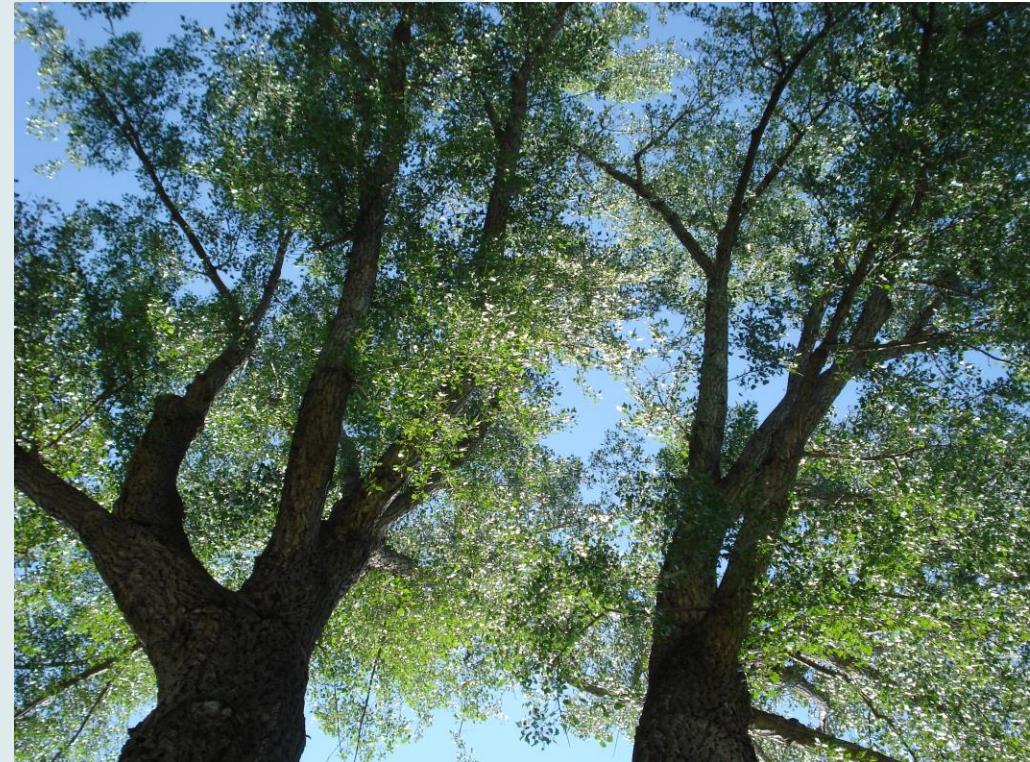


Thinking about Compassion & Love in Academic Libraries

Sandra Cowan, University of Lethbridge

Mary Greenshields, European University Institute

CAPAL Conference - 7 June, 2022



COMPASSION



<https://www.mindful.org/3-ways-to-train-the-compassionate-brain/>

"Definitions of compassion...involve two components: *sensitivity* to suffering and the *motivation* to help alleviate it."

-Kolts & Chodron, 2013, p. 7



COMPASSION AS WELLNESS

"If you want others to be happy,
practice compassion. If you want
to be happy, practice compassion."

-Dalai Lama as quoted in Kolts & Chodron,
2013, p. 7

COMPASSIONATE LIBRARIANS

“Even with patrons who could cause trouble for the librarians, empathic understanding was the rule rather than the exception....’I always try to remember that there’s probably a lot going on with them and so it’s not a personal attack” (p. 67).

Williams & Ogden, 2021

“Several of the librarians identified the importance of developing relationships with patrons as part of the service they provided—relationships could be the needed help...librarians needed to provide whatever help they could, from Narcan to housing assistance, so that they could be at peace with their choices” (p.68).

“Respondents indicated that their own empathy and compassion for others increased as a result of their low-morale experience. If participants became supervisors or administrators, their low-morale experience prompted them to reflect on and adjust their leadership style to one that highlighted compassion, flexibility, acknowledgement of employee contributions, and a significantly reduced tolerance for abuse.”

-Kendrick, 2021, p. 868

“Compassion meditation, they [therapists] said, helped them be more sensitive and yet, less prone to emotional contagion.”

