

A Conversation on Compassion With Brooke Dodson-Lavelle

Transcript of Brooke Dodson-Lavelle on Changing Systems Beginning With Ourselves

(Music Intro)

Leslie Langbert: Hello! Welcome to the University of Arizona Center for Compassion Studies. This is 'Conversations on Compassion'. I'm Leslie Langbert. Thanks so much for listening.

If, like me...I feel as though since you're listening...like me, you're feeling the urgency in these days to do whatever we can to expand our feelings of compassion, to take action so that the world becomes a more just and loving place. Many of the things that we're seeing in the news, in the state of affairs today, can really cause us to question how available compassion is. And also I think they can cause us to question our own efficacy...what can we do? Can we make a difference? is it enough? Can it come fast enough?

I'm talking today with Brooke Dodson-Lavelle. She's the co-founder and president of a really amazing organization called Courage of Care Coalition. Based in the Bay area, their mission is to empower both personal and social transformation by providing deep contemplative training coupled with powerful tools for systems change. They support individuals, organizations and communities in realizing a more courageous, caring and equitable world. This organization provides retreats, workshops, intensives and for those that are interested in really bringing this into their work in a very deliberate way, year long training in facilitating Sustainable Compassion Training.

I met Brooke years ago. She and I had the same meditation teacher in Atlanta. Brooke was earning her PhD at Emory at that time, and she introduced me to Cognitively Based Compassion Training. Brooke is one of the few people that I know who has passion and a commitment for sharing contemplative practice- for expanding compassion and sharing these teachings, particularly with young people and with children. She's one of the

few people I know who actually adapted these practices to share with young people and with children.

In her work these days she's focused mostly on working with adults. Really kind of bringing this ability to feel compassion and to transform the work from something that we do as kind of an internal or an individual process to really expanding...so that we are more aware, we are more responsive, not only to our own experience of suffering but really becoming more responsive to and aware of the suffering that is happening all around us – that has always been happening. For many of us, we have been aware of this always. And for some of us, it is a harsh truth that we are awakening to.

Her work is really powerful. I'm really proud to call her my friend. I'm really excited that you are here to hear what she has to say, to listen to this conversation. I hope you enjoy it. Before we begin though, I want to give you a way to learn more about her work and what she does. You can visit her website courageofcare.org. Thanks for listening.

Leslie: Alright. welcome Brooke! I'm so, so glad to be here having this conversation on compassion with you. Thank you so much for joining me.

So I wanna make sure audio is okay. You can hear me? Okay you're a little bit muted.

Brooke Dodson-Lavelle: Is this better?

Leslie: Yes yes. Way better way better. Alright. Okay. So I know you are so busy in Oakland and, I mean, really all over the country, delivering training and workshops. Let's talk about that. You just finished a training so let's start there. What are you working on? Tell me the exciting news.

Brooke: So, just this past weekend, a team of us here at the Courage headquarters in Oakland, led a workshop for white folks interested in learning more about systems of domination and oppression, especially the ways we are affected by, participate in, and actually even perpetuate white supremacy. And this was a group of contemplative trained participants who have a background in contemplative practice that are really looking to push the boundaries of their practice and understand, actually in some ways the limits of just exploring contemplative practice in this individual model, and recognizing the need for us to step up in light of our current socio-political climate. Although none of this is really new, but it's a way to really step up and learn and take responsibility for what we're participating in and what's on the horizon if we really don't get it together actually pretty quickly.



Leslie: This is super powerful. Let's just jump right in on the deep end. So, tell me more about this in terms of the folks that attended this retreat. Is it just really for their own expansion of their own awareness to carry it into their own lives and interactions or are they bringing this to bear into their organizations and in systems?

Brooke: Yeah, Courage is an a way kind of oriented I think into two directions; and one way we kind of grew in a response to the contemplative movement. I'm speaking really generally, of course, there's many wonderful things happening, but we grew in response to what we perceived to be was a movement that was really focused inward that had kind of maybe even lost touch with a sense of the structures and systems within which we're embedded. And that many of the contemplative traditions in modern America that a number of us of have in common, whether there's some variation of Buddhist, Protestant, Jewish, et cetera, have this really strong and kind of insidious individual or narrow focus on the person and that our path to 'waking up' is about our own self-development, and that translates to our approach actually to thinking about systems.

