

**Testimonial for Mindful Compassion: A Personal Practice  
Workshop (28-30 October 2016)**  
Dr James Kirby, University of Queensland



The recent Mindful Compassion event facilitated by Professor Paul Gilbert and Dr Nicola Petrocchi, and hosted by Compassionate Wellbeing, was a deeply moving experience for me. The 3-day workshop provides an opportunity for individuals to engage in guided discovery to learn more about themselves – what fears, blocks, and resistances they have to compassion and how to work with their own self-criticisms. There were about 30-40 of us that came together in Derby, England to participate in this personal practice workshop. Each day had something unique to offer, Day 1 we spent understanding the basic model of Compassion-Focused Therapy, of which Paul is the founder. That meant we learnt about the evolutionary model and how life is hard and how ‘tricky’ our brains are, which we did not design. We also completed perhaps one of the most emotionally moving meditative practices I have engaged with, which focused on the ‘flow of life’ and was paired with music. Day 2 started with some mindfulness practices that Nico skillfully guided us through. Nico really focused on the idea of being gentle and soft with our mindfulness practice, and his experience and knowledge of mindfulness deepened my own understanding. On Day 2 we also focused on qualities of our compassionate image, visual elements, sound, voice tone, how our compassionate image would relate to us. We also completed a meditation called, “Compassion as Community” which brought us closer to the concept that we are so interconnected – again a special exercise. On our final day we examined the different versions of ourselves, our ‘angry self’, ‘anxious self’ and ‘sad self’. We also completed an exercise in pairs which meant we engaged in using our “compassionate self” – that exercise brought almost all of us in the room to tears. That exercise itself was worth the travel from Australia. If you have the chance to complete the 3-day Mindful Compassion workshop I highly recommend it. It provides the opportunity to learn more about yourself, as well as the processes therapists use with their clients. This was the second time I completed this workshop, with the previous one in New York with Paul and Dennis Tirch. And I would not hesitate doing it a third time, as you just learn so much about yourself. Paul and Nico did such a fantastic job at providing us with the safeness to help explore and learn. Was the most wonderful experience.



*Nico & Paul with Jean Gilbert, James Kirby, Cassie Tellegen & Fletcher Kirby*