

For today, focus on making observations without moralistic judgment in at least two of your interactions.



## JANUARY 4

*I am not easily frightened. Not because I am brave but because I know that I am dealing with human beings, and that I must try as hard as I can to understand everything that anyone ever does.*

—Etty Hillesum, Holocaust survivor

### ***Improving Relationships as a Primary Goal***

Compassionate Communication suggests that improving the quality of our relationships is a primary goal. Indeed, that connection with ourselves and other people takes a higher priority than being right, winning, making more money, or looking good to other people. If you focus on *improving the quality of your relationships* through deeper connections, you will improve the state of your life, enhance the peace and love in your life, and feel better about yourself.

I learned this through personal experience. I worked from time to time with a business colleague. Over the years, our relationship deteriorated to the point where we had no civil connections with each other. Our association was worst just as I was starting to look at how I contributed to the angst in my relationships. As a result, I started to focus more on my connections with people rather than trying to be right or to win arguments. Within a remarkably short time, my colleague was telling me how much she admired the changes

I was making and how much she enjoyed her relationship with me. We both expressed our sadness for our earlier behaviors. Today, we are close colleagues who work together in a variety of projects and easily call each other a friend.

When you shift your focus to valuing your connection with other people, you improve the quality of your life and your relationships. Everyone who crosses your path will benefit from this shift of focus. It is inevitable.

Be aware today of the times when your priority is to win or to be right rather than to connect, then shift your focus to connection with others.



## JANUARY 5

*Try not to become a man of success, but rather,  
try to become a man of value.*

—Albert Einstein

### ***Giraffe Consciousness***

In Compassionate Communication, we use giraffes as our metaphor because they have the largest heart of all land mammals (forty pounds!). They remind us to connect from the heart. They also have long necks, a metaphor for seeing far down the road. So when we say or do something, it is important for us to be conscious of the potential long-range consequences of our actions. It's about being fully present to our actions and words, knowing that each action creates a reaction. When we consciously choose to respond to life