And in the [contemplative] movement, a lot of us feel that if we just trained enough people in mindfulness or compassion practices and we just get enough of those programs into schools or in health systems... of course those are helpful to a certain extent....But there seems to be this driving belief that if we just do that, all of the systems of poverty and inequity and oppression would kind of just fall away, and we were realizing in part, because we were part of that problem and part of that process, that it actually wasn't saving the world as quickly as we all wanted. You know, many well-intentioned people, and we started saying, 'wow. there's a whole other world out there that we're not even tapping into'. There are a lot of people this is not news to - you especially as a social worker- who do work and thinking about systems and thinking about structures of domination and oppression. So part of Courage grew out of this really strong desire to kind of call in all of our contemplative friends and say 'hey, there is something really powerful in what you're holding and the possibilities for it is totally being stifled if we don't attend to these broader systems'. Wow. We've got to break out of this. A really narrow mold. That's one direction.

And then on the other side, we were already out in the world kind of working with our friends on the front lines of social service, so people like you, who already know 'the world is on fire and I've gotta get out there, and I've gotta fix stuff and people need help and I do not have time to be like sitting on a meditation cushion taking care of myself!' All of those folks. And, you're seeing, you're watching those people burnout seeing the enormous burden

or maybe sense of hopelessness and despair and overwhelm the more we become aware of the actual complexity of these systems.

We're looking to that group and said 'hey, actually how do we help you stay in touch with the ground of our being and the life blood that sustains us, and get in touch with whether it's in contemplative practice, in the reconnecting to spiritual practice or practices from our ancestral lineage that have held us. How do we help those people on the front line recognize you're not alone in this and we can help you support and sustain?

Courage is, in a sense, is trying to orient in a way in between those two worlds. Be kind of the bridge. Right? In a way maybe even forge a new path for some of us to work with those intersections. So the training we've been doing...this training yesterday also was really for people who see themselves kind of in the margins of those worlds and who want to deepen their own practice and take that back into their organizations or community, or want to learn how to bring that forward as new programs and practices.

Leslie: it's time, right? And it's such powerful, powerful work. I am seeing and hearing more and more that this is the next direction, if you will, of organized contemplative practice. If we can describe it in that way. So I want to talk more about Courage of Care. it's such an amazing name for an organization and from the very beginning you know when you visioned this and took the incredible risk and the courage that it took to create this a couple of years ago, I know that initially a lot of the focus was really around supporting educators, human service workers and, so let's talk about what really drove this for you.

Brooke: Right, I want to shy away from thinking that we're forging some new movement or figuring out something new, because the world has been calling us to do this forever, and we are just at the nexus. I say that because I think there's a necessary humility in that. It has been time for really long time. I. I feel like what keeps me in this is I can hardly bear the ongoing destruction, violence, the oppression, the marginalization...the despair and the hopelessness that we experience, that we place upon other people, that we perpetuate, and this sense of isolation that's really embedded in that. And underneath that there's a really deep grief that I think we're maybe as society or even a civilization not actually facing like the deep grief of loss and the potential loss if we do not get it together. Like yesterday.

In that grief there's also like kind of longing or like a call to reconnect and to re energize and we're waking there's movement in this and I feel like at least right now in my own process I feel like I'm in an ongoing process of grief. I feel a lot of us sense that and maybe some of us stop at the stage of

denial or defensiveness. 'it's not there. it's not happening', right? Or, 'it's too big so I can't even deal' or some of us start to become awake to it and find feelings of guilt, or anger or rage, and that's where our work is. And some of us begin to get stuck further and we start to become aware of the shame, especially if... depending on where we're located in the system and then how we participated in it.

