

Compassion Technique[©]

Step by step explanation for facilitators

1. The coachee focuses on one situation and one person. This is not voiced by the coachee. This is the starting point of the process. We deal with one situation per session. If there are more situations, the Compassion Technique will be applied multiple times.
2. In the process, we continually check the progress by giving it a number. In this step we determine the starting number. It's only useful to do this for situations in which the number is higher than 3. If it is 3 or lower, this situation doesn't affect the coachee too much and he or she can handle it. Have him or her choose a different situation if the number is 3 or lower (or doublecheck if the coachee really wants to work with this situation, sometimes it only gets the number 3 but it really can be a situation in which someone would like to see change and where someone else would give it the number 6). Ask the coachee to voice the number.
3. The visualization is not necessary, but it helps a lot of people. In this step, we are looking at the starting situation. This "softens" during the different rounds most of the time. The coachee can for example experience that the other person is very close in the beginning and very far away at the end. In that case, there is more room for both. Also, the place where the other person is standing at the end (in front, left, right, behind, diagonally) can feel more comfortably. What can happen as well is that the facial expressions will become softer. There are so called "sub modalities" woven into the questions. Some people prefer seeing, others prefer hearing, feeling, smelling or tasting. For those that have difficulty getting a picture, it usually helps to offer the other sub modalities. If the coachee really has difficulty visualizing, you can say it is not necessary. In that case, you can leave out the checks in the other rounds. Sometimes it can be necessary to explain to very rational people that visualizations are something that top athletes use to get better results. Tell the coachee that the internal process doesn't have to be said out loud.
4. This is the last step in defining the starting situation. Putting a word on the tension is already the first step in the process. Oftentimes it is the first time someone really contemplates what it is about. Ask the coachee to say the word out loud. You might help to find the right word. Ask if perhaps there is a second word, emotion or feeling. If that's the case, ask to give every word, emotion or feeling a number on a scale from 0 to 10. You then work with the word that has the highest number. This number will normally go down in the next steps. Sometimes the tension can get a bit higher but most of the time it's about a second emotion that comes up. For example, the beginning emotion was

anger with an intensity of 9 out of 10. In round 2 anger can get down to 5. In round 3 sadness can come up with an intensity of 7. If we only look at the tension, it seems like it has gone up. If we look at the emotion, we will probably see that anger has gone down even further to 4, but that a new emotion (sadness) has come up. In the next round, we will work on that new emotion (sadness). When the new emotion (sadness) has gone down to 2, the original emotion (anger) has also gone down to a number of 3 or less.

5. This is the step to help center the coachee. After ending the Compassion Technique you can come back to this step and share that this is an easy stress release or center exercise. It is an easy and powerful technique for which the coachee doesn't need instructions or coaching.
 - a. Demonstrate the Whole Brain Position. Often, that's easier than explaining it.
 - b. The coachee can feel weird doing this. In that case you can explain why we do it (if necessary you can explain it afterwards). The reason we do the Whole Brain Position is because stress or tension can lead to (partially) blocking a part of the brain. With the Whole Brain Position we regain access to our whole brain.
 - c. So, when we experience tension, a part of our brain is kind of "being paused" or "disconnected". In other words, we don't have access to our whole brain capacity anymore to deal with a situation and that often overwhelms us even more. How does that show?
 - i. Example 1: we only go in "feeling" mode. We don't have access to practical solutions anymore. For others we look like we are running around like a crazy person. We are stuck in emotions. This disconnection often happens to women.
 - ii. Example 2: we only go in "rational" mode. We don't have access to our emotional side anymore. For others, we seem cold and distant. This disconnection often happens to men.
 - d. The action of crossing the limbs over the central meridian of the body during the Whole Brain Position connects the different parts of the brain.
 - e. Breathing in and out helps to calm down. Participate in doing this, especially if you notice the other person breathing in a very shallow way.
 - f. Visualizing the golden ball and the dropping of the ball helps to calm down and to put the focus on the vertical line which causes someone to be more centered. The golden color is to indicate the importance of it. Stopping at the heart and dwelling on it is for people (especially men) that don't have any connection with words like "making contact with your heart".
 - g. You can also determine the time to stick with the attention in the heart region yourself. When you feel that the coachee is calm enough, you can ask to open their eyes again.

6. After the coachee has been centered by the previous step, there is more space to go to neutrality and compassion. This step is about an internal process in which the coachee doesn't voice the *answers* to the questions. However, ask the coachee to read the *question* on the card out loud. This helps on the one hand to increase your own involvement and on the other hand to help coachees who are more auditory than visually to find an answer.

