

COMPASSIONATE COMMUNICATION & EVERYTHING IS MY TEACHER

Week #4 of a 5-Week Series Based on the Robert Brumet Book, "Living Originally"

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Wednesday, Oct. 8, 2025

So, tonight we're talking about We're going on through Rev. Brumet's book. And I've got chapters #7 and #8 ... and Practice #5 and then a special practice. And if you've been reading along with this book, it is really kind of very "Do it" heavy. You know what I mean? You've got to practice what you preach. You've got to practice what you preach.

And so I've got #7 and #8, which is: #7 is "Compassionate Communication" and #8 is "Everything is My Teacher." And I don't think it's any coincidence that I have these two chapters, either — because there's a lot of transformation going on my life. The people here at the church know I've only been here a couple of months. Me and my lovely granddaughters moved here from California, and It's been a lot of transformation since then. You know, I've got a senior in high school and I've got kids in school. And I've got working here and learning all the things. And everything right now for me is also a lesson.

So, the first chapter is **COMPASSIONATE COMMUNICATION**. He says: What is compassionate communication? How is it different from normal communication? We communicate all day long, right? We do it with our speech. We do it with our body language. We do it out the window when cars go by [congregants laugh] that we don't like. I don't do that though, huh, guys? No; I don't do that. Not me. So, we're always in communication.

Brumet says, "In relationship with others, our greatest joys and our greatest challenges are through communication." And being married, I believe it. [Congregants laugh] I live it, you know? And part of the world today, too, is — one of the things that gets me — is texting. When I send a text, the way my husband receives it is not the way I intended it to go. Or vice versa, you know what I mean? So, he'll call me and go, "*What did you just say?*" And I'm like, "*Oh, no; I was saying this.*" You know? But it's like, we're trying to get through it fast. And the communication doesn't come around near the same as it used to when we were actually communicating more with each other.

But also that communication — that they're talking about compassionate communication — isn't just about romantic relationships. It's about everyday life. Because we're always in that communication.

So, I learned about this particular practice from Buddhists a long time ago. It's called "right speech." Has anybody else heard of the right speech? Yeah; very good. Very good. Yeah, it was probably Thich Nhat Hanh that I read it from probably three decades ago, yeah, when I first started this healing.

He says when you're talking with somebody, to be compassionate, you want to ask yourself three questions before you speak. The first one: Is it true? Is it? Is it kind? And is it necessary?

And here's a little clicker for you. When I learned this first, I added two more to the end of it. You can use them if you want. It's not in his book, but I added in: Does it need to be said now? Because timing is important. And: Is it mine to say? Because not everything is mine to say. You know, sometimes it's someone else's -- as a spouse or someone else close to them -- to say. So I try to put those in myself.

So, **is it true?** I need to know that it's true before I say it out loud. And this keeps me in the right speech. This keeps me in compassion. Because if I'm telling something that I think might be true ... Every time somebody puts the word "I think" in there, I go "*eh.*" Because "*I think*" is not the answer. It's "*I know*" or "*This is true.*" And not everything you see on the internet is true, just in case you're wondering. [Laughs] That's the world we're living in right now, right?

So: **Is it kind?** Does it make a positive impact? Or are we putting somebody down? Even if they are whatever we think they are, is that what our purpose here on earth is — is to make it negative? Or can't we say something kind about it?

A long time ago, one of my friends told me that, everywhere she goes, she speaks kind words to everybody. Even people that she doesn't really care for — she finds something; some truth. *"Oh, my gosh, your outfit looks wonderful today."* Or, you know, *"Well, that's a wonderful song you're singing."* Or anything! Like, you know, *"Look, you're all color coordinated!"* Or whatever it is! *"You didn't pull in front of me and make me mad."* [Laughs] Anything that you can say that brings people up is compassionate. If we're just here to tear each other down, we've got enough of that out there. We see it all the time — battling it all the time.

But, at Unity, we know the truth: we're all one. So, let's be kind to each other.

The next one is: **Is it necessary?** What is my intention — my motive — behind saying it? What's my purpose in saying it altogether? Is it just to say it and be snide or, you know, or make a comment?

