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2014 REA Annual Meeting, Nov. 7-9

Cultivating Compassionate Living Grounded in a Christian Approach in the Violent World

We live in a world in which violence prevails. The violence happens within ourselves, our families, interpersonal relationships, society, in situations between countries, even religions. Whether the violence is intentional or not, whether it is serious or slight, we are likely to be not only the victims but also the offenders —those who hurt people. This implies that we are very closely related with violence in a violent world. How do we live with the pervasiveness of violence? Should we admit defeat and adjust to the violent structure and vicious circle as victims or criminals? Or, instead, should we resist violence and its structure or circle and work to make the world peaceful and compassionate?

Today, I will explore a spiritual path that will enable us to nurture compassion within our lives as the way to resist violence. Thus, I will define violence and its cause as a spiritual crisis. Moreover, I will provide compassion to overcome violence and its structures, explaining the meaning of compassion and the practice of compassion that is based on Triptycos and CEC. I hope that this article contributes an alternative spiritual way to free ourselves from violence and to cultivate a compassionate life.

Definition, Natures, and Categories of Violence

How can we define violence? Are there standards to measure violence or ways to define violence? Violence can be differently defined according to different views and perspectives. Some define violence as terror and terrorism. Others define violence as war and colonialism. Still others define violence as racism or sexism or classism. However, it is very difficult for us to define violence as a word or form or type. The reason is that “violence is a complex phenomenon and needs to be addressed in a more comprehensive and holistic manner.”¹ In other words, violence has various forms and aspects. Moreover, violence can be differently defined depending on how we see it or what views we hold.

Nevertheless, we need to seek the most common and fundamental definition of violence to overcome and remove it from our world. The World Health Organization perceived the seriousness and pervasiveness of violence and published a report, ‘World Report on Violence and Health,’ about the definitions, forms of, and approaches to violence. In the report, The World Health Organization defines violence as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.”²

Although we have this common definition of violence, it is an undeniable fact that violence has various and different aspects. Samuel Kobia explains that violence has three faces: personal, interpersonal, and collective.³ Violence happens in the collective form such as wars

¹ World Health Organization, “World Report on Violence and Health: Summary,” World Health Organization 2002, accessed Sep. 1, 2014, http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en, 3.

² World Health Organization, “World Report on Violence and Health: Summary,” 4.

³ Samuel Kobia, “Overcoming Violence: An Ecumenical Christian Task,” in *Violence and Christian Spirituality: An Ecumenical Conversation*, ed. Emmanuel Clapsis (Geneva, Switzerland: Brookline, MA: WCC Publications; Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2007), 9.

and genocide as well as in the interpersonal form like discrimination, oppression, and deprivation, and in personal form like suicide. The World Health Organization also divides violence into three categories with broad perspectives: “self-directed violence; interpersonal violence; and collective violence.”⁴

In the nature of violence, the victim can be affected in one of four ways: physically, sexually, psychologically and through negligence or deprivation toward the victim. In this respect, Samuel Kobia explains the natures of violence as: “physical, psychological, sexual or in the guise of negligence and deprivation”⁵ viewing violence from the same the perspective as The World Health Organization.⁶ In the perspective, Kyriaki Karidoyanes Fitzgerald defines violence as “profound physical and/or sexual abuse,” unwanted “physical contacts,” and physiological threats such as fear and intimidation in the relationships between those who hold power and the powerless.⁷

These categories that describe the nature of violence are divided into various and specific types. Especially, The World Health Organization has analyzed various types in three broader categories; self-directed, interpersonal, and collective violence. In the self-directed violence, there are suicidal behaviour and self-abuse. Interpersonal violence, can be divided into two divisions: family and intimate partner violence and community violence; this includes child abuse, domestic violence, rape, and sexual abuse. The collective violence is divided into the social, political, and economic forms such as wars, genocide, terrorism, etc.⁸