And I think under all that for many or most of us is that deep sense of grief, and if we don't start to touch that and acknowledge that, name that and call each other into reconnection, call each other into practices, is like basically game over. And so many people have been calling us into that. I think of Joanna Macy's work. I think of the Civil Rights Movement and basically every social movement in the world. Eco Justice movement. People have been begging us to get in touch with that deep sense of disconnection and longing and the world is waiting for us to actually have the capacity to feel that and heal that, yeah?

In my own... you know I've been thinking a lot about this. I've been involved in a lot of circles, doing...trying to do a better job around the entire racism work and anti-oppression work, still very much a beginner in learning this. But, what's been reawakened for me is kind of a reflection on the point in our lives. Or the process by which we as individuals but also as a collective have effectively started believing the lie. There was something and I think a lot of young children sense and this is why I love working with kids. There's a sense that many children have, even teenagers, see this is not right. Like there's another way. There's another way to be in this world. This is not okay.

Leslie: Yes.

Brooke: A lot of us and understandably so, become indoctrinated or socialized to believe in that lie and we and develop these ridiculous coping strategies to deal with and in some ways even thrive in that. And I think part of the process as adults is reconnecting with that re-awakening...that getting in touch with the pre- lie, right, in dealing with the process of having believed the lie, participating in it?

And I think the possibility for working with kids is catching them before that. And actually drawing our inspiration and our energy from those fearless little beings, in a way, who have not bought into this crap, right? And try to energize and sustain that. So that's the draw.

A lot of this you know. You were a part of this. I mean, you and I worked together so many years ago, right? Part of this beauty and the promise of

doing work with young children- it's really to do this and create context and containers to hold them in this so they don't get caught up in the same system we've been caught up in. And that we encourage them and instill in them a sense of fearlessness and a kind of courage, yeah? And this is where the name Courage of Care came from is that as we tap that kind of ground and that sense that we are deeply relational beings, we are not being isolated and what have you. That is that the energy, if you will, of the universe movement of it is this kind of creative energy. You might even call it a caring energy that has in it an energy or this will to liberate.

As we tap into that more and more, there's a natural courage that's born out of that. Like a natural power or freedom that's like 'I wanna be free. You wanna be free. Let's all be free.' Right? and how do we tap that? How do we create spaces where people can really feel that more and more.

Leslie: Exactly. I know we've talked a lot before about working with kids and working with young people, and the class that I teach here, at the beginning of each class we take a moment to kind of center and there's just a reminder of their right to be here. And I think, you know, for me, in coming back to that and wanting to offer that as kind of a point of grounding particularly for kids...and in you know relating it our own experiences of deep grief around disconnection. It comes down to I think this very deep rooted sense of shame that is...it's generational shame, I think. You know, the sense of sort of not feeling okay and not being right in the world and the way that these systems are structured and that you know life needs to look a certain way or you need to present in a certain way in order to be okay and worthy and not really having a clear sense of where that comes from? And I.. I don't know I just I sense more and more and when I talk with other people too who talk about their parents' experience of assimilating into white culture and there's a shame. I think many of us are walking around without those clear answers. Just sort of a feeling. Does that make sense?

Brooke: I think the process of oppression and the system of oppression that is the most recognizable, paradoxically, because its often the most invisible, is the system of white supremacy, right? And we, as citizens of this country, whether we immigrated or migrated here only a few generations ago or long before, we are all participating in this in some way. We're all caught in it, participating in it, perpetuating it, affected by it, harmed by it and we're all dehumanized by it. In different ways, but all of us are dehumanized by it.

Those of us who are, in some way, in the dominant center, right? and our identities are complex and we're not all in or out, but those of us who are

afforded certain kinds of privileges and opportunities based on the color of our skin, or education or our wealth or religious affiliation and so on...

We participate in a kind of dehumanization in which we don't...we have internalized certain kinds of ways of thinking about what is 'good'. What does it mean to be a 'good' human being and to get in that center where there are opportunities and resources, right? So part of this I think in some twisted way is survival driven or driven by this misinformed idea of scarcity.