One of the things that I happen ... I lived in California before we moved here. And I worked an hour from where I lived. So, if you know Southern California, it's nothing but traffic. We lived up on the side of the mountain, and I had to get ... I was still in the same county — San Diego County — but I had to get from my house to Mission Valley, which was downtown, every day back and forth for work.

And I caught myself one day as I was driving home, and this driver nearly ran me off the road. And as I was driving along, I got so angry. And I was just, like, the whole way home — and I was still 50 minutes from home — I rehearsed that in my mind. I kept saying, *"I can get it right,"* you know. *"Oh well, he did this and he shouldn't have done that"* and so that when I got home I could present it to my husband. [Congregants laugh] Because I was in the right, right? I wasted 50 minutes of my time in anger, pumping adrenaline through my blood. For what? By the time I got home, I was just like, *"This isn't even worth saying."* It really isn't!

I'll find that, even today, I'll be like driving home or something, and somebody cuts me off or something. Oh, and then when I get home, I don't say anything to the kids. I'm just like, *"You know, it happened."* You know, it's not going to add kindness to this world. Is it necessary for me to say this? Does it change anybody else's life that this person almost ran me over? No. I was glad that I was aware of what was going on and I didn't actually get hit.

And I want you to remember that all of this applies to you, as well. Self-talk is one of the most painful things for some people. It's really easy when my friend comes up and says, *"Oh, I'm having this issue,"* and I'll give her all these words. And then she leaves and I go, *"Oh, God, did I hear myself?"* Because I don't speak to myself like that.

I'm a work in progress, by the way. I'm not all the way there. [Laughs] I'm still working on it.

But it does apply to yourself. Is it really true to be saying this to yourself? Is it really kind? If we're not kind to ourselves, you know, we really don't have ... We've got to fill our tank up — right? — before we fill anybody else's up. That kindness starts within; that kindness starts ... And is it necessary to go over it, over and over for 50 minutes, so you can get home and say, *"I was a good girl and somebody tried to hurt me"*? You just ... It was unnecessary.

So ... and I want to propose this for you. How could the world change — how could your life change — if you and everybody in your life followed those simple rules: Is it true? Is it kind? And is it necessary? I have a feeling we wouldn't talk near as much. We'd be doing things together instead of speaking things that were unnecessary. Because not everything that comes across our mouths — not everything that

comes across the TV — is absolutely necessary to hear. And especially right now, they're just trying to pump us full of adrenaline so, you know, they can get the reaction they're looking for from us. Well, that's not mine to hear. That's not mine to be. I want to be kind to myself. I want to be kind to the people around me. And if ... When I go, I want the epitaph on my stone to say, *"She was a loving person. She was kind."* That's all I can give; that's all I've got left ... you know, I mean, when you'll go, I won't be able to take any of it with me, right?

But I think that our world would be a lot different if people just stopped before they open their mouths and answered those three questions. And then if you're going to say it, say it. But answer those three honestly before you say something to somebody. That's where compassionate communication comes in.

And it's not about speaking, it's about listening too, right? Because listening is important. When I lived here before — I lived here from 2004 to 2012, and this was my home church. And that's why I was so excited about coming back. But I was a chaplain, like these wonderful people right here.

We had a retreat and Rev. Alice was our chaplain leader. And we went into retreat and she had us play this this game where ... it was a listening game. We would sit next to each other in pairs. Do you remember? Right, Susie? Because Susie was part of the team when I was there. And we would look at each other and one person would start talking, but the other person's job was to only listen to 25% of what the person was saying. So we were, like, fiddling with stuff. We didn't have our phones like we do now. But, I mean, we were doing things. We were turning around and listening to other conversations.

And then we stopped and we had the other person do it. Then we do the 50% listening. And so, it was some distraction, but not all the way. And then we went back to 75%. And then we got to 100%. And only at 100% did the people feel like they were heard. Only when the person listened intentionally, looking at you and talking to you.

Because if I'm doing this [mimes being distracted], I can't even talk about it. Whenever my grandkids come up, I have to turn and look at them because I'm like ... I need ... I have to separate myself. This is what we're talking about here. Because it's just ... that's the only real communication that's happening is when you're face-to-face or video-to-video with them and you're talking with them. And you're listening to them.

