



How to Find More Compassion Through Imagination

In today's video, I want to continue our discussion on Imagination. I want to start with a very short sentence from the book *Untamed* by Glennon Doyle. I just finished the book and I highly recommend it. And in many ways, it could be my own story. So this is the sentence I want to read to you.

"I realized that imagination is not just the catalyst of art. It's also the catalyst of compassion. Imagination is the shortest distance between two people, two cultures, two ideologies to experiences."

I love that! The brain does not know the difference between imagination and reality, as neuroscience shows us. We don't experience what's out there, we experience our perception of what's out there. And in today's world, in today's culture, there is a tremendous amount of divisiveness. We can become very dogmatic. Myself included. I can become extraordinarily dogmatic.

I do want to wake up to that every single time because, as you know, many years ago, I was involved in a very dogmatic religion. I don't ever want to repeat that again but I feel the tendency within myself. Part of the reason people become dogmatic is because in some ways, it's a brain function. Our brains' number one priority is to keep us safe. And the second priority is to conserve energy. So it's easier on the brain if we just know what's going on. And we have this tendency to make everything black and white because it's just easier on us. But life is not black and white. Life is a beautiful, rich, nuanced gray. So whenever I find myself getting caught up in my dogma, which of course I still do, I have to ask myself to take a look at that and to wake up to that.

Listen, I don't know what's best for you. I don't know what your path is and why you're on the journey you're on and why you believe what you do. You don't know what's best for me. Only I know that, and I can trust that. And you can trust that for yourself, what's best for you.

So back to imagination. The brain doesn't know the difference between imagination and reality. When we begin to imagine what it's like for someone else to live the life that they are living, when we put ourselves in their shoes, then it wakes up a part of us that can be more compassionate, more understanding, more supportive. It wakes up an openness, a tenderness, that we can have when we attempt to put ourselves in other people's shoes.



I think of the immigration situation. These people who are coming, most of these people, not all, they are coming to this country in an attempt to escape something. And I don't know about you, but I would do almost anything to protect my family. When I can put myself into that imagination of the danger, I have so much more compassion. I want to reach out and help and support. That's the point of imagination is to help us see from different perspectives. When we imagine, it wakes our brains up to begin looking for what we are imagining. That's why manifestation practices, which sounds so woowoo, can be actually be helpful because when we begin to envision what we want for our lives, for our future, the good, the true, the beautiful, then it wakes our brains up to begin looking for those opportunities. That's how it works when I imagine what it might be like for you. It wakes up my brain to be able to have more compassion, more understanding for you. And it helps me become less rigid, less black and white.

Now listen, I know the challenge of this. It is very, very hard! Especially in this climate of divisiveness. It's why I think it might be a good idea... again, you have to decide for yourself... but it may be a good idea to spend less time looking at the news and more time imagining the kind of life that you want for yourself, your community, and for the world. Imagining the good, the true, beautiful because when we keep our noses in the news, all we're going to see is black and white, right and wrong, good and bad. We're not going to see nuance. We're not going to see possibility. We're not going to see hope, and it's going to polarize us more and more and more.

So today, I encourage you to use your imagination to begin to look toward the good, the true, and the beautiful, even in people who hold terribly different ideas about how life should be and should work. That's what I have for you today. I appreciate you tuning in.