I am in complete agreement with the perspectives and analyses of violence as articulated by The World Health Organization. But I argue that the definition and perspectives do not include spiritual or religious aspects of violence. It means that the study or report disregards the fundamental and radical causes of violence. In this respect, Ioannis Petrou adds religious to the sub-categories of violence, defining violence as “exploitation and oppression of various kinds — social, financial, political and religious, as well as social exclusion, sexism and the abuse of women, etc.”⁹ Moreover, Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan emphasizes mental, religious, and spiritual aspects of violence in various forms: psychological, emotional, physical, mental, spiritual, economic, religious, cultural, racial, sexual, verbal, and attitudinal.¹⁰

Violence as Spiritual Crisis

Why does violence exist in our world? How do the violence pervaside our lives as various forms? The reason is that we are faced with a spiritual crisis. According to Ronald Hecker Cram, “human violence is an expression of spiritual crisis.”¹¹ Violence in personal, interpersonal, and collective relationships is a sign of spiritual crisis. I maintain that violence as spiritual crisis emerges from disconnection with the sacred, including the divine, the Self, and all sentient beings. Disconnection from the sacred causes violence in our world.

⁴ World Health Organization, “World Report on Violence and Health: Summary,” 4.

⁵ Kobia, “Overcoming Violence: An Ecumenical Christian Task,” 9.

⁶ World Health Organization, “World Report on Violence and Health: Summary,” 5.

⁷ Kyriaki Karidoyanes Fitzgerald, “Domestic Violence at Home: Cursory Observations,” in *Violence and Christian Spirituality: An Ecumenical Conversation*, ed. Clapsis Emmanuel (Geneva, Switzerland: Brookline, MA: WCC Publications; Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2007), 157.

⁸ World Health Organization, “World Report on Violence and Health: Summary,” 5.

⁹ Fitzgerald, “Domestic Violence at Home: Cursory Observations,” 25.

¹⁰ Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan, *Violence and Theology*, Horizons in Theology (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 2.

¹¹ Ronald Hecker Cram, *Bullying: A Spiritual Crisis*, 1st ed (St. Louis, Mo: Chalice Press, 2003), 17.

Disconnection from the divine brings about “a one-eyed view.” This one-eyed view emerges from a way of thinking that is based on fact, reason, and intellect, and it characterizes many people today. A one-eyed view produces a mechanical, scientific, secularized, and commercial or material viewpoint. Sacred realities, moments, and values are negated by those who are engrossed in a one-eyed view. In this respect, they have lost the “wholesight” to see both phenomenological reality based on fact, science, and reason and spiritual and heart-centered reality based on values.¹² Thus, the one-eyed view separates them from God or the divine, causing them to disregard encounters with the divine and spiritual values.

In relation to the Self, the disconnection from the Self means becoming separated from the true Self that is “open, mature, wise, curious, loving, compassionate, and connected.”¹³ Those, who are disconnected from the true Self, measure the value of a person from a mechanical, secularized, and commercial or material viewpoint, disregarding the humanity and dignity of the Self. Also, in the disconnection from the Self, we have distorted views, judgments, biases, and partialities so that we criticize and judge ourselves without any compassion. Thus, we lose the balanced guidance of the Self and an extreme inner part or parts or hidden inner movements take over our inner worlds. Inner movements include “reactive emotions such as anger, fear, despair, and disgust; internal voices such as self-loathing, perfectionism, blame, or judgment; and behavioral impulses in unawareness.”¹⁴

The more our extreme characteristics are activated, the more we disconnect from the true Self that is our spiritual core. In other words, violence toward self happens as a result of inner movements by which we are separated from our true Self, the sacred within.

Finally, disconnection from all sentient beings results in a dualistic perspective in which all entities are separate and independent. The dualistic view disrupts any idea that we are interconnected and interdependent beings. Thus, dualism causes disconnection between self and others, self and nature, and self and the world, violently disrupting all our relationships, although in reality we are not separate beings but interdependent.¹⁵ The disconnection naturally causes violence such as war, genocide, sexual abuse, racism, and classism.

These disconnections from the sacred including the divine, the Self, and all sentient beings cause us to become fragmented beings who bring about a violent world. Thoughtful awareness of violence and its causes challenges us to explore encounters with the sacred, including God or the divine, the Self, and all sentient beings, for gaining peace, restoration, justice, healing, reconciliation, and hope in our world.