We give up a lot of ourselves to be in that, actually. We give up our culture, we give up our heritage. We give up our freedom of expressing the parts of ourselves that don't fit in the center. And we live disjointed lives, too. And then we struggle...we have a hard time being in our own bodies as full human beings because all of us have been taught that it's maybe not welcome here. Of course there are exceptions to this, right?

And our brothers and sisters who have been for the most part on the margins of these systems have internalized to like the 'n'th degree that their very being is not good on some level, and all of us live with the horror and the shame of that. Of the dehumanization of that. That we move through the world consciously but really often unconsciously all the time relating to other people as less than human beings.

We do this work because no matter how good or awake we think we are, educated we think we are, we're moving through the world not seeing each other as whole, and denying parts of ourselves as whole. And I think we're living out[side] of a moral integrity and that's a shame. I think that's the source of it, and it makes sense, right?

Leslie: It does. it does make sense and it is an incredibly difficult process to get in and begin to dismantle. It is incredibly difficult to do. But so, so important to do and absolutely past time. Beyond time. One of the things that I'm really interested in is how we begin to create spaces....not necessarily sanghas so much, but because we come together for contemplative practice in so many different ways. There's meditation, there's yoga...there's you know all of these other things that have really been quite controversial I think in a lot of places, because they've been designed and appeal to a pretty narrow - feels like kind of a narrow- population. And that process of being able to create spaces of gathering that are more naturally inclusive and safe and not just in simply being respectful but absolutely welcoming for all experience and that willingness to be with the discomfort that comes along with exactly what you talked about...what's happening in this country, in our society. You know we are not aware of how we are complicit in this.



I'm thinking of when I did the training with you recently and there was a point in the training where it was just sort of... you know it felt like it hit me upside the head this level of...I've been completely unaware of being complicit in my work...thinking I had chosen this profession of social work that was really about empowering others and really empowering folks who are disenfranchised on a number of levels and like wow. okay . just even by virtue of working in organizations, how that's siphoning away resources from communities that have their own solutions to issues that were created by systems that they were not a part of.

I don't really have a question in here. I think it's just you know always with you like I feel like we just sort of start dialog and see where it goes. Maybe the question is, given how so many of these pieces are so insidious and we're so unaware...when we're 'holding the seat' [of sharing contemplative practice], what have you found has supported you or allowed you so far to be able to step into that space to make the shift from the way that we may have, you know, been traditionally trained to offer contemplative practice?

Brooke: Yeah, this is a really good question. I think one starting place for me that comes to mind is when we think about the term compassion and I'd like to use the term care. We're talking about way of developing an orientation to the world. Kind of like an ethical and one might even say moral stand like a readiness to respond to the world and a commitment in that also to understand what's causing... whether it's suffering, or what would facilitate more joy and connection, and work to make those conditions more sustainable, more available and so on. That's the commitment as we start to wake up to that.

The training involves for so many of us deepening our own ability to be with our own 'stuff' in some way, and to really start to un-do the systems of oppression we've actually internalized. To really actually try to be free. Whether it's re-thinking what's good or not good or so on, or being free from shame or self-criticism or fear that we're not good enough or all the harmful internalized thing others have taken upon themselves. It's really to be free. But it's also to recognize the ways in which all of us are caught in broader systems. I think that's the piece that is actually missing.

I don't know that we can fully do this work if we don't become more aware of the systems we're caught in. Like the example you gave. We can, in the name of love and care and compassion, go out and do volunteer work across the world, or apply for grants to pull resources from communities in need in the name of doing service for those very communities or do something that feels like a great idea to us that challenges the very values and



commonsense practices of communities that we move in. So if we're not doing that work, we're not living up to our commitment. We're actually not living up to our compassionate commitment in a way if we don't do this work. So that's huge motivation for me. And then in that way if we're not doing that, too, what we end up doing, and this is I think one of the hardest things to come to terms with, is we end up imposing our own agendas on other people...our own oppressive agendas of what it actually means to be good and healed. We actually become part of that in the name of our service work.

