



Global Compassion Coalition

The Global Compassion Coalition (GCC) is a worldwide movement to make compassion a civic, cultural, and environmental force.

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Coming Home: The Double Edge of Outrage. From Anger to Fierce Compassion.

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Hello Dear Community,

We live in times in which outrage often dominates headlines and social media feeds. Anger against cruelty and injustice can be a mobilizing force, and draw attention to urgent problems. But when outrage becomes our default mode, it oversimplifies complex issues, narrows our perspective, and makes people we don't like or disagree with into "others". What's more, research suggests that, when not balanced by awareness and emotional regulation, reactive anger can erode empathy and cooperation.

At the same time, calm goodwill alone isn't always powerful enough to create meaningful social change. In answer to this quandary, contemplative traditions have proposed the concept of "fierce compassion": a form of care that includes the courage to protect, set boundaries, and confront harmful behavior.

In the wild, we see its expression in mama bears protecting their cubs. When a mother bear senses danger, she can become a fearsome force. The curious thing is that, both in humans and other animals, when

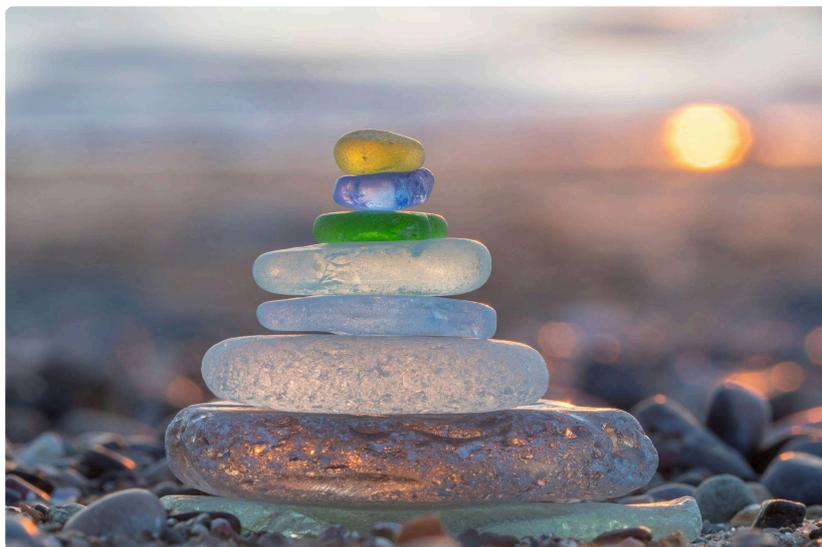
mothers move into protective mode, levels of oxytocin (a hormone associated with bonding and care) actually increase.

A striking cultural echo of this appears in a scene from the Canadian sitcom *Workin' Moms*, in which Kate, the protagonist, encounters a bear while walking with her baby in the woods. Jolted by a rush of primal alarm, she steps in front of the stroller and releases a piercing war cry that sends the bear retreating. The moment captures the way in which love can turn from soft and fuzzy to heroic in one fateful instant.

As a conscious practice, fierce compassion is neither weak nor aggressive. Rather, it's about transforming anger into a purposeful force that supports justice while preserving our shared humanity.

Here are some resources to help us make wise use of our anger, without forsaking our higher aspirations.

Take a Stand: Choose Equanimity



“A few months ago, I met [john a. powell](#) at a backyard get-together... Given his position as director of the [Othering & Belonging Institute](#) at UC Berkeley and as a prominent voice for equity, I expected our conversation—centered on funding cuts and Department of Justice investigations into colleagues at UC Berkeley—to be tinged with shared outrage. But john didn’t meet my indignation with more fire. He simply smiled—a true “Duchenne” smile—and said, “I just stick to my values.””

Margaret Cullen, founder of the GCC’s Compassion Corps and author of an upcoming book on equanimity, describes this moment in [a recent article](#) on how to push back against the reactivity that dominates today’s social climate. Because outrage is emotionally energizing and socially rewarding, some platforms amplify it to spur confrontation and escalate engagement.

Cullen points to equanimity as a powerful counterbalance. Rather than indifference, equanimity is the capacity to stay grounded in our beliefs and values, even when facing provocation. In a media environment that often profits from division, refusing to be baited into hatred or attack becomes an act of resistance; a way to honor our humanity while advancing meaningful change.