Because we've seen reports after reports that say you should be listening a lot more than you're talking anyway. So let's listen! And let's apply it to ourselves. Listen to your body. Listen to the chatter that goes on. Listen to what's going on in our lives and say, *"Hmm. Let me think. Let me look at it."*

So the lowest level of listening that Brumet speaks about is hearing the other person, but not ... just being preoccupied with other thoughts. Does anybody sit in a conversation — anybody besides me — and be thinking completely about something else while the person is talking to you? It's easy to do, isn't it? Really! Because you're caught in this — we're caught in this, *"Get it all done right now; it's urgent and important. Right now."* So that's the lowest level of thinking that we have.

He says **the second level of thinking is open to the speaker: you're open to them talking to you, and maybe even enjoying the talk, but you can only receive at the level of your own intellect.** Have you ever experienced that with people? That you're talking to them and they just don't get what you're saying? And they kind of have that look on their face like ...? *"I'll stop here. It's okay. We can talk about it another day."* But it happens.

And I don't want to point fingers or anything, but people at Unity have this sense of more. And they get to talking to people, and people go, *"Huh?"* You know ... [Laughs] *"What was that you're saying?"* Because we have a different set of truths. We know, you know ... We're into "all as one" and everything

else. We have these truths that goes beyond and sometimes people ... It shakes them up a little bit. But that's their level of intellect.

He said **the third one is honestly willing to be changed by interacting with the other person**. So, I'm listening to you, Susie, and I'm saying, *"Oh, I get what you're saying; yeah. Okay. Well, let's go do it that way then! Yeah!"* I'm willing to do it. That is almost 100%.

What he says is **100% is both the speaker and the field of listening to Spirit as it speaks to both of them**. Basically, you're transcending what's happening altogether. So, this person's speaking to this person, and it's almost like there's this trinity going on, instead, because it actually is more. You're both going down a path that you really didn't think the conversation was going to take.

Have you ever gotten into a conversation and then, after you left, you went, *"Wow; that was awesome! I didn't know that person knew these kinds of things, and now I'm changed by that. My life is changed by that."*

So, compassion is not just about speaking, it's about listening.

And Rev. Brumet says — a quote in his book — he says, *"The most important relationship we have is with our own true nature. This relationship is deeply influences all others."*

And like I said earlier, if we're not taking this to heart for ourselves, this could be really hard to relate it out there. People will know that you're not being authentic. I'll put it that way: authentic. You can tell when people aren't authentic; I know you can. People come up to you and they're talking and you're like, *"Mmm; no, maybe not."* But if you start with yourself, go into yourself — you're honest with yourself, and you can be honest with them — that's where the connection is. That's when you're deeply moved.

And Ram Dass — I'm not sure that everybody knows here who Ram Dass is. He's an author; he was a guru, and I read a lot of his books. He did a lot of things in the 70s and 80s. But he said, *"The quieter you become, the more you can hear. When you know how to listen, everybody is the guru."*

Every person is your teacher when you can listen.

What a world, right? Imagine the things I could learn from you. Imagine things I could learn from you. Just by listening to you guys.

I mean, when I hold classes — and I'm holding classes online right now — I tell them first thing — *"I'm here to learn along with you. Because you're going to say something that is going to help me. You're going to say something that's going to inspire me to be a better person. Because I'm going to listen to what you have to say and we're going to interact. I love that experience of that."*

So you're doing this not to judge anybody or even judge yourself. You want to understand people. We're doing this to understand. And when we understand it makes big difference.

I had a conversation -- this week, right? -- with my lovely friend here. And I was trying to explain something about some PowerPoint slides, and she was trying to understand what I was saying. And it just wasn't sinking. My words were not coagulating in her brain or something. And finally, she said one thing and we're like, *"That's it. Now we're on the same level. Now we understand."*

Because it was like I was speaking a different language, and what she was saying I couldn't understand either. And then it was like—we kept going, because we wanted to understand. And then we had it. And it was like, *"Oh, now, now that's going to make it easier: make it easier for me; make it much easier for her."* Because I don't want to be a pain.

