



## 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 tenderness of new beginnings

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## Hello Dear Community,

How do you tend to meet beginnings?

Some of us arrive at a new year carrying tenderness for what has just passed —a sense of release, mixed with uncertainty about what comes next. Others feel the pull of forward motion: the energy of a blank page, new possibilities waiting to be named. Most of us hold a little of both.

Early January is a liminal time; a threshold between what has been and what is still taking shape. These in-between moments often soften our edges. Sleep may feel uneven, energy can rise and fall, and new ideas may surface alongside a desire to slow down, rest, or simply watch the clouds stroll across the sky.

Perhaps the greatest gift of a 'liminal time' is the way it thins the walls we build around ourselves. As our edges soften, we become more available to the world's invitations. Could embracing uncertainty and befriending the unknown open a door to personal and collective transformation? Let us count the ways!

**Insight & Inspiration: Grandma Eileen's Gift**



*Photo courtesy of Grandma Eileen/Instagram*

What began as a way to keep 95-year-old Grandma Eileen connected during the pandemic has grown into something extraordinary. When her grandson noticed how much people lit up during their conversations with her, he invited others to ask her questions online, and later, in person. For six years, Eileen called in and spoke with thousands of complete strangers, until she passed away in 2018 at the age of 102. [As reported by GoodGoodGood](#), her legacy became The Grandma Stand: a simple setup on New York City sidewalks where grandmothers invite strangers to sit, talk, and be

heard. Since then, it's grown into a nationwide project, with six new stands on the way.

In New York, about 15 grandmas staff a rotating pop-up, which can be found in Central Park, on the streets of Manhattan, or in any nook or cranny in the city. The volunteer grannies set up their own purple lemonade stand and post a question prompt to get the conversation started, with topics ranging from "What's made you cry recently?" to "What's a relationship you need to fix or let go of?" Grandma Flo, a volunteer in New York, has thoroughly enjoyed serving at the Grandma Stand. "It's made my life a lot happier," she shared in [a recent video](#). "It gives me an outlet ... something to do, and I really enjoy talking to people from different parts of the world and different cultures. I learn a lot from them."

## **The Growing Edge: Singing Through the Great Unknown**

[The Guardian](#) documentary [Threshold](#) introduces us to a unique choir dedicated to singing for those at the end of their lives. These singers don't perform for an audience; they offer "lullabies for the dying," using soft, melodic voices to create a cocoon of safety and comfort. Through the story of the choir's founder (who navigated the loss of both her son and husband shortly after starting the group) we see how singing and collective presence can transform death from a "monster under the bed" into a shared human experience.

A moving testament to the idea that, even in our most vulnerable moments, the simple vibration of a human voice can remind us that we are not alone.

## News You Can Use: The Hidden Power of Brief Connections



### [Research from the Greater Good Science Center](#)

suggests that brief, positive interactions with strangers, such as a friendly exchange, shared laughter, or a moment of genuine attention, can have surprisingly lasting benefits for well-being. These moments of warmth help reduce loneliness and foster a sense of belonging that is not limited to our closest relationships. In a surprising twist, it appears that feeling seen and acknowledged by unfamiliar others can be just as nourishing as time spent with friends or family, reminding us that we are part of a larger social fabric.

Over time, these everyday encounters do more than lift our mood. Studies show they can increase trust in

others, intellectual humility, and confidence in collective kindness, the belief that people, together, can act with care and goodwill. The takeaway is simple and hopeful: small moments of connection in public life aren't incidental. They quietly strengthen community, openness, and the conditions for a more compassionate society.