-Bibeau et al., 2020, p. 14

“...radiating compassion to the coworkers will also reactively elicit compassionate responses”

-Lee et al., 2017, p. 121

LOVE

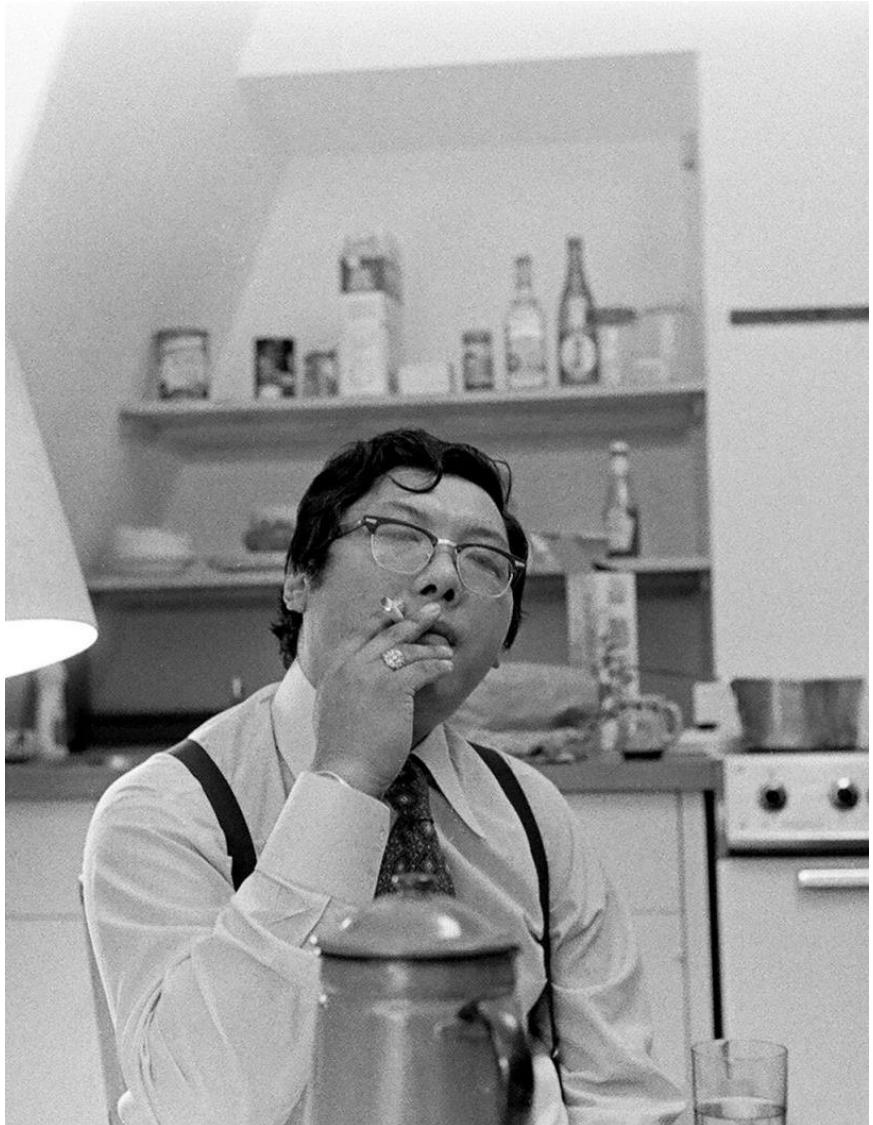
"Caring for myself is not self indulgence, it is an act of self preservation, and that is an act of political warfare."

- Lorde, 1988

We must change our conception of what knowledge is and who can be considered a knowledge producer. Currently, knowledge production on the campuses is insulated from the broad infrastructural work that sustains academic life [...]. Yet, like women's reproductive work, this work too is mostly invisible.

(Federici, 2019, p. 101)





<https://tricycle.org/trikedaily/encounter-shadow-buddhist-america/>

IDIOT COMPASSION

"It is perhaps most important in working with others that we do not develop *idiot compassion*, which means always trying to be kind. Since this superficial kindness lacks courage and intelligence, it does more harm than good. It is as though a doctor, out of apparent kindness, refuses to treat his patient because the treatment might be painful..."

-Trungpa, 1991, p.126

IDIOT COMPASSION IN THE LIBRARY?

What about...

- Being all things to all people? Mission creep?
- Inability to say no to university or library administration?
- Enabling bullying, microaggressions, systemic disrespect?
- McMindfulness? McCompassion?
- Centering illness and wellness on the individual and denying systemic and institutional impacts on well-being?
- Stereotypes of niceness?
- Demands for compassion as a source of stress?

“Attempts to essentialize and idealize compassion risk losing sight of the event of compassion in favour of moral exhortation.”

-McCaffrey, 2015, p. 20

COMPASSIONATE V. THREAT-BASED THINKING

"Whereas threat-based thinking is narrow, biased and tightly focused, compassionate thinking is broad and flexible. We are able to consider and understand the situation from different perspectives. Compassionate thinking can move back and forth between empathizing and problem-solving, between directing warmth and acceptance to those who are suffering and seeking pragmatic solutions to address the causes and conditions that create and maintain that suffering."

- Kolts & Chodron, 2013, p.160



A QUESTION FOR YOU

What are some solutions for promoting a more compassionate, loving workplace?



Photo by Hush Naidoo Jade Photography, unsplash.com/es/@hush52?utm



THANK YOU <3

sandra.cowan@uleth.ca

mary.greenshields@eui.eu

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