So I think the more we develop even just that frame, I think that it can call us in to starting to deepen in these ways and we can't do one without the other. We can't do transforming work if we're not actually doing our own internal work right? And vice versa.

Leslie: Yes I see that absolutely that balance of if we're able to change the macro, right? If we are able to affect systems, you know there has to come with that a transformation of our own hearts and minds. I know one of the really key cornerstones of your Sustainable Compassion Training work is around what you've described as the 'three modes of care'. You know, really being able to balance the ability to care for oneself, receive care from others in order to be able to effectively extend care. And I think, you know, the one area that I think people immediately kind of go to is that their challenge is in self care.

And I think even myself, you know, for a while, I was sort of like, 'oh, that's probably really where I need to work' and know you, for me, as I deepen with this, it's actually kind of shifted and the challenge is around receiving care. I think we have such a strange 'bootstrapper' mentality in that we have really ingrained very deeply I think in many, many ways that it is a weakness to ask for what we need or to be in a place to receive care. And I think that inhibits our ability in terms of how we manifest change for these larger systems that we're talking about. So yeah, absolutely it comes back to the core of our own ways in which we think about - in the way that we feel about -these modes of care. This is my sense of it, but I know that you have much more depth and richness to share about that particular piece that is a big part of the work.

Brooke: You've got it. I think relationality is key in many ways for the future in the contemplative movement if we're lucky, for us to really wake up to that, and I think that's what's been lost by many traditions in the transmission and adaptation of certain secular contexts in the west. It's that we've lost this deep relational frame that has held so many of our



contemplative and spiritual traditions intact. And the idea, to put it simply, is that we are not simply autonomous beings that work really hard and become enlightened or meet God or transcend, but that we are held in a network or field of care and we learn to wake up. We learn to be more loving. We learn to be the image of our divine being and so on, in and through the ways others have modeled after and loved us into that being. We are nurtured or tutored into this. Yes, of course we also have to take our responsibility and do some of our own work. But we are held in that. That is the empowerment as it is called certain traditions. That relational dimension I think is also recognizable and other religious traditions, right?

And I think this is now something that social neuroscientists are picking up on more and more, like Jim Coen's work out of UVa who I think is just brilliant, right, like, we are wired as relational beings. But something, is kind of like a virus, like this insidious individual frame that we can think about happens in the modern period like with that kind of turn inward and subjective turn. It has roots and relationship to the rise of capitalism and more recently this neoliberal focus, this heightened sense of you as an individual and the system of meritocracy which we know to be false in United States. This idea that you work really hard to prove that you're good and that you're only valuable if you produce effectively. Our education system, by and large, is been co-opted by this individual, competitive framework. Our health care system, largely, has been co-opted by this, and it's killing us.

I think this is also what's driving burnout and this is where I think that relational frame can especially be helpful to those of us in service. I think those of us in service feel this in some way? I think many people in service are drawn into it because they're natural caregivers. They're naturally in relationship with their families and their colleagues or their communities or they have some spiritual connection that they get this. But we're trained into the narrow frame where we start to think 'oh my gosh. I have to fix the system totally by myself, like, it's on my shoulders'.

And our practice becomes privatized and our work becomes privatized, and it becomes about us. About me buying into this individual hero narrative that to be good, I have to save the world by myself. Which is why we see everyone has their own 'new' contemplative program, or psychology, or therapy or retreat! We've been co-opted by that and it's pulling the community apart in that way, right? But this relational model is saying, actually it's not all on your shoulders. Yes, you're also part of it and that you're responsible, but there's a field of us trying to do this and the more we catch on to that field, the more we in a sense kind of get a kind of, I think

power, actually from that. And that actually is the energy of transformation in many ways.

And it's knowing that we're held in that container, to go back to your thing on self care. Knowing that we're held in a container in that fundamentally we are okay on some level is also what allows us to really get in the dark and do the deep dirty work that most of us don't want to do. We need to feel how to do that work. We really need to.