¹² Parker J. Palmer, *To Know As We Are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), xxiii. Palmer explains that “wholesight” has two types of sight. One type emerges from the mind based on fact and reason. The other sight is grounded in the heart with love. In my use of the word, “wholesight,” my perspective is that one sight comes from the mind, as Palmer states, while the other is a spiritual sight.

¹³ Jay Earley, *Self-Therapy: A Step-By-Step Guide to Creating Wholeness and Healing Your Inner Child Using IFS, A New, Cutting Edge Psychotherapy* (Minneapolis, MN: Mill City Press, 2009), 7. According to Earley, there are many parts in our inner worlds. They interact with each other under the guidance of a true Self. Also, each part has its own role, belief, feeling, motivation, and memory in its harmonious and compassionate relationship with the many parts. However, when we lose the leadership of the true Self, the extreme parts, like guards seeking to protect us, can take over. See Jay Earley, 16-29.

¹⁴ Frank Rogers Jr., Mark Yaconelli, and Andrew Dreitzer, *Practicing Compassion: Following the Spiritual Path of Jesus* [Claremont School of Theology], forthcoming, 20.

¹⁵ Dalai Lama, *The Power of Compassion: A Collection of Lectures by His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama* (London: Thorsons, 1995), 103.

Compassion to Overcome Disconnection with the Sacred

What makes us to restore disconnected relationship with the sacred, including the divine, the Self, and all sentient beings? What leads us to free and liberate from the violent structures and circles?

I argue that compassion is a way to free people from violence, connect them with the sacred, and bring about their flourishing as they live compassionately. Compassion also helps people become aware of their violent structures or circles or states. The awareness of violence is a first step to free from violence. It cultivates the skills, heart, will, motivation, attitudes, and behaviors needed to overcome violence. Specifically, compassion is a spiritual way to restore connection with the sacred, including the divine, the Self, and others, across the many boundaries that separate us. Restoring connection with the sacred enables people to overcome violence and to experience restoration, healing, reconciliation, and hope in our world.

In terms of the divine or God, compassion enables us to experience the presence of the divine as a compassionate source. God is a sacred and compassionate being. When we are connected with God or the divine, compassion flows within and over us. On the other hand, when we are disconnected from the divine presence, the compassionate core within us gradually disappears or dissipates. Entering the road of compassion is to restore connection with the divine. Thus, compassion helps us to engage in divine union, love, fellowship, and awareness of our compassionate God as the sacred Source.

In relation to the Self, compassion restores connection with the Self as the sacred within so that freedom from suffering and healing might be found. Compassion helps us see what is happening to us in our inner worlds. In particular, it facilitates the process of becoming aware of the inner part or parts that cause inner movements, including thoughts, emotions, desires, impulses, and inner voices, that bring about violence toward self in our lives. Thus, compassion nurtures the Self, as a compassionate essence, into conversing with and caring for the inner part or parts hidden in inner movements and assists it in understanding the parts' sufferings, needs, wants, and fears. In other words, compassion invites us to restore connection with the Self so we may live more compassionately.

In terms of relationships with others, compassion restores connection with others, including loved ones, neutral persons, and difficult persons. Compassion for others emerges from connection with the Self and the divine. In particular, it helps us to recognize the fears, needs, wants, and sufferings of others. Thus, compassion invites us to be aware of the humanity of others as sacred beings and to stand in others' shoes in order to understand their positions, attitudes, and sufferings. In other words, compassion becomes the bridge that is able to restore connection with others, making it possible for us to recognize that we are interdependent beings.

4. The meanings of Compassion

Buddhism defines compassion as the desire that all human beings be free from suffering and achieve happiness. The theoretical rationale for such a definition is that human beings have the right to be happy and to be free from suffering. The practical approach is to recognize that we are not separate beings but interdependent beings in the scheme of existence. This awareness leads us to desire that all human beings be free from suffering and be happy. In order to achieve freedom from suffering and happiness, Buddhism has explored understandings and causes of suffering and practical ways to overcome suffering, such as the meditation of calm abiding from the Dalai Lama, Lojong practices, and Metta practice. In sum, all Buddhist theoretical approaches and practices focus on freeing people from their suffering and helping them achieve

happiness.

