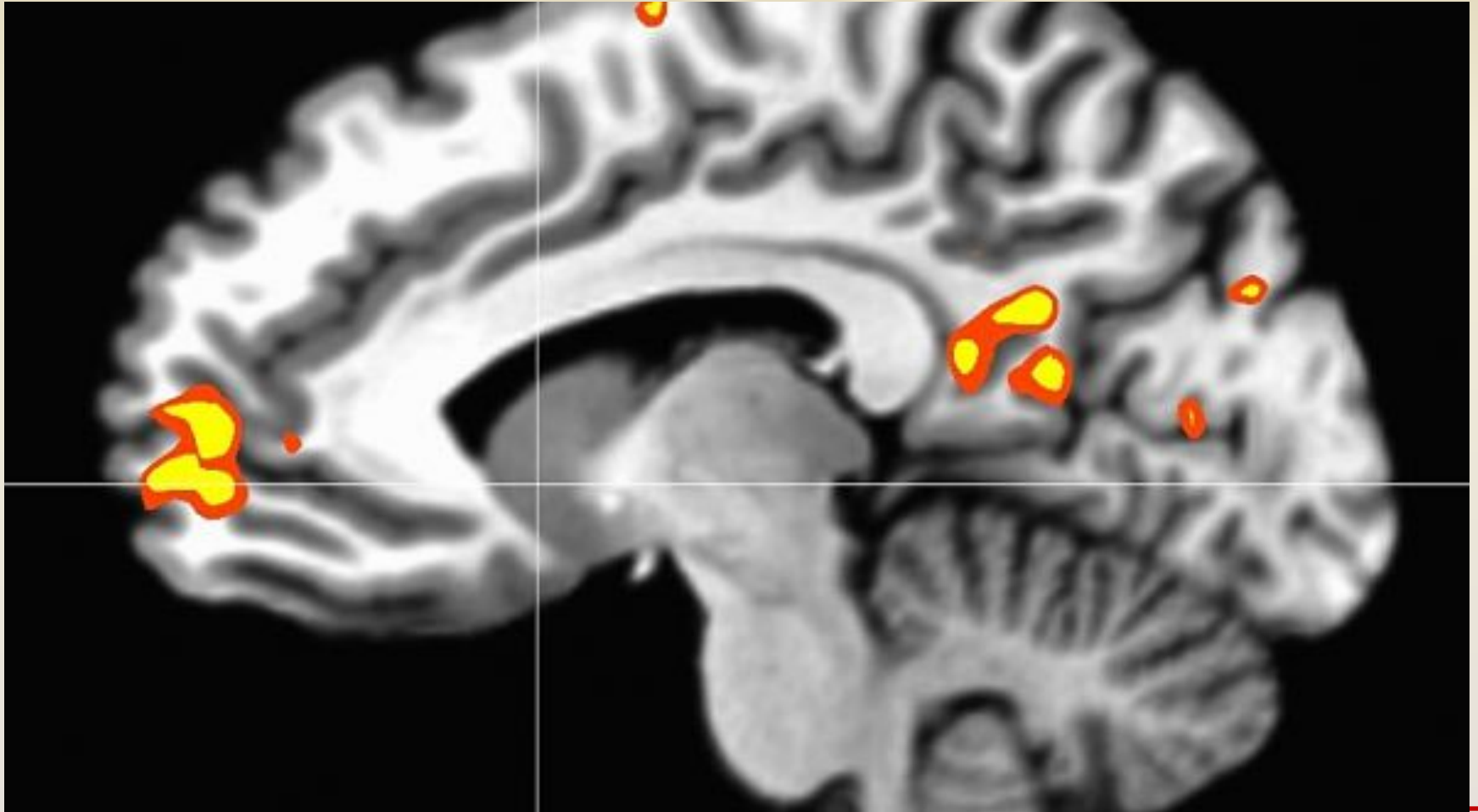
Compassion: innate?

