

# Compassion in Action

## Building a Coherent Society



Side Event co-organized by Brahma Kumaris, Clarence B. Jones Institute for Social Advocacy, Unspoken Smiles Foundation, and International Day of Yoga Committee at the UN.

Tuesday February 19, 2019

**Compassion in Action: Building a Coherent Society**, Click here for [Speakers](#)

A side event with a different and refreshing approach took place where four storytellers got together for a workshop to address inequalities and challenges to social inclusion using compassion as a tool, calling everyone to be **Compassion In Action** (CIA) agents. So, what is compassion? As moderator, BK Sabita Geer, NGO representative of the Brahma Kumaris, stated, “it is feeling that comes from deep inside of us. Compassion generates love, kindness, support without boundaries; it is something to be felt and experienced individually.”



What made this event stood out was that after each storyteller, there was a minute of silence during which two questions were suggested for reflection. There was also an opportunity to share with each other using compassionate listening. A beautifully designed workbook was given to each participant to use.



<b>Compassion in Action</b> Building a Coherent Society	
Tuesday, February 19, 11:30am – 12:45pm, Conference Room A, UNHQ	
Workshop	
11:30 AM	Opening Remarks by Moderator – Sabita Geer, NGO representative for the Brahma Kumaris to the UN
11:35 AM	Panel Discussion Session-I <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Kinnari Murthy, MBBS, MPH – NGO representative for the Brahma Kumaris to the UN</li> <li>2. Valerie Still, Ph.D. (ABD) – Co-Founder and President of the Clarence B. Jones Institute for Social Advocacy</li> </ol>
11:50 AM	Interactive Activity
12:05 PM	Panel Discussion Session-II <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jean Paul Laurent – Founder, Chairman and CEO of the Unspoken Smiles Foundation</li> <li>2. Denise Scott, Esq. – Chair of the International Day of Yoga Committee at the UN</li> </ol>
12:21 PM	Open Interaction
12:35 PM	Concluding remarks from the Panelists
12:40 PM	Guided Meditation – Sabita Geer, NGO representative for the Brahma Kumaris to the UN

The **Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University** storyteller, BK Kinnari Murthy, shared a true story of a man that changed his own life and the lives of many. One light was ignited and then many more followed. Inner conscience is to be nurtured but as we grow, we overwrite our inner voice. Meditation is the tool to sit back and listen to ourselves, and connect.

*In the words of the storyteller:*

“In the midst of so many sessions discussing various ways to find solution to social inequalities, I was in Conference Room A with a diverse group of people who had come together having realized and understood that compassion in action is the means for building a coherent society.



I was inspired and also touched listening to true stories from panelist various acts of compassion rather acts of greatness. It was humbling experience to be there and be able to



share the life transforming story of Pancham Singh who was a dacoit but changed to be a mentor for many. He was awakened when he realized that peace is everything, love is the law and nourished his conscience by stepping in and listening to his core values. We are all agents of compassion and each one of us can make a difference in the world. It doesn't take any money. All it needs is one thought, an awareness to hold, an attitude to share and an action of care."

*Reflection questions:*

1. Identify thoughts you have had over the past 24 hours that aligned with your conscience.
2. Having identified them, how do you see the spiritual trajectory in application?

The **Clarence B. Jones Institute for Social Advocacy** storyteller, Valerie Still, President of the Institute, talked about implicit biases and how we have to get passed them. With all the smart phones on hands and bombarded with so much negativity, the youth has to be reminded of their powerful potential and to learn compassion for themselves, being kind to self and others and feel the ripple effect. It needs to make a pledge to themselves, be their best contact and turn on their power to be CIA agents.

"I dream, I am, I lead, I rise" is a powerful quote from the Student Leadership Summit for youth.

*In the words of the storyteller:*

"As president of the Clarence B. Jones for Social Advocacy (CBJ), I would like to thank the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University for inviting me to be a panel storyteller for the side event, "Compassion in Action: Building a Coherent Society on February 19, 2019 during the UN 57th Session of the Commission for Social Development. The CBJ Institute utilizes some of the tools and practices taught by the Brahma Kumaris with our Youth Leadership Summits, which aim to empower our youth by; 1) making them aware that they are stars, pure energy with unlimited potential 2) making them aware of the power of their thoughts and 3) encouraging them to change the world by connecting to other with compassion... become CIA agents, Compassion in Action agents.



The feedback from the attendees was powerful and useful. One attendee noted that compassion is actually a skill that needs to be taught, learned and practiced. One of the aspects I think could have increased the impact of the session would have been more time spent in actual "practicing" the skill of compassion, giving attendees an experience, and not just theory and stories. People want to do good and want a loving and caring environment but just don't know how they can make a change with so much negativity in the world. I believe, those in attendance yesterday did get an experience and felt Divine wonder and power."

*Reflection questions:*

1. When I encounter someone, am I aware of my implicit and unconscious bias?
2. What are some tools I can use to open my heart to compassion and eliminate my implicit bias?

**The Unspoken Smiles Foundation** storyteller, Dr. Jean Paul Laurent, Founder and CEO of the Foundation, knows firsthand what it means to not have a respectful life. He talked about his experience growing up in Haiti as a turbulent kid who got in trouble with school and how moving to the US and having a second chance made him want to be a role model for kids in his country of origin. Getting on board people and companies he raised money to go back and help with children's dental health, as they believe that behind every smile there is an untold story, but also with focusing on behavior change. Functioning in 7 countries helping over 7,000 children they believe that giving food is not compassion; sitting on the floor and eating with the children is.