In the scientific and social scientific perspectives, compassion is not defined as an idea or a concept. The reason is that compassion can be expressed in diverse dimensions. However, I have inferred four general meanings of compassion from various sources. The first meaning is participating in another's suffering. Paul Gilbert defines compassion as being open, sensitive, and responsive to the suffering of self and others without any defensive or judgmental views.¹⁶ In terms of the second meaning, some scholars, including Lynn Underwood, David Graber, Maralynne Mitcham, and Hans-Werner Bierhoff, define compassion as participating in another's feelings.¹⁷ The third definition is authentic connection with another's suffering and emotions.¹⁸ Fourth, compassion is defined as viewpoints and actions that require active participation in the suffering and feelings of another.¹⁹ The ultimate purpose of compassion according to these four meanings—participating in the sufferings and emotions of others, connecting with them, and actively getting involved in others' feelings and sufferings because of one's convictions—is to relieve the suffering of others in the formation of self-compassion. In other words, compassion is a way to free others from their suffering. Consequently, it results in achieving happiness in our lives. Diverse secular fields, such as physiology, psychology, family studies, genetics, and neuroscience, have explored understandings of human beings and how people develop compassion. Many studies have found that the desire to alleviate others' suffering and increase others' happiness begins from compassion for the self. Thus, the studies have explored secure attachment in psychology, genes, caregiving systems, the physiological soothing and contentment system, a new brain and mind, and self-expansion model in the area of cognition. The ultimate goal of these studies is cultivating compassion for the self and others with the aim of freedom from suffering and happiness. In sum, the secular areas focus on understanding human beings themselves from different perspectives.

From a Christian perspective, Triptykos and the CEC aim to free people from suffering and to cultivate their flourishing in an inclusive sense. While Buddhism is much more interested in the causes and awareness of suffering and the secular areas focus on understandings of human beings, Triptykos and the CEC have various approaches for compassion formation. Triptykos centers on the threefold spirituality of loving God, self, and other. In order to free people from suffering and vitalize their lives, compassion is named as a spiritual way to connect one with a compassionate source, restore one into one's original humanity in the image of God, and cultivate compassion toward others. When I compare Triptykos's definition of compassion with Buddhism's and secular fields' definitions, the most distinct difference is the inclusion of

¹⁶ Gilbert, "Introduction and Outline," 1.

¹⁷ Lynn G. Underwood, "Compassionate Love: A Framework for Research," in *The Science of Compassionate Love: Theory, Research, and Applications*, ed. Beverley Fehr, Susan Sprecher, and Lynn G. Underwood (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 9. David R. Graber and Maralynne D. Mitcham, "Compassionate Clinicians: Exemplary Care in Hospital Settings," in *The Science of Compassionate Love: Theory, Research, and Applications*, ed. Beverley Fehr, Susan Sprecher, and Lynn G. Underwood (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 346. Hans-Werner Bierhoff, "The Psychology of Compassion and Prosocial Behaviour," in *Compassion: Conceptualisations, Research and Use in Psychotherapy*, ed. Paul Gilbert (London: Routledge, 2005), 148.

¹⁸ Sheila Wang, "A Conceptual Framework for Integrating Research Related to the Physiology of Compassion and the Wisdom of Buddhist Teachings," in *Compassion: Conceptualisations, Research and Use in Psychotherapy*, ed. Paul Gilbert (New York: Routledge, 2005), 104. Salena Brody et al., "Compassionate Love for Individuals in Other Social Groups," in *The Science of Compassionate Love: Theory, Research, and Applications*, ed. Beverley Fehr, Susan Sprecher, and Lynn G. Underwood (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 285.