- Our capacity for empathy, compassion, kindness, and altruistic behaviour is **inborn** ... only later do we judge who is worthy or not of our kindness
- What's in it for *me*? Social psychologist Daniel Batson research on prosocial motivation - if we feel empathy for someone, we will help them, regardless of what we get out of it...Warneken & Tomasello (2009) - children naturally help
- Cooperation AND competition
- But for some who haven't encountered compassion while young, can be undeveloped (e.g. Davidson) & most of us have tendency to be **self-critical** self-criticism very harmful (one of biggest predictors of serious mental health problems - Harter, 1993)
- Untrained, compassion is **reactive**

Benefits of (self-)compassion

- Makes us **happier** , **more optimistic** & **increases relationship satisfaction** (Neff et al, 2007, 2013)
- Decreases depression & anxiety.. (Self-compassion) linked to **psychological health and wellbeing** (e.g. Neff et al; Brach, 2003)
- Works with **affiliative** brain systems (self-criticism works through threat system) (e.g. Weng et al, 2013)
- Associated with improved ability **to cope with adversity** (e.g. Sbarra et al, 2012)
- Sense of purpose
- Boosts connections with others .. in organisations, **promotes healing and builds the quality of relationships** ... trust and strengthening shared values of interconnectedness (Dutton, Lilius, and Kanov , 2007) Greater **presence, attunement and resonance** (McCraty, 2002; McCraty *et al*, 1998)
- As little as 30 minutes a day for 2 weeks is sufficient to change the brain and induce **more prosocial & altruistic** behaviour (Davidson)
- Benefit more from **others' kindness**
- **Greater creativity** (Zabelina and Robinson, 2010)

The brain on compassion



Coaching at Work Annual Conference

Maintaining Momentum:
Coaching and Mentoring in a VUCA world

6th July 2016, London

Coaching
at Work

The neuroscience: practising self-compassion

- Strengthens the parts of brain that make you **happier, more resilient and more attuned** to others
- **Can comfort 'negative' emotions** in the present, reducing distress ... recruits the Care Circuit (Panksepp, 1998 - seven primary emotional circuits in the brain) to generate oxytocin & endogenous opioids
- **Can permanently heal** painful memories from the past or **change negative** core beliefsPanksepp: if distressing memories reconsolidated while Care Circuit active, they become less distressing
- Compassion meditation studies (Davidson, 2012) - In monks, 'happiest' brains very documented (e.g. LPFC more active than the right; extremely high level of connectivity between LPFC & amygdala; gamma waves with highest levels of amplitude & synchrony) ... but even novices become happier!

Compassion: cornerstone of all good coaching

- Compassion = important factor in creating **positive change** in psychotherapy (Wampold, 2013)
- Compassion leads to better outcomes (Boyatzis; Fluckiger et al, 2012) - leads to **desired change, enhanced health, and well-being** in coaching (Boyatzis, Smith and Beverage, 2012)

Compassion in coaching

“Aaaaggh....I keep trying to coach my client around how to be more compassionate towards himself, but I’m getting nowhere ... I must be a terrible coach!”



The inner critic

*What is this self inside us, this silent observer,
Severe and speechless critic, who can terrorize us
And urge us on to futile activity
And in the end, judge us still more severely
For the errors into which his own reproaches drove us?*

T.S. Eliot, *The Elder Statesman*

Floccinaucinihilipilification

Noun rare

The action or habit of estimating something as worthless

Coaching at Work Annual Conference

Maintaining Momentum:
Coaching and Mentoring in a VUCA world

6th July 2016, London

Coaching
at Work

EXERCISE

How do you typically react to yourself and in challenging times?

(hand-out)

EXPLORE/COACH IN PAIRS

Compassionate coaches

Practising self-compassion helps us:

1. Help our client become a source of compassion for themselves - e.g. *role-modeling* self-compassion, explicitly helping them *develop* self-compassion
2. Be happier and to generate more compassion for our clients ... more *resilient & more attuned* to others helps us generate UPR (Welwood, 2002)

The more our clients feel heard, understood and cared for, the more likely it is they'll be healed/get positive outcomes

Mindful Compassionate Coaching

Foundations

- *Practice*: Coach supported by own mindfulness/compassion practice
- *Philosophy & stance*: turning towards the difficult; exploring emotions; emphasis on being mindful & self-compassionate
- *CPD & supervision*: Mindfulness & compassion/related
- *Underpinnings*- able to draw on evidence-based mindfulness & compassion cultivation approaches

MCC: coaching relationship

- **Contracting** for how mindfulness & compassion might show up in coaching...ABC
- **Modeling** CARE, TRUST, RESPECT, MINDFULNESS, LOVE, COMPASSION....Turning towards difficulty (lotus and the mud) etc
- Drawing on mindfulness/compassion-related **underpinnings & practices** where appropriate