Leslie: Absolutely. It's the freeing part of it all, right? We resist because there's all this patterning of exactly what you say...you know, that archetype of the hero helper and so I have to go in and do it all. And then there's you know even that nature of competitiveness among organizations that are doing similar work and you know, all of that. But that openness in the sense of cooperation, and looking through the lens differently to see all of the people that are bringing their gifts to the work, to the effort in different ways and recognizing how we are each another part of the web instead of trying to figure out how to plant a stake first with a particular population or whatever the case may be... It creates so much ease and freedom that's like 'oh, okay. I can...whew! I can exhale now and and settle in and do this' because it allows so much expansiveness, I think.

This is part of what I really love about what you're doing with Courage of Care in that exactly what you're creating is bringing so many different people together and in different communities from different perspectives around similar issues to be together and move that work forward. Tell me about... I know that you're this summer offering a lot of workshops and trainings. So fourteen forty (1440) Multi-versity, I know you've got some other things happening and doing some other workshops and brief retreats which are super fantastic and I hope that people that are listening check those out because they're going to be incredibly powerful and worthwhile. So let's talk a little bit about what you're sharing and what you're teaching about now.

Brooke: You know one thing we're really interested in is building community and the community takes practice, right? It takes practice to be in community. We have to learn how to be the kind of people that we want to be in community with. And we have to actually practice letting go of some of our own stake, like you mentioned, in this work and really learning to trust that the power of the collective it's far greater than anything we can ever do our on own. And so our trainings are attempts to be in that spirit and I think because we are learning organization, and forever will be, right? We work in the process of how do we keep undoing the 'bad' and doing more

and creating more of the 'good' or the open and the inclusivity, in line with two different directions that Courage faces, right?

Facing the contemplative world and helping us develop a kind of structural competency and awareness of how we can bring those powerful traditions further and in more sophisticated ways while also holding down all the yogis and shamans and spiritual beings in the world, right? And oriented the other way, how we can help people who are already in the movement, or organizers or social justice leaders really stay deeply in touch with the kind of taproot for their practice and find supportive, safe ways of doing some of that deep work, whether that is the exploration of the rage, the shame, the grief that can that be freeing or liberating in their practice.

Our training is coming online this summer. Some of them are for the public that are a way of getting a feel for this basic template we have and we try to move people through this kind of spiral curriculum that helps hit on these different stages like, How do we come together and build community and collectively envision? How do we develop our own capacities for care and love so that we're always in touch with doing our own work? How do we then learn and see what's getting in the way of us radically connecting and loving each other, loving ourselves? How do we then begin to heal from the systems of domination, disconnection, isolation that were part of, caught up in? And then, how do we transform with those new eyes, with a new perspective, how do we begin again?

So those are public offerings and those are our retreat this summer and beyond and our education programs online. In our advanced training, we take the advanced version of that and orient it one for contemplatives... how does the contemplative use that model to really start to awaken and use some of those tools whether they're leading their own spiritual communities, and similarly, how do those of us in service use that same template to continue calling us into doing our own work in spaces of community. So we're looking for people to come do that work with us.

Leslie: I have no doubt that you will fill this...each of these trainings with awesome people coming to help you do the work. I personally am really excited to start learning more deeply with you beginning the end of the summer and bringing a lot of this back this into our community here, and to being able to share this through the Center for Compassion Studies.

I'm really, really looking forward to that. It is indeed a deep personal commitment, but so deeply worthwhile I think on many levels. I was talking with another friend recently about the work that we do. I think that the healing work that we do for ourselves and that we foster or help facilitate

around us either in the communities where we live or where we feel called to share or even how we become invited to share...which is been a really incredible part of this process on this journey so far for me. You know to have the invitation to come and share in different communities and with different groups has been incredibly powerful. But there's also the sense of not only being able to deepen personal transformation but also the sense of maybe being able to go and start to heal back through the generations. To be able to somehow...you know when we talk about generational trauma and we talk about how that's in the DNA and this idea of when we heal that takes that back through the DNA for our ancestors as well. It feels powerful. It feels really powerful. I don't even have the words to adequately express.

