The goal of this conference is to learn about the compassion-inspired work taking place in the NAU and Flagstaff communities. In so doing, we hope to underscore the multi-dimensional nature of compassion: its philosophical, psychological, and spiritual roots; its cultivation and expression; its importance, relevance, and application in our everyday lives.

Today's program features four presentations, a poster presentation, and three hands-on workshops. There is no registration or registration fee; complimentary lunch and snacks are provided. Student sign-up sheets will be available for students seeking extra credit.

Self-Compassion and Mindfulness: Practical Tools for Motivation and Positive Change
Shannon Arnett, MA, CEHP, RYT-500, Director of Inner Peace Facilitation and Training, LLC

This workshop explores strategies for using self-compassion and mindfulness for anyone working on a goal, feeling stuck, or seeking to find greater intrinsic motivation. Often in our competitive society self-criticism and comparison are used to drive us forward into the direction of a goal. Research based exercises reflecting the power of awareness and self-compassion are proving to make dramatic strides over negative efforts toward achievement and motivation. For those working with others, ways to share these tools in supportive ways are also shared.

Striking Back at the Empire – Self Compassion Remedies to Cure the Dog-Eat-Dog Paradigm From Within
Marnie Vail, MSS, MD

“Today everything comes under the laws of competition and the survival of the fittest, where the powerful feed upon the powerless. As a consequence masses of people find themselves excluded and marginalized: without work, without possibilities, without any means of escape,” (Attributed to Pope Francis) “True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring.” (Martin Luther King – from his speech “Beyond Vietnam”) “As long as the soul is always “out there” the world will be “torn into opposing ideologies; walls, psychic and material, will be built to separate enemies.” (Anne Baring paraphrasing Carl Jung) A participatory workshop during which you will brainstorm, raise consciousness, and create personal “medicine” which will help you to put competitiveness in its proper place and realize your own perfect piece of the whole.

Understand through Compassion, Live Fearless in the Heart: Finding Balance through Kundalini Yoga and Meditation
Laurel Clohessy, BA, RYT-300, International Kundalini Yoga Teachers Association, Program Coordinator at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Flagstaff

In this dynamic workshop, we will use the ancient wisdom of Kundalini Yoga to unlock the ability to live in a state of heart-centered compassion; allowing for opening of feelings, and capacity to love in all ways. Kundalini yoga and meditation is a sacred technology that addresses all systems of the body, mind, and spirit in a way that is do-able for anyone! …Willingness to breathe, and lean in the right direction is all that you need to receive benefits of this practice. We will do a kriya, or yogic set, as well as a gong relaxation, and meditation. Be prepared to move, however no mats are needed. Comfortable clothing is recommended. Warning: you may leave more happy and uplifted than you came.
Mindful attention to catalyze compassionate attitudes and actions across social and cultural lines. These studies speak to the potential for social benefits of blurring/crossing lines. We then show how even brief mindfulness training can increase empathic responses or to find solutions that go beyond winning wars and and punishing perpetrators. This talk demonstrates how boundaries limit our vision and our compassion and shows the personal and social benefits of blurring/crossing lines.

Luís Fernández, Ph.D.  
Program in Sustainable Communities, NAU

Us vs. Them: The Politics of Solidarity and Liberation

This presentation is grounded on the work of the late Dr. Joel Olson, who wrote extensively on the usefulness of “us vs. them” in building solidarity and liberation movements. It is also a summary of larger book project titled The Politics of Fanaticism. The presentation will discuss the friend vs. enemy dynamics not at the psychological or individual level, but as a group level political strategy for freedom with a long and complicated history. In some specific circumstances, a politics based on identifying a foe can lead to liberation. In fact, in some cases this may be the only option. However, this presentation is not an argument against compassion, per se, but rather a critique of what is missed when the social framework is reduced to a compassionate lens.

Rhonda V. MaGee, J.D., MA (Sociology)  
A Whole New Lawyer? Mindfulness and Compassion in Legal Education and Innovative Law Practices

In the last decade, mindfulness has increasingly been introduced within law schools, law firms, and other professional education settings. In this interactive presentation, Professor Magee will describe the work of leading lights in this movement, including her own cutting-edge scholarship and teaching on mindfulness and its relationships to law; to teaching for inclusivity and identity safety; and, to social justice. She will highlight research findings in support of these developing trends, and share some of the ways that mindful lawyers have begun to reshape the practice of law to increase collaboration, community-well being and compassion.

Panel Discussion: Compassion in the Face of Adversity  
Facilitator: Jean Malecki, MD

Under adverse conditions or with people who are coping with adversity, is it possible to sustain the active and passive parts of compassion which are so crucial to healing both the body and the mind? Dr. Pett Philippa, MD, SPR Intensive Care Unit, Guy’s and St Thomas’ Hospital London works in the medical profession, where health care professionals are faced with the challenge of maintaining a compassionate focus. Dr. Philippa will talk about the role of compassion in the context of medical distress (ICU patients) and death and dying. Louise Clark, MFA, Doctoral Candidate, Hugh Downs School of Human Communication, ASU will present her findings from a descriptive study completed during a summer camp bereavement experience for children who have lost a sibling or parent. Lori Polini-Staudinger, Ph.D. Chair, Department of Politics and International Affairs will talk about how compassion arises from and is a critical component of understanding and coping with human suffering, including some insights into the compassionate philosophy of PIA graduate Kayla Mueller that characterized her political work.