¹⁹ Underwood, "Compassionate Love: A Framework for Research," 4.

connection with a divine or compassionate source. In Triptykos' perspective, connection with the Sacred is the precondition for compassion. Triptykos sees compassion as involving connection with the compassionate source, restoration of our authentic humanity, and bringing about the flourishing of others' lives.

Although the approaches to defining compassion are very diverse among these perspectives, they all include an understanding of compassion as the desire that human beings experience freedom from suffering and achieve happiness or the flourishing of life.

Compassion Practice Based on Triptykos and CEC

The Triptykos School of Compassion and the Center for Engaged Compassion (CEC) at the Claremont School of Theology have developed a curriculum for compassion formation with a Christian approach. The compassion practices will contribute to freeing people from their violent structures and cultivate flourishing in their lives. Thus, in this part, I will offer a brief history of the Triptykos School of Compassion and the CEC. I will also explore core principles, essential components, compassion practices, and the curriculum for compassionate living.

Brief Introduction to the Triptykos School of Compassion and the Center for Engaged Compassion: Dr. Frank Rogers, Dr. Andrew Dreitcer, and Mark Yaconelli founded the Triptykos School of Compassion in 2009. The ultimate purpose of Triptykos, which means “threefold,” is to equip people with the skills, will, thoughts, emotions, and desires for compassionate living through diverse practices. At its formation, Triptykos had a basic and core question for developing principles and practices: “How does a person become a radically compassionate person?” After struggling with the question, the founders came up with the idea of a “threefold spirituality” as the radical way of Jesus: to love God, love self, and love others.²⁰ From this perspective, cultivating a threefold spirituality frees people from their suffering and offers them a way to flourish through compassionate living. Thus, Triptykos has explored practices for compassion formation through a variety of formats, such as retreats, workshops, and research projects. The principles, teachings, projects, and practices conducted by Triptykos have become compassion practices for compassionate living.

Core Teachings of the Triptykos School of Compassion and the Center for Engaged Compassion. The teachings and life of Jesus are foundational to the Triptykos School of Compassion and the CEC. Triptykos and the CEC emphasize that the spiritual way which Jesus embodied is “radical.” His teachings and life emerged from his fundamental and deep faith in God. In this view, these provoked revolutionary changes to religious and institutional faith.²¹ So the spiritual way of Jesus is called “radical.” Especially, the spiritual way of Jesus is summarized as a threefold spirituality: loving God in every dimension that a human has, cultivating abundant and flourishing life for oneself, and loving others as created in the image of God as much as oneself is. Jesus embodied this threefold spirituality in his life. Frank Rogers states, “the path of Jesus is a way of radical compassion.”²²

Thus, Triptykos and the CEC developed the threefold spirituality of Jesus into a spiritual path of radical compassion with three aspects. The spiritual way of radical compassion “deepens

²⁰ Triptykos, “About Triptykos,” accessed Oct. 16, 2013, <http://www.triptykos.com/teaching>.

²¹ Frank Rogers Jr., *Rhythms of Radical Compassion: The Way of Jesus as a Threefold Spiritual Path* [Claremont School of Theology], n.d., 10.

²² Rogers, *Rhythms of Radical Compassion*, 10.

one's connection to a compassionate source, restores one to a humanity fully loved and alive, and increases one's capacities to be an instrument of compassion towards others in the world."²³ In other words, there are three movements, including connection with a compassionate source, restoration of original humanity, and cultivation of compassion toward others.

Triptykos and the CEC describe these three movements as emerging from God's heart by using an analogy of the human heart. In their explanation, the heart goes through a threefold rhythm: gathering problematic blood cells into the center, restoring them to their originally natural and healthy condition, and returning them to the body to transfer oxygen, absorb carbon dioxide, and provide nourishment. In this respect, God's heart also pulsates in a threefold movement: connecting a wounded person to the radically compassionate sacred source, reinstating whole humanity through relationship with the compassionate source, and returning the person into the world to heal wounds and the suffering of others with a compassionate heart.²⁴ In essence, God's heart is filled with compassion. God instilled in all creatures God's compassionate essence. Thus, all creatures pulse in the rhythms of compassion as the essence of God. The teachings and life of Jesus themselves also pulse in the heartbeat of God.

