



Excerpted from *Presence-Based Coaching*  
By Doug Silsbee, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008

## Practice 8.1: Finding Compassion for Others

There are a number of powerful ways of seeing how we are connected to people we resist. In fact, it has been argued that for us to see something in another that we resist or that bothers us, that same trait must be present in ourselves. Seeing this commonality moves us into compassion.

Choose a situation in which you are judging, labeling, or feeling irritated by another person. First, write down a description of what this person does that is difficult for you. Be as specific as possible about both the other person's behavior and your reaction.

Now temporarily suspend your judgments and irritations. Write as if you were the other person. Place yourself in her awareness, describing the behavior that you find irritating and speaking to the inherent positive aspects or reasons for the behavior. Write in the first person, using "I" statements, speaking as her. As you do so, let yourself feel what it is to be her.

Finally, consider how the other person is like you. What aspirations or concerns does she have that are not so different from your own? What attachments and aversions might be driving her behaviors? What do you have in common?

Let yourself sense the commonalities. Find a place of compassion within yourself for the other person.