Those of you who know Brooke, who have studied with her, if you know her, if you're friends with her in any way, you have this deep, deep recognition of what an incredible visionary and incredible teacher she is. And I think if you're listening at this point, you've heard so much already you know that this is absolutely clear. But I think this is one of the really powerful pieces I think that I've learned from you through our friendship and just things that we've talked about and just hearing and learning from you. As you continue on this path of the work I'm watching you and always I feel like I'm learning from you in many ways. So I thank you for that.

Long pause

I'm sort of taking that in for a moment...

I think that one of the biggest takeaways around cultivating and and sustaining compassion in this conversation is that sense of hope and that sense of yes, even though many of us maybe just now are kind of coming to the realization of things that so many of our friends and others in our community and people that that we don't know personally perhaps, have been experiencing for a very, very long time. And we are perhaps, some of us, just maybe starting to recognize, this can feel overwhelming. I think you said that we can take a couple of different stances. There can be that continued denial or the 'this is you know so large that I don't even know how to begin'. But I think the biggest piece that is coming through all of us is that it isn't on us to do this alone. That we have to do it together and in community. We do our own work but we don't have to do it in isolation.

Brooke: Yeah, and I'm so interested these days in just what you said in how we learn how to make our practice and our development which has been so privatized for many of us -how we make that public. And I don't mean Facebook public, Selfie public...How we make public our own processes such that they can be held and mirrored within our communities. That is where

really deep work happens. We have so much pressure placed on ourselves to figure out our own stressors, deal with our own demons, deal with our own relationships and separations, losses, death, divorces...almost on our own, which is so unnatural, It feels like! A community is a place for healing and helping us learn how to grow, how to hold things, the parts of ourselves we can't see or don't want to see, right? And that's where the real practice is. At the same time, each of our little orbs have to take some of our own responsibility for own work, right?

I like to think of this is like offering up our process such that it can be seen and maybe be a learning or a gift for just someone else or offering it up so that it can be held and healed, right?

Leslie: yeah, yeah!

Brooke: That's the work of grief is having it acknowledged. Having it held. Having some sense of reconnection and then some re energizing from that, right?

Leslie: Absolutely, absolutely...there's a power in that. This is been amazing.

Brooke: I love you.

Leslie: love you too! This is always so, so powerful. it's just amazing to have these conversations with you. I feel like we could absolutely continue it for much longer time. I have to revisit it. Next step is we need to we need to bring you here. So yeah before we close this is there anything that you'd like to add or to share?

Brooke: I just...well, I want to thank you for all the work that you're doing and I want to thank everyone else out there in the work, right? it's really gonna take an army us of to do this and we're all trying our best in this work and.. I want to kind of name that and honor that and lift that up and encourage that. And also call us in that to figure out how do we do this better, right? How do we do this better together, in a way.

Leslie: Yeah, always, always trying to improve, to learn, to grow in this work. There are so many powerful teachers and so many powerful ways to approach this and so much more to learn. Thank you dear one for doing this.

Closing/Outro

Well friends. There we have it. This amazing light in the world changing the world inspiring us to be courageous in our extension of compassion. Brooke is offering teachings coming up in the Bay area at the Courage of Care

headquarters in Oakland. I really highly recommend the workshop coming up in October the twenty seventh through twenty ninth, Courageous Leaders for Collective Liberation intensive. I'll be there. Hope to see some of you there and if you'd like to learn more about what we're up to here in Tucson at the Center for Compassion Studies or if you're outside of Tucson, and you want to drop us a line, we would to love hear from you. Visit our website at [compassioncenter dot Arizona dot EDU](http://compassioncenter.arizona.edu).

Thank you so much for being here, for listening, and for being willing to expand your own natural feelings of compassion in the world.

This has been another episode of the University of Arizona Center for Compassion Studies Conversations on Compassion. This has been produced by Garry Forger. Our sound engineer is Gary Darnell. Music produced by Gary Darnell and the incredible team at the University of Arizona Office of instruction and Assessment. This is Leslie Langbert with the Center for Compassion Studies. Thanks for listening!

Music outro