



Awakening to Abundant Life Week 4- Compassionate Communication

Letting go of complaining, criticizing, judging and blaming is a very healing, transformative spiritual practice. We've all been programmed and trained in these behaviors. And it's so common that many of us, much of the time, don't even notice that we're doing it. However, as Jack Canfield says: *"Life gives us whatever we say and focus on; so if we're complaining about how bad it is, we're creating more of how bad it is."*

In the life changing book "A Complaint Free World", Unity minister Will Bowen describes 5 reasons we complain: (1) To get attention (2) To avoid taking action; pointing out what's wrong, but not doing anything about it. (3) To pre-excuse poor performance; 'I'm not good at this so don't expect too much.' (4) To brag, to seem superior. (5) To control and manipulate others.

These behaviors come from a fear-based ego that is afraid that we're not good enough, that we won't get what we want, or that we're not safe. Our spiritual work is to love ourselves and others enough to consciously choose unconditional acceptance and appreciation, so that we awaken to new levels of peace and joy.

Notice how you feel when you're complaining. Our critical thoughts and words send waves of negative energy throughout our bodies and trigger negative mental, emotional and even physical effects.

When we stop complaining, we shift into a more peaceful, loving consciousness. We feel less and less anger and fear, and we attract fewer angry, fearful people and experiences into our lives. We also naturally become more compassionate and grateful, and our attitudes, relationships and health improve!

"Let us be kind to one another, for most of us are fighting a hard battle." - Ian MacLaren

If you're ready to let go of the negativity and negative effects of complaining and criticizing, begin by noticing how often you complain, or criticize situations, yourself and others. You might be surprised how often it happens. Remember not to judge yourself!

Noticing our complaining is a shift from **Level 1: Unconscious Complaining**, to **Level 2: Conscious Complaining**. We're still complaining, but now at least we're *aware* that we're doing it!

Level 3: Deciding Not to Complain. So, what *do* we talk about when we stop complaining? Talk about what you like, what you want, what you're grateful for. Give compliments instead of criticism. Instead of 'problem' say 'opportunity'; instead of 'have to' say 'get to'; instead of complaining ask for what you need. Talk only about what you want, and talk directly to those who can do something about it.

When a critical thought comes to mind, we stop ourselves before we say it. As we do this, fewer critical thoughts come up. At this stage we may think we're not complaining when we actually are. The way we feel will tell us if we are or not. Sometimes it's not *what* we say, but *the attitude* with which say it that makes it negative. "It's just another day in paradise!" can be gratitude or sarcasm, depending on the energy with which we say it.

Reinforce your intention with affirmations such as "I choose to be kind." Find a Complaint Free Buddy, and support each other in becoming Complaint free.

If we stay with it, eventually we achieve **Level 4: Conscious Competence**. Our new normal has become positive, compassionate communication, peace, gratitude and a healthier mind and body! We're awakening to a more abundant life!

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord..." Psalm 19:14