So how do you practice it? Well, the compassionate communication. Rev. Brumet offers these suggestions. He said: **set an intention of compassionate speaking and listening**. Even if it's for a short time, say, *"I'm going to do this with this friend when we go to coffee, just this right here."*

Nobody says, *"Hey, turn over your life and do all these things."* I don't know anybody who could do that. Maybe the Buddha did it, right? He left and never I went back, but I don't know of anybody else who threw it away like that and did it. Try to intentionally set just some time—or some person—just to practice this with and listen. Listen to yourself; listen to how you feel when you're around that person and what they're saying and how it makes you feel.

Pay attention throughout your day, he says, and to notice what you actually communicate. Does it compare with what you want to communicate?

That was happening this morning. I really wanted to say something so she could—and she really wanted to understand—and it just wasn't meshing. So, we kept going; kept practicing. And we got to it. So, is what you're trying to do actually going to match your intention—what's really coming across? Am I setting my intentions?

And give yourself feedback. You can actually give yourself feedback in many different ways, because you're going to practice, practice, practice. Right? You can give feedback through talking with a friend and they give you feedback. My favorite feedback is journaling. And my favorite way to do it is I ask a question — I'm right handed and I ask a question —and then I answer it [holds up left hand]. Because I can't control this hand as much as I can control this one. And when this one starts moving, it just answers. It's like a 10 year old: they're going to give it to you raw. You know what I mean? Sometimes it's not very pretty. But I get it, I totally get what's going on.

Sometimes I sit in a chair and I put a chair in front of me. And I ask a question and then I get up and I move into that chair and I sit for a few seconds and I go, *"Okay; that question was just asked of me. What's my answer?"* And I'll answer. You would be surprised at the answers you come up with. You would be surprised with the journaling, with the chairs, with all the practices that he says. These things really work to better understand yourself and then better understand everybody. And have that compassionate communication.

And you can also bounce this off of a really close a close friend: someone you trust really deeply. I have a friend that I've been friends with since I started in recovery almost 30 years ago. And I can throw anything at her and she catches it There's nothing I could shock her with; there's nothing. She's just like, *"Hey; okay. Let's go with this."* And she will tell me exactly the truth back.

How many people actually tell the truth back like that? I haven't found a whole lot. Or I say it to somebody, and then I hear it from somebody else. That one makes me really mad, because I thought this person was a confidante and then, days later, it's coming back from somebody else that I never spoke it to. So, I mean, I really am particular about the people ... and this one, specifically, I can tell her anything. And she'll call BS anytime. She'll go, *"I call BS. Let's do this. You want to break this down for you."*

And I appreciate that in her! And I do the same for her. So, you need someone like that! Or, if you don't have that, journaling can do that, too. But find a way to practice it where you can get it all out; you can say what you need to say; and you can live in this compassion: the compassion of communication with others, and especially with yourself.

So he does say — Rev. Brumet says — that there are "perils on the path." And he says sometimes there's violent — like speaking violently; judgment; or lack of compassion occurring. That's when we should get to work our core practices. And so far in the series that's what we've been working on — is core practices. They've already given you four and we're on the fifth one right now.

So, when you forget what you learned, you revert back. Right? I do, you know? I tell everybody: I have this toolbox, and it's full of all these amazing tools I've learned from every therapist, every group, everything I've ever been in. But sometimes I've got so many tools piled on the top ones that I forget about the ones down here. And sometimes I have to pull them all out and see, because I need that one right now. That's the one I'm looking for. They're in there. You have it.

That's the whole oneness of it. That's where we are in our lives. That's why we're all — we know we're all one. It's there. We'll look deep for it. Work these practices.

And he says the near enemy is a spiritual practice that masquerades as practice. So, do you ever — I don't know if you guys know people like this: people that think/say they're spiritual, but they're really not. There's a term for it, and I can't remember right now what it is. Spiritual bypass. They do spiritual bypass. So, they throw all the words at you, but when they live their life, it's not what the words were. You know, they call that spiritual bypass.

"I have all the answers."

"Oh; Do you live them?"

"Oh; you know, I'm going to go live my life over here."

And perfectionism. There's a lot of people out there trying to be perfect. I spoke to somebody today about how we are humans DQing and not human BEing. Because we have the next task and the next task and the next task, and I got to get from here to there. Where is my BEing inside there? Because I am a human BEing. And how you have to take time to feel that and to be that.