The Growing Edge: Beware the Subtle Traps

In contemplative psychology, many wholesome qualities are understood to have both far enemies and near enemies. A far enemy is an obvious opposite, and is usually easy to recognize. A near enemy is more subtle: it poses as a positive quality while, in fact, undermining it. In [a Rubin Museum article](#), GCC board member [Chris Germer](#), Phd applies this framework to fierce compassion. The far enemies are clear: hostility, demonizing others, and reactive anger that loses sight of our shared humanity.

More challenging to spot are the near enemies, which can come across as compassion but actually dilute it. Complacency can masquerade as calmness, flattening differences in the name of unity can erase real inequities, and pity can create distance instead of connection. Recognizing these subtle distortions helps us practice compassion that is both courageous and clear-sighted.

News You Can Use: Why Outrage Fuels Misinformation and How to Resist It.

Recent [research published in the journal *Science*](#) shows that misinformation spreads online in part because it evokes outrage. Analyses of social media activity and behavioral experiments found that misinformation sources tend to generate stronger outrage than trustworthy sources, and this emotional activation significantly increases sharing behavior. People are also more likely to share outrage-inducing content without fully reading it, suggesting that emotional engagement,

rather than accuracy, often drives the spread of misleading information.

Complementary studies suggest that psychological inoculation can help reduce susceptibility to misinformation. This can take the form of brief educational interventions that teach people to recognize common manipulation techniques, including emotionally charged language, false dichotomies, scapegoating, incoherent arguments, and personal attacks. Such interventions have been shown to improve individuals' ability to distinguish reliable from unreliable content. These findings indicate that strengthening both emotional awareness and critical evaluation skills can help reduce the spread of misinformation and foster more responsible information sharing.

Inspiration & Insight: Small Voices, Vast Wisdom



[In this uplifting piece](#) by Ladan Lashkari for [The Daily Good](#), a group of adults asked children ages 4 to 8 a simple question: *What does love mean?* The answers reveal a grounded and whimsical understanding of love as everyday care, presence and loyalty. As Danny (age 7) explains, “Love is when my mommy makes coffee for my daddy and she takes a sip before giving it to him, to make sure the taste is OK.” Terri (age 4) says, “Love is what makes you smile when you’re tired.”

Many of the children highlight love as companionship and presence. Billy (age 4) shares, “When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouth.” Tommy (age 6) recognizes love as enduring mutual enjoyment: “Love is like a little old woman and a little old man who are still friends even after they know each other so well.” Perhaps the most moving story comes from Mark (age 6), who comforted a neighbor who had lost his wife by climbing on his lap and sitting with him. When his mother asked him what he had said to the grieving man, he replied, “Nothing, I just helped him cry.”

In Case You Missed It: Compassion as Resistance

[In this GCC-hosted conversation](#), Rev. Neddy Yong facilitated a rich dialogue with panelists Rev. Dr. Aizaiah Yong, Professor Lailatul Fitriyah, and Ashley Plotnick, LCSW, MAJS, M.Ed., representing Christian, Muslim, and Jewish traditions, exploring how

compassion can serve as a powerful response to extremism and polarization.

The speakers shared personal stories and theological insights showing that compassion is not an abstract concept, but a force that helps communities confront injustice, heal divisions, and sustain moral courage. Professor Fitriyah conveyed: "Islam was born in 7th century Arabia as a critical movement against merchant capitalism at the time, which formed layers of hierarchical society.. That's why one of the first persons to become a member of the Islamic community freed the slaves, because in Islam there is a concept of equality; we are all infants of God." Similarly, Ashley Plotnick pointed out "We can't remove our hearts in the way we read our Torah."

A Question for You

Where in your life right now do you feel pulled toward reactivity or outrage?

What might it look like to respond from fierce compassion instead, protecting what matters to you without losing your sense of shared humanity?

Let's Practice!: The Mama Bear Pause



The next time you encounter something online or in conversation that triggers anger or indignation, try this three-step pause:

- 1. Notice the surge**

Before responding, take one slow breath and name what is present: anger, fear, protectiveness, or hurt.

- 2. Remember what you love**

Ask yourself: *What am I trying to protect right now?* Let the answer reconnect you with your values rather than your impulses.

- 3. Choose your response**

If you decide to speak or act, aim to express clarity

without contempt. If you decide not to engage, consider that a conscious act of protection rather than avoidance.

Notice how the pause affects your sense of agency, connection, and integrity.

In times when division is loud and relentless, choosing to show up with compassion is an act of moral courage.

Thank you for helping us build a world where everyone belongs.

With deep appreciation,
Fabiana,
Editor, *Coming Home*

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