*Reflection questions:*

1. In the past hour, which virtues and qualities have I seen and acknowledged in myself and others?
2. How do I see these diverse virtues and qualities being used to build a coherent society?



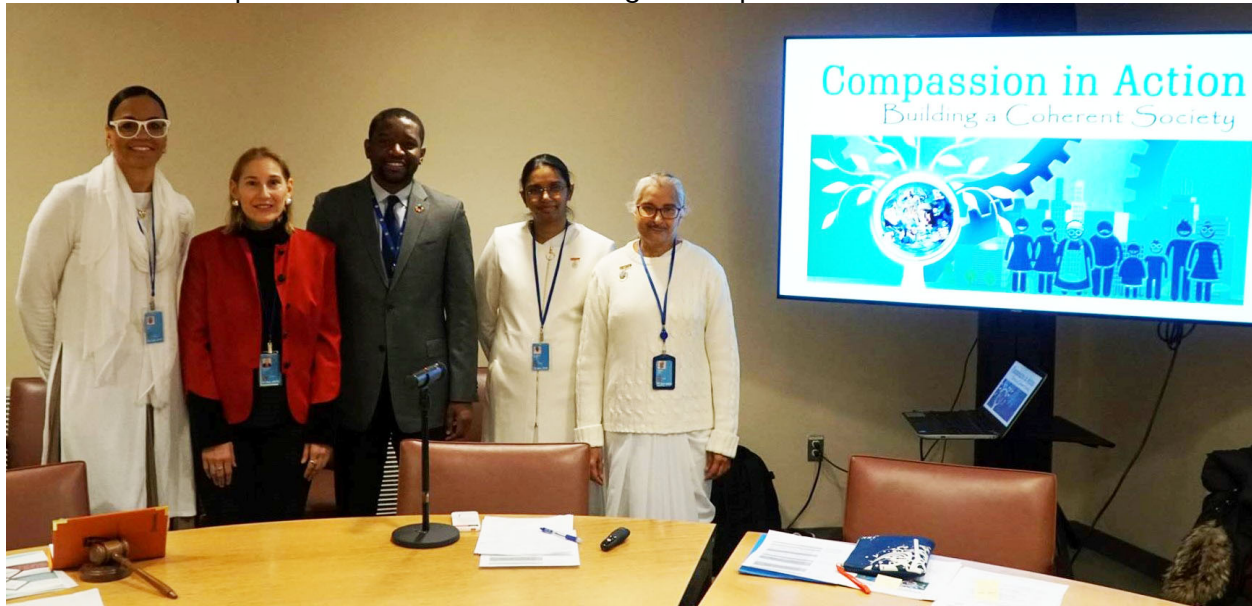
**The International Day of Yoga Committee at the United Nations** storyteller, Denise Scotto, Chair of the committee, believes that we should have a voice in the way society runs for the good of everyone so that we alleviate poverty and include all, as each and everyone of us is born with inherent human value and dignity. We should have respect for all life, for nature. What it means to have social inclusion is to live a life of worth, belonging, being comfortable. To create a better world to live in harmony, in peace. The root of everything is our humanness and we need to see how we relate to others and how to have respect for the other.

*Reflection questions:*

1. How do I convey love and acceptance through my words and actions?



2. How can I empower others to achieve their greatest potential?



We were all asked to 'step into compassion' by understanding the connection between awareness, attitude, vision, action and the world.



*In the words of a few participants:*

"I enjoyed the event. I felt the theme of compassion, or any other virtue per say, needs time to really get to the point to experience it. However, the time given for reflection and sharing in pairs allowed some of that to take place.

It was inspiring to hear about how others are practicing compassion and how their organizations are implementing that.

It seemed as though some of the attendees had a subtle wish to learn how to experience that in themselves. Most people who go to the UN have a strong purpose to help the world and the panel really inspired them. It felt as though they left with the determination to go even deeper into the subject.

It was a good opportunity for people to have that space to hear, experience, and feel empowered enough to go out and share that. It was a great event and hopefully NGOs are given more space for workshops and experimentation forums like this one."



"For me this event, with the help of the reflection questions and apart from all the interesting things that I heard from the wonderful speakers, was an opportunity to be reminded of some other simple steps to practice compassion that we tend to overlook when overwhelmed with the routine or negativity. To stop and have a conversation with myself, ask the self that always likes to debate why this and why that to be quiet. To remember that I don't have all facts, before I judge others for their actions, and that there aren't always bad intentions behind people's actions. Thus, think before speaking. Show other people by example how to do it. It sure is a lot of work but who doesn't like to put work into such noble causes knowing that it's helping to change society for the better?!"

**BK delegation:**

Kinnari Murthy, Nidhi Shukla, Karen Perusse, Valerie Still, Nik Lal, Bhругu Yagnik, Sabita Geer.  
Helpers included: Vivian Pappas, Yuritzi Govea, Namrata Shah.



### Words of Compassion from the Famous:

- Compassion is an action word with no boundaries \_ Prince
- Listen with ears of tolerance, see with eyes of compassion, and speak the language of love \_ Rumi.
- When we practice loving kindness and compassion, we are the first one to profit \_ Rumi.
- The inspiration to serve emerges when a soul has 3 qualities – mercy, compassion, and true love \_ Dadi Janki.