So self-judgment; that's a big one too. We've talked about that a couple of times.

And your egos and your expectations are enemies. Dang, I learned that one this weekend. I had an event plan and I expected, WOO HOO! And what happened was [low energy] woo hoo. And I was ... My husband says I'm naive in some ways, because I always expect a lot of ... I expect me out of other people. It's basically what I do. And he goes, *"Not everybody's like you; come down to earth. You know what I mean? Be here with us, because this is where it really is."*

So, it wasn't a bad thing. It still worked out fine. It's just I had set myself up to think that this was it. So, next time I have this communication with this group of people, I will share my expectations and ask if they can meet those or if there's some way we need to adjust. So that way it doesn't happen again. So, I learned from that, too.

So, the special practices that are incorporated are all the core ones that we've just talked about, and the other weeks they've talked about, as well.

And we're going to move into now the next part of the talk, which I hope is still under time, which is: **EVERYTHING IS MY TEACHER.** Ah, this one caught me by surprise this week. I've been reading this book along with the other — while the other ministers are doing it — and I thought, *"Oh, that's not too bad."* And I got here and I went, *"Ah, everything is my teacher."*

Everything I do, everything I see, every person that talks to me, I have the opportunity to learn from. Because if I think I know it all, that's a closed mind. We have to have open minds to be able to do this. So, everything is my teacher and this is a practice.

And we're all going to relearn this in time, especially when we get down or hard on ourselves, it's hard to remember that. You know, you think you're failing. You think you're failing. Every step I ever took in my life brought me right here to this moment. And you would not know the horror that some of those steps took. But here I am. Here I am! And I would not be me without taking all of those steps along my path.

So, all along I was open to the lessons, for the most part. Some of them hit hard. But being open to the lesson gets you where you need to go; where your divine self should be.

And I'm here at Unity ... and this is no coincidence, either. Because this was always the Unity home to me when I was here before. And I didn't even know they had an opening until someone emailed me and said, *"Did you know Unity has an opening?"* And I said, *"What?"* And then I got on the phone and submitted my application immediately. And got a call back the next day. And Rev. Maraj actually married myself and my husband in 2011 here at this church. So, he remembered me. Other people here remembered me. And it was just like just coming home.

But I'm here! And I thought if all of these adventures —or disadvantages— or whatever it was that hadn't happened, where would I be instead? They say pilots can be off course by one degree and land on a completely other continent by the time they get where they're going. One degree! That's why they always keep checking in; keep checking in with the towers to get back on track.

So, when you think you're at a point where you've learned everything, be afraid right there. Go, *"Hmmm. Maybe."* Because what happens for me is I get a lesson that shows up: definitely, and quickly. It usually doesn't take too long.

So, there's a difference between conventional learning and deep learning. In conventional learning, I know that I don't know that. I know that I don't know how to speak Spanish. I know that I don't know how to play a guitar. That's conventional learning. I can learn those tasks.

But deep learning: I'm learning something I didn't even know I didn't know. I get a lot of that on the Gaia Channel. I mean, I watched some of those things about —I had no idea. I just [mimes "mind blown"]. And then I have conversations with my friends about it and it's like, *"Where have I been?"* Because it's just so fantastic! I didn't even know that I was missing that in my life. I did not have an idea.

So that's the deep learning we're talking about. And you know what? It can be scary. And from my perspective, that's why addiction is so prevalent. Because people get caught to that point and they don't want to go past it. So they start finding a way to numb it. Because they know they need to go past it, but they can't. That's what I did; that's what a lot of my friends did.

And you can numb it with shopping. I have a family member that has spent every dollar on every credit card every month. And I don't know how she does it, because it just confuses me. How would you still make the payment, you know? I have addicts in my life; I have alcoholics in my life; I have workaholics in my life, you know?

So, anything can be an addiction, because you don't want to move through that space. So, you're going to fill it with a bunch of other stuff, because the learning would be too hard. I tell everybody it's like a teeter totter. So, when the weight of staying where you are gets greater than the weight of changing, you'll change. But you have to get to that level where it's no longer like this — teetering back and forth— it has to go further.