Six essential components of compassion. Triptykos and the CEC name the six essential components of compassion as follows: (1) paying attention (or contemplative awareness), (2) understanding (or empathic care), (3) loving with connection (or all-accepting presence), (4) sensing the Sacredness (or spiritual expansiveness), (5) embodying new life (or desire for flourishing), and (6) restorative action.²⁵

The first of the six components of compassion is paying attention (or contemplative awareness). Paying attention is the first step toward compassion. It allows us to be aware of another's or our own authentic humanity without any distorted judgments or prejudices. We often project our own perspectives and experiences onto the lives and behaviors of others. This results in distorted views, bias, and partiality. According to Rogers, paying attention or contemplative awareness is the "the non-reactive, non-projective apprehension of another in the mystery of their unique particularity."²⁶ It helps us to disentangle distorted and entwined lenses and to have the whole sight to perceive another as he or she is in his or her humanity.

The second component of compassion is understanding (or empathic care). When we perceive the humanity and dignity of another or the self, we enter into a process of understanding them. In other words, paying attention to another or the suffering self invites us to stand in the other's shoes with empathic care. In this stage, when we understand the other's or self's sufferings, wounds, desires, emotions, and thoughts with an empathic heart, we are touched in our compassionate core.

When we really understand the inner and deep entity of another with empathic care, we approach the third component of loving with connection (or all-accepting presence). Understanding another leads to an embracing connection with and care for him or her. Thus, we become an all-accepting presence that is open, receptive, sensitive, responsive, and connected to another. As a result, we participate in the suffering and delight of another with loving connection.

The fourth component of compassion is sensing the Sacredness (or spiritual

²³ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 4.

²⁴ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 4.

²⁵ Frank Rogers Jr., *The Compassion Practice: Calibrating the Pulse of Our Lives to the Heartbeat of Love* [Claremont School of Theology], forthcoming, 24–30.

²⁶ Rogers, *Compassion Practice*, 25.

expansiveness). When we are an all-accepting presence for another, we sense that the Sacred source of compassion flows over and inside us. The reason is that our human compassion and capacity for care emerges from compassionate sources. Compassion is the essence of the Sacred as God and emerges from God's heart. Thus, when we are connected with the suffering of another, we sense the existence of the Sacred flowing within us and it is that Sacredness through which our spirit of compassion is expanded.

Sensing the Sacredness gives rise to the fifth component of embodying new life (or having a desire for flourishing) for the suffering self and others. While we are engaging in the suffering of another with empathic care, we want the other to be free from suffering. We also desire that the other's sufferings be transformed into peace, delight, happiness, and freedom. Thus, we seek flourishing life.

The desire for flourishing and new life seeds the sixth component of compassion, restorative action. Compassion requires us to take specific action to alleviate the suffering of others and to nurture their flourishing in the fullness of compassionate living. If restorative action does not occur, compassion just remains in the mind and its power is reduced. Restorative action contributes not only to changing the suffering of another, it makes compassion flow into and fill the world.

These six components constitute the pulse of compassion. Each component interacts with the other components. If one decreases or disappears, the pulse of compassion is diminished. Compassion includes all six components. The first letters of the first through five components spell *PULSE*: *P* = paying attention, *U* = understanding, *L* = loving connection, *S* = sensing the Sacredness, and *E* = embodying new life. In other words, the components become the pulse of compassion.²⁷

Considering these six components, we realize that compassion is not simply awareness or emotion or thought or desire or action. Compassion emerges from diverse capacities of humans. Triptykos and the CEC emphasize that "compassion is an experiential gestalt, a holistic complex that involves and integrates the full range of human capacities – perception, emotion, cognition, physiology, motivation, and behavior."²⁸

The Compassion Practice. Through integrating the six essential components and five core principles, Triptykos and the CEC have designed The Compassion Practice for nurturing our compassion. The Compassion Practice is based on the radical way of Jesus and the pulse of God. It centers on restoring connection to the sacred, self, and others and is divided into four movements.²⁹

The first one is to "get grounded (or catch your breath)."³⁰ Getting grounded enables us to solidify our foundation. Rogers expresses this movement as "finding solid ground."³¹ In this stage, we distance ourselves from our strong feelings, thoughts, inner voices, drives, and impulses when we are overwhelmed by them. The best practice for distancing is to catch our breath, which hardens the ground. Moreover, through taking deep breaths, we are invited to restore our connection with a compassionate resource or our truest essence. The spiritual methods of getting grounded with the sacred can be very diverse according to individuals'

²⁷ Rogers, *Compassion Practice*, 30.