Mindful Compassionate Coaching underpinnings & practices: ABC

- **AWARENESS/MINDFULNESS:** e.g. traditional mindfulness (Buddhist) teachings (e.g. Thich Nhat Hanh, Dalai Lama); secular mindfulness teachings (MBSR- Kabat-Zinn, MBCT- Mark Williams); Liz's FEEL/FELT model (Hall, 2013/2015); Gestalt, Clean Language
- **BODY WISDOM:** e.g. somatic coaching e.g. Richard Strozzi, Eunice Aquilina); yoga; mindfulness teachings & practices (e.g. Body Scan, Mindful Movement- Walking Meditation)
- **COMPASSION:** e.g. Buddhism; Kristin Neff's work; CFC (e.g. Paul Gilbert; Chris Irons, Stephen Palmer), Tim Desmond-modularity/psychological parts
- Plus **NEUROSCIENCE** etc

Compassion Focused Coaching

- CFT (Gilbert)
- Integrated approach: including evolutionary psychology, neuroscience, attachment theory, social psychology
- CFC aims to help clients notice & understand impact of 'negative' emotions, self-criticism, rumination etc; understand benefits of creating an alternative compassionate & helpful relationship with themselves & others, and how to do this
- Works with concepts such as the Three Affect Regulation Systems model; evolutionary ideas re human brain being tricky...normalising
- Uses practices including Soothing breathing; Compassionate Focused Imagery

Three Affect Regulation systems

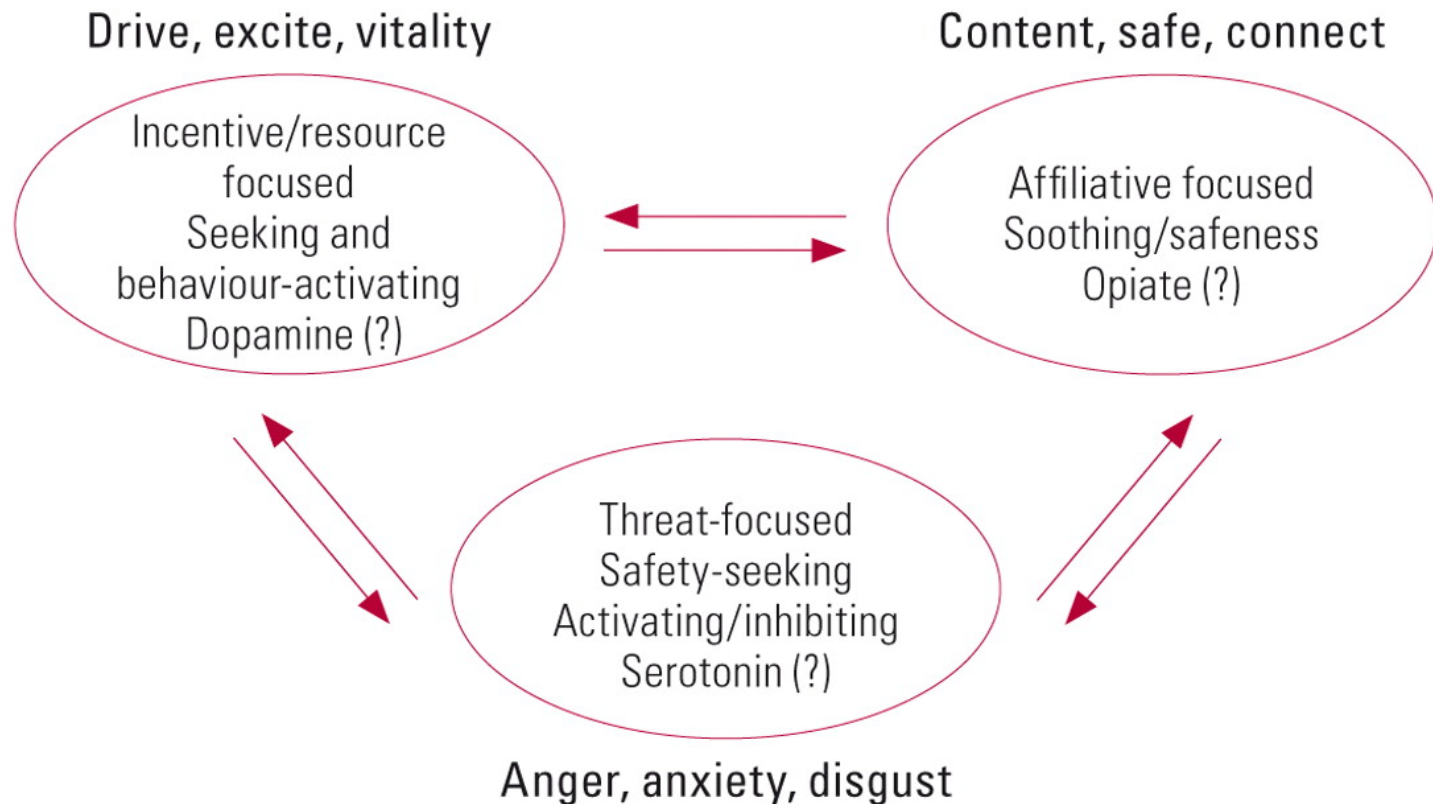


FIG 1 Affect regulation systems. From Gilbert (2005a). with permission of Routledge.