Or you learn. You know, it would be great to be inspired and learn. I have the granddaughters that are here. They have an older sister. She's 25, and she's brilliant. She has things in her mind — and like these guys do — about Unity, because she grew up in Unity ... here for a few years and then with a grandmother that's in Unity. And the stuff that comes out of her mouth; I am amazed. I had no idea; at 25 years old, I could not have recited those things. But she has it, and she gets it. And I was like, *"Where do you get that?"* Because that is so wonderful that she knows the Unity of stuff. She knows the *"all is one."*

And she's okay along the way. And she knows that it's lessons. And she's like, *"Well, this is another lesson for me."* And I'm just like: she's amazing to me. And I know that these guys are going to — when they get out on their own — they're going to be the same way, too. Because they know it. They see it. They hear it all the time in these walls.

Nobody told them to be here tonight. They came on their own. I was surprised they showed up. I was like, *"Oh, look, they're here. That's great!"* I love it when they got it.

So, one of the examples that Robert Brumet uses — and it's kind of, I don't know. I'm going to say it. It's kind of a controversial topic. But Christopher Columbus discovered this land, right? He was actually shooting for India and missed. So, you could have said he failed. But he got here, but he didn't know what he was seeing, because it wasn't what he was expecting.

So, it was like he had to learn all this — and we won't talk about the learning part of it — but it was a whole different experience that he couldn't even have fathomed in his mind before he actually landed there. That's deep learning. That's learning something that you never even knew you didn't know.

And deep learning does not destroy; it transcends the ego. Everybody's like, *"Oh, the ego."* Nobody's trying to get rid of your ego. We're trying to evolve it. You say, *"Oh, I have to get rid of my ego."* No. Keep it under control. Transcend; invite it to come with you on this journey. You know, what will we learn? Where will we go? What will we do?

And they say that humility is the biggest key to slowing down the ego. Is humility. Being humble: *"I don't know that."* When's the last time somebody said something to you and you go, *"I don't know."* Instead of going, *"Oh, let me find out!"* Instead, *"Really, I don't know. You know, I don't I don't have that information."*

So, what do you got to do for this, as well? To have ... **To learn from all these things that I've been talking about is: you've got to do the work.** You can't put it off. I mean, you can put it off for a while if you want ... but sooner or later, it's going to call you. Sooner or later, it's going to come back and say, *"Hello; I'm here again."*

So do it! Get into it and do it! And do it with intention. Journal about it. Discuss it with people. Share it with friends. Talk to them with the listening, and watch for ways that you're learning stuff. Watch for new things that come up into your life or things that were usually the same before, but they seem different now. Because it happens. It happens to all of us.

So, keep that in mind tomorrow morning when you get up and you think, *"Okay, I'm going to see if I can find something new. See if there's something that is new."* Or learning to do the talking; the right speech. Try it just for a little while. Try it on. I always tell everybody, *"Try it on for like six weeks; just see, in some way, how it comes to you."* I think it'll settle and hit you the way it needs to. And then you'll understand what they're trying to say — Brumet's trying to say — in this.

So, for this one, they say the "far ego" is the going unconscious: that's what we talked about. And, *"I believe I already know everything."* I've gotten that before: *"I know."* You know, dismissive.

And the "near enemy" is believing you're doing the work, but you're just feeding the ego. And I know people that do that, too. Like I said, that's that spiritual bypass that they do.

So, I'm going to wrap this up. I've gone over my time. But I want to just give you a couple takeaways from Chapter #7. It says: Right Speech. Is it true? Is it right? And is it necessary? Compassionate communication begins with right speech and deep listening. Start practicing them. See how it goes for you. Report it back to me. I'm here every Sunday in another building with the Youth & Family.

And in Chapter #8: Everything is my teacher. Be open. You know that I'm a master gardener, too. But if something's not growing, it's dying. So, If your heart is closed or you're unwilling to learn, you're not feeding your soul. You have to crack that open a little bit; start growing. Even if it's just one thing at a time. Take a chance; it works, right?

So, continue to practice all the practices they've been talking about in there. And next week they'll come back with more super practices for you.

So, let's do this affirmation one more time as we get ready to go. And say it loud and say it proud!

Together: [with congregants] *"I communicate intentionally and consciously, and lovingly embrace the lessons in my life."*

Lovingly embrace. So, thank you so much for listening!

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