Picking cards with questions has different aspects:

- a. Having the coachee shuffle the cards can help them get the feeling that this session is especially for him or her and that there is no fixed order in the cards.
- b. In a lot of methods, the mind, the reason, the ratio or the ego is being put on hold or not allowed to participate. What happens sometimes, is that it rebels and it questions the method or the facilitator. By using questions, we involve this part and make sure it becomes part of the solution.
- c. There is no right or wrong answer to a question. It is all about what the question does to the coachee. The effect is that there will be more compassion, or at least neutrality. The other person will be experienced less as a perpetrator and the coachee himself gets more power. Oftentimes ideas will pop up on how to handle a situation or a person differently.
- d. The questions have a different effect on different people. Sometimes someone immediately knows a rational answer on a question, sometimes it takes a while. Sometimes there will be no rational answer but the coachee feels something changing, physically, emotionally or mentally. Sometimes the coachee understands the importance of the question but doesn't have an answer yet. Then it is like a seed that has been planted and that will sprout later. It often happens that the coachee would like to write something down. Encourage this. Sometimes the coachee doesn't have an answer to the question or a connection to the question. That is also okay.
- e. Have someone deal with a question for at least halve a minute. Even when there's an immediate answer, it might be good to spend more time with a question, in order to get extra answers or more nuances. Often the immediate answer comes from the ratio and the feeling or heart hasn't had the chance to also get involved. If the coachee is resisting too much, try to follow your own intuition to either have the coachee be with the question a bit longer or proceed to the next one. Avoid that friction is created between you and the coachee. However, the result of not being long enough with a question could be that more questions (rounds) may be needed to have the tension decrease. If that happens, don't worry, let it happen and trust the process.
- f. The reason there are three questions per round, is to guarantee that at least one question spoke to the other person.
- g. Having the coachee draw the cards has two reasons:
 - i. The order changes constantly, this keeps the coachee as well as the facilitator focused so that there will be no ingrained patterns.

- ii. The coachee performs this action themselves. They are not dependent on the coach. This encourages them to focus on their own strength. Or at least the pattern of becoming dependent on coaches will be avoided or discouraged.
 - h. Behind every question, there is a whole framework. The pitfall for the facilitator is to explain it. Don't do that. Let the questions do their job, also when you notice that the coachee doesn't (fully) understand them. Trust the process. Let the coachee draw a new question when they really don't understand the question.
 - i. The questions that have been answered are put aside and not put back into the set. In this way every time a new question that shines light from another angle to the situation, will pop up.

- 7. Have the coachee take a moment to reflect on what happened in silence. Give him or her the opportunity to write down an insight or idea.

- 8. This is a check in between. It is not really necessary, but it does help plenty of people feeling that a change is occurring than just saying a number.

- 9. Check the number.
 - a. As discussed in step 4, the number usually goes down.

Usually the number has decreased to 3 or below after no more than 4 rounds. When that's not the case (for example when the number is still 5), ask how the coachee feels and experiences the situation and the other person differently. Ask the coachee if this is enough. Sometimes that's the case. Sometimes a 5 could be such a relief and difference that for the coachee it is enough for the time being. Often new insights are gained and how to deal with the situation and/or the other person. This may be enough for now. In other cases, it might be good to do another step. What may help is this visualization:

 - i. "Visualize the other person again. Put them on a distance which is comfortable to you. Now focus on the little golden ball near your heart. Enlarge it. Keep making it bigger until it is a ball or egg in which you fit. Feel the strength it gives you. Now look at the other person. See that this person also has a golden ball in their heart's region. Maybe you have to search and probe a bit because it's covered with other things like worries or emotions. But if you look attentively, you will see the golden ball. Let it grow bigger so that the other person is also inside the golden ball or egg. Say to yourself: I feel my inner strength. You feel your inner strength. You were the trigger of my feeling, not the cause. I wish myself that I am fully in my loving strength. I wish you that you are fully in you loving strength." *Wait for a moment and give some*

time to allow it to happen. Then say: “when you are ready, you may open your eyes.”

- b. As indicated in step 4, there can be multiple tensions in the beginning or they can originate after another tension has decreased in intensity. Make sure to check this if this is mentioned in the beginning. If you feel that a different tension or “negative” emotion has popped up, check with the coachee if this actually happened or not.

10. The end: Whole Brain Position.

- a. Demonstrate the Whole Brain Position again.
- b. Explicitly ask to describe the new feeling. Have the coachee voice it to you. Usually this is a feeling related to calmness, understanding, peace, inner balance, neutrality or compassion. If necessary, help the coachee to find the right word. However, the most important is that the coachee feels the feeling. The word is of secondary importance. Encourage the coachee to make the connection with this new inner feeling regarding the situation with the other person. Allow enough time for this.
- c. The reason for pressing the finger tips to each other, is to anchor the new feeling, like in NLP (neuro-linguistic programming).

Whole Brain Position