Out of balance

- Overactive Threat System (anger, shame etc)
- Overactive/underactive Drive System
- Underactive Caring & Affiliative System



Compassionate Imagery exercise

Explore in pairs/plenary

Coaching at Work Annual Conference

Maintaining Momentum:
Coaching and Mentoring in a VUCA world

6th July 2016, London

Coaching
at Work

Loving Kindness Meditation

- *May I be safe kind to myself ... free from suffering ... accept myself as I am*
- *May you be safe kind to yourself ... free from suffering ... accept yourself as you are (loved one)*
- *May you be safe kind to yourself ... free from suffering ... accept yourself as you are (neutral)*
- *May you be safe kind to yourself ... free from suffering ... accept yourself as you are (difficult person - client?)*
- *May you all be safe kind to yourselves ... free from suffering ... accept yourselves as you are (everyone)*

LKM benefits

- Positive impact on body's biochemistry, enhanced **resilience & empathy & self-compassion** (e.g. Davidson, 2007)
- Tool for driving **positive behavioural change** (e.g. Frederickson, 2014)
- Use in CFC (Gilbert)
- Ekman (2008): powerful tool to help people **rewrite internal scripts**
- Marturtano (2014) recommends as part of **mindful leadership**
- LKM in coaching helps coaches 'quieten' their inner critic, and be more present and listen more deeply to client - helped create an environment which improved coaching outcomes....softening, easing, helping more transformational work take place (Heardman, 2016)

Potential obstacles to self-compassion

- Fear
- Defensiveness
- Pride
- ‘Near enemies’ of self-indulgence; self-pity; passivity; egotism
- Culture

'Near enemies' of self-compassion

- **Self-indulgence** ... won't bother to do anything ... doesn't actually serve
- **Self-pity**: wallowing in suffering and not with wishing oneself well
- **Passivity**: Compassion leads to action (not always)
- **Egotism**: being overly involved with our own needs ... self-esteem

Stages on path to self-compassion



- **Backdraft:** anger, negativity ... worthless self fighting for survival →
- **Infatuation** stage →
- **Tricky middle bit** - no magic formula ☹️ →
- **True acceptance**

Mindful Compassionate Coach

What does *your* Mindful Compassionate Coaching practice look like?

What can you commit to?

Explore in pairs

Coaching at Work Annual Conference

Maintaining Momentum:
Coaching and Mentoring in a VUCA world

6th July 2016, London

Coaching
at Work

Practices & exercises

- Mindfulness practices
- FEEL/FELT model (Hall, 2013,2015)
- Compassionate Imagery (Gilbert)
- Loving Kindness (Befriending) Meditation
- Self-compassion break (Neff website)
- <http://self-compassion.org/test-how-self-compassionate-you-are/> (Neff website)

Resources

- ***MINDFUL COMPASSIONATE COACHING MASTER CLASS*** with LIZ HALL: *Thursday 15th December*
- *Coaching in Times of Crisis & Transformation* (Liz Hall & others)
- *Mindful coaching: using mindfulness to transform your coaching practice* (Liz Hall)
- “Compassion Focused Coaching”, *Handbook of Coaching Psychology* (Irons, Palmer & Hall)
- *Radical Acceptance* (Tara Brach)
- *Self-Compassion in Psychotherapy* (Tim Desmond)
- *Self Compassion* (Kristin Neff)
- *The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion* (Christopher Germer)
- *Mindfulness: a practical guide for finding peace in a frantic world* (Mark Williams and Danny Penman)
- *The Mindful workplace* (Michael Chaskalson)
- *The miracle of mindfulness* (Thich Nhat Hanh)
- *Wherever you go, there you are* (Jon Kabat-Zinn)
- *Full catastrophe living* (Jon Kabat-Zinn)
- *The Mindful Therapist* (Daniel Siegel)

Contact Liz

Email: liz@coaching-at-work.com

Tel: 0844 209 2157

Skype: liz.hall2

www.coaching-at-work.com

www.lizhallcoaching.com



Coaching at Work Annual Conference

Maintaining Momentum:
Coaching and Mentoring in a VUCA world

6th July 2016, London

Coaching
at Work