**FROM DISCORD TO DIALOG**

“*Compassion means letting go of proving your identity…you work the way wind works, the sun works, the air works. The air does not say, “I will give you breathing space provided you breathe the way I want” …You go beyond the way you want to do things. If you can let go of yourself as the most important person in the world, there will be more capacity and spaciousness within you to work with others*.” Venerable Khandro Rinpoche

Four Steps of Dialogs of Courage: 1) VERIFY what they have said so they can hear themselves, and so you slow down your emotional reaction, giving you time to listen and respond. Have you heard them correctly? 2) VALIDATE the emotion that their tone of voice, expression and words suggest. “*Sounds like you feel…”* If you are correct, they may demonstrate relief in their face or in a lowered tone of voice. 3) VENERATE the Value or Basic Need (safety, belonging, respect, etc.) that impels their emotional state. Do you also have this value or need? Find common ground. Acknowledge its importance to you. 4) VOLUNTEER “May I share my own experience?” when you feel rapport has been established. Respect their ‘no. If they say ‘yes,’ speak in ‘I’ sentences, without blame or condescension in your words or expression. Note that while you have different opinions, you share the same need/value. Thank them for listening and appreciation for their sharing too.

*“Perhaps all the dragons in our lives are princesses who are only waiting to see us act, just once, with beauty and courage. Perhaps everything that frightens us is, in its deepest essence, is something helpless that wants our love.”* Rainer Maria Rilke

Lao Tzu: “*A good traveler has no fixed plans and is not intent on arriving.”* Good listening is like that good traveler. It does not have a fixed agenda imposed on it.

Can we stop turning other people into objects? THOSE people, ‘people like that,’ and other categories and titles? Can we cease over-identifying ourselves with our ideas or opinions too? Thoughts are fluid and come and go; they are not us.

The ‘need to be right’ may be based on our basic needs for safety and esteem but endanger listening and good relationships. We can be right, or we can be kind.

As we move around the wheel of life (changes in experience, economics, age, etc.) our point of view changes. People take a stand based on where they stand.

Bill Murray: *“Knowledge is like underwear. It’s important to have, but not everyone wants to see yours.”* Ignore their feelings, they will ignore our facts.

Confirmational bias is the “*recognition of cues or information that affirms what we already believe, and dismissal or the likelihood of ignoring information and cues that challenge them.”* (D. Rakel) When beliefs are challenged, there is pain.

Expressed opinions are the ‘tip of the iceberg.’ The larger part of people is below the surface and usually not shared: basic needs, values/traditions, emotions, and biases. To understand someone else with whom we disagree, seek deeper levels.

Every living thing yearns for love and respect and recoils from shame and cruelty. Relationship wins over rhetoric. Relationships can influence others beyond words.

*“You can have no influence on those for whom you have contempt.*” Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Our goal is not to change others. Only they can change themselves. We are the only person we can control. Our goal is to change how we communicate.

IF INTERESTED IN SHARING THIS PRESENTATION, CONTACT REBEKAH SHARDY at rebekahshardy@yahoo.com or (970) 308-8393. Thank you.

**Abbreviated Reading List**

“Compassion and Wisdom,” Venerable Khandro Rinpoche, Lion’s Roar June 17, 2017.

[How One Man Convinced 200 Ku Klux Klan Members To Give Up Their Robes : NPR](https://www.npr.org/2017/08/20/544861933/how-one-man-convinced-200-ku-klux-klan-members-to-give-up-their-robes), http://npr.org/2017/08/20/544861933

“The Compassionate Connection: The Healing Power of Empathy and Mindful Listening,” David Rakel, W. W. Norton, 2018.

“Klan-destine Relationships: A Black Man’s Odyssey in the Ku Klux Klan,” Daryl Davis, New Horizon Press, 1998.