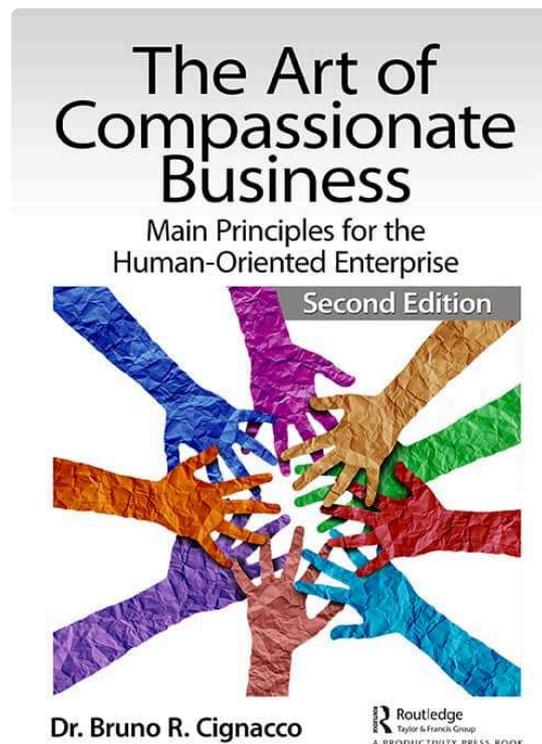
## Take a Stand: Step into Another Person's Story

The Empathy Museum is a traveling participatory art initiative designed to help us see the world through other people's eyes — literally and imaginatively. Through installations like *A Thousand and One*, where visitors listen to real first-person stories from around the globe [while walking through someone else's shoes](#), the museum invites us to step outside our habitual perspective and engage with lives different from our own. By making empathy tangible and experiential, this work encourages deeper understanding across divides we encounter daily — from interpersonal disconnection to broader social challenges.

Now, the project is expanding with the upcoming [Courage Museum](#), a companion initiative that explores the inner landscapes that make empathetic action possible. While the Empathy Museum places us in another's story, the Courage Museum asks us to look inward: What does it take to stand with others in times of fear, conflict, or uncertainty? Together, these projects make a powerful case for empathy and courage not as abstract ideals, but as lived, artful practices —

tools that, when exercised, can help address prejudice, conflict, and inequality in our communities and beyond.

## Have You Read It? Beyond the Bottom Line



In *[The Art of Compassionate Business](#)*, GCC Founding Supporter Bruno Cignacco challenges the traditional view of the business world, in which employees are mere commodities and the bottom line is the only real measure. Instead of a fear-based, zero-sum game, Cignacco presents a compelling case for the "human-oriented enterprise," arguing that principles like compassion, empathy, and psychological safety are not idealistic extras but essential drivers of long-term success, innovation, and sustainability.

The book's framework applies this compassionate approach to every stakeholder. For employees, this means creating workplaces where individuals feel valued and supported, leading to lower stress, reduced turnover, and a surge in creativity. For customers and suppliers, it means building genuine, long-lasting relationships based on mutual support and generosity. Cignacco connects these human-centric practices to tangible business benefits, positioning the book as a practical manual for modern leaders seeking to build a more resilient, and ultimately more profitable organization.

## Let's Practice! The Art of Wandering



In a world that demands we always be "on our way" to a specific goal, [the simple act of wandering](#) can feel like a radical softening. As reported in a [Psyche](#) article, when we move without a destination, we allow our nervous system to shift from the high-tension "mobilization" of the sympathetic system into a state of open curiosity. The filmmaker Mykhailo Bogdanov explores this in his beautiful short film, [Avoesis](#)—a term coined to describe

a specific kind of quietness that isn't just silence, but a profound tuning-in to the world around us.

This week, after watching the film for inspiration, we invite you to practice "enlivening indolence." Whether it is a ten-minute stroll through your neighborhood or a longer afternoon in a park, try to leave the "to-do" list behind. Notice how your breath changes when the pressure to arrive disappears. What aspect of the unknown comes to meet you when you walk in wonder, rather than worry?

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## A Question for You

If you were sitting at the Grandma Stand today, and the prompt was: *'What is a hope you are carrying for the person you are becoming?'* — how would you answer?

Please reply to this email, and we may share your response in a future newsletter. Thank you!

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As we navigate these first days of the year, may we remember that compassion grows when we allow ourselves to be a little more human, a little more reachable, a little less hurried. Whether you are

wandering without a map or sharing a heartfelt moment with a stranger, you are participating in the vital work of weaving a more tender world.

Thank you for being part of this growing global community, and for the courage it takes to meet the uncertain with an open heart.

With open-hearted joy,  
Fabiana,  
Editor, *Coming Home*

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*Thank you for being part of the GCC community.  
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