²⁸ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 17.

²⁹ Rogers, *Compassion Practice*, 31.

³⁰ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 26–27.

³¹ Rogers, *Compassion Practice*, 32.

preferences: taking a walk, resting in silence, meditating, listening to music, and so on.³²

The second practice is to take our PULSE (or cultivate self-compassion). When we are enmeshed in negative emotions, inner voices and monologues, drives, and impulses, we first cultivate compassion for ourselves by taking a “U” turn or turning inward after getting grounded to the divine presence or compassionate essence. Inner movements bring about our sufferings, but they are not our enemies; they are aspects to heal, care for, and pay attention to. Triptykos and the CEC emphasize that the compassion practice to nurture compassion for ourselves is to take our PULSE. The meanings of PULSE were delineated previously in the discussion of the six essential components. In sum, *P* means “paying attention” to our own internal movements without any judgment or prejudice. *U* signifies “understanding empathically” our inner movements, reflecting their fear, longing, aching, and gift. *L* refers to “loving with connectedness,” offering a compassionate heart and care toward any reactions or parts provoked from interior movements. *S* means “sensing the Sacredness” and inviting the compassionate Sacred into one’s suffering or inner parts. *E* refers to “embodying new life,” and desiring restoration of our humanity and flourishing in fullness within.³³ Through taking our PULSE, we are invited to nurture self-compassion, which reconnects us with our compassionate resource and essence. Thus, our heart pulses in the heartbeat of God as compassion.

The third movement is to take others’ PULSE (or cultivate compassion for the other). When we are grounded with the sacred and connected with ourselves, we can cultivate compassion for others by taking their PULSE. However, when we nurture compassion for others, if our inner movements—such as rage, avoidance, and suffering—happen within us, we need to retake a “U” turn for ourselves. The reason is that inner parts or egos have something to listen for, heal, and care for. If we do not have any inner turbulences and our pulse is not erratic, it is a proper time to nurture compassion for others. The practice of PULSE for others is the same as for the self except that it is directed toward others. We first *pay attention* to the existence of another without any judgment or prejudice. When we see the humanity of another, we understand empathically his or her emotions, thoughts, and behaviors, reflecting on the other’s fears, longings, aches, and hidden gifts. Understanding empathically invites us to become an all-accepting presence toward another. We love with connectedness with another, extending care and compassion to the other’s suffering and flourishing. As we are connected with the suffering of another, compassion flows over and within us. At that time, we sense the Sacredness and our spiritual expansiveness. As a result, we are invited to embody new life, being free from the suffering of another and bringing about the flourishing of our life in the fullness of happiness.³⁴

The final stage is to “decide what to do” (or discern compassionate action). When we are deeply connected to the self and another in the grounding of the sacred, we engage in restorative actions for oneself and the other. Compassion leads us to decide what to do for freedom from suffering and for promoting life’s flourishing. In this respect, Rogers emphasizes that we should discern compassionate action in two dimensions. The first is that compassionate action aims toward freedom from suffering and flourishing for ourselves. The second is that compassionate action extends healing, freedom, justice, and restoration to another.³⁵ Thus, compassionate action makes the humanity of ourselves and others alive and vibrant in the rhythm of the compassion of God’s heart.

³² Rogers, *Compassion Practice*, 32.

³³ Rogers, *Compassion Practice*, 34.

³⁴ Rogers, *Compassion Practice*, 34–35.

³⁵ Rogers, *Compassion Practice*, 36–37.

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