Cultivating Compassion Tool Kit – emotional touchstones

Emotional Touchstones 1

A touchstone could mean a personal symbol or emblem that keeps you focused on what is important to you. It could be for example:

- an object
- a piece of music
- a poem
- A picture

Suggestion for a trigger for retrieving emotional touchstones - Some of us had “precious drawers” as children which contained our own touchstones to remind us of special times in our lives.

Emotional Touchstone Resources 2

Touchstones are very individual but here are a few examples of what others have seen as a touchstone: “Still I Rise” by Maya Angelou:

www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/still-i-rise-by-maya-angelou

Saint Sans Symphony No. 3 “The Organ Symphony Finale:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hopaQjQFYw

Bach’s double violin concerto 2nd movement

http://futurepull.wordpress.com/2012/07/30/the-grounding-effect-of-a-personal-touchstone

Emotional Touchstone examples 3

Touchstones may also involve behaviors we engage in to maintain or restore our mental wellbeing and sense of self. These behaviors could involve for example:

- relationships with people
- going to special places
- engaging in particular activities

Emotional Touchstone 4

A third meaning of touchstones relates to experiences you have had where you have surprised yourself with what you have overcome, the impact you have had on others and the capacity you have shown for physical and mental toughness. Remembering these experiences when things seem very challenging is important to prevent you feeling defeated:

“X wasn't the end of me, so there's no reason Y will be either “

Exercise - Take a few minutes to consider your own touchstones in any of these three meanings and how you could incorporate these into your life to enable you to go on providing compassionate care to others