



National Healthcare  
Communication  
Programme

# Our Core Values



*Making conversations easier*

“

*Transformation and participation takes work, requires courage and determination. It is about how we engage and interact with each other, how we speak to each other in a way that is that is open, yet respectful of difference. These values are ones we may be able to recall from traditions, but if not, they must be brought into being, renewed. There are decencies that are lodged in the heart of our Irishness, when it is expressed at its best, are surely among our greatest resources. Those decencies are the ones that urge us to spring to respond to each other's vulnerabilities, to see the merit of enhancing each other's capacities, of encountering and sharing care and love, of working together for common benefit in a public world that we share. It is important that we seek to reach always for the best of ourselves, and the best of what we might become, and that we allow that to guide our collective ambition for our country.*

Inaugural Speech by President Michael D. Higgins  
St. Patrick's Hall, Dublin Castle, 11 November, 2018

**Note:**

Compassionate communication in healthcare is like the leaves and branches of a tree, visible for all to see and hear. Supporting our conversations are enabling communication skills. At the core of these skills are values like the roots of a tree hidden underground. These values can be nurtured to bridge the gap between knowledge, technical skills, and authentic efforts to achieve partnership with the people who use our services.

Download the [Calgary-Cambridge Guide here](#)



I think I will need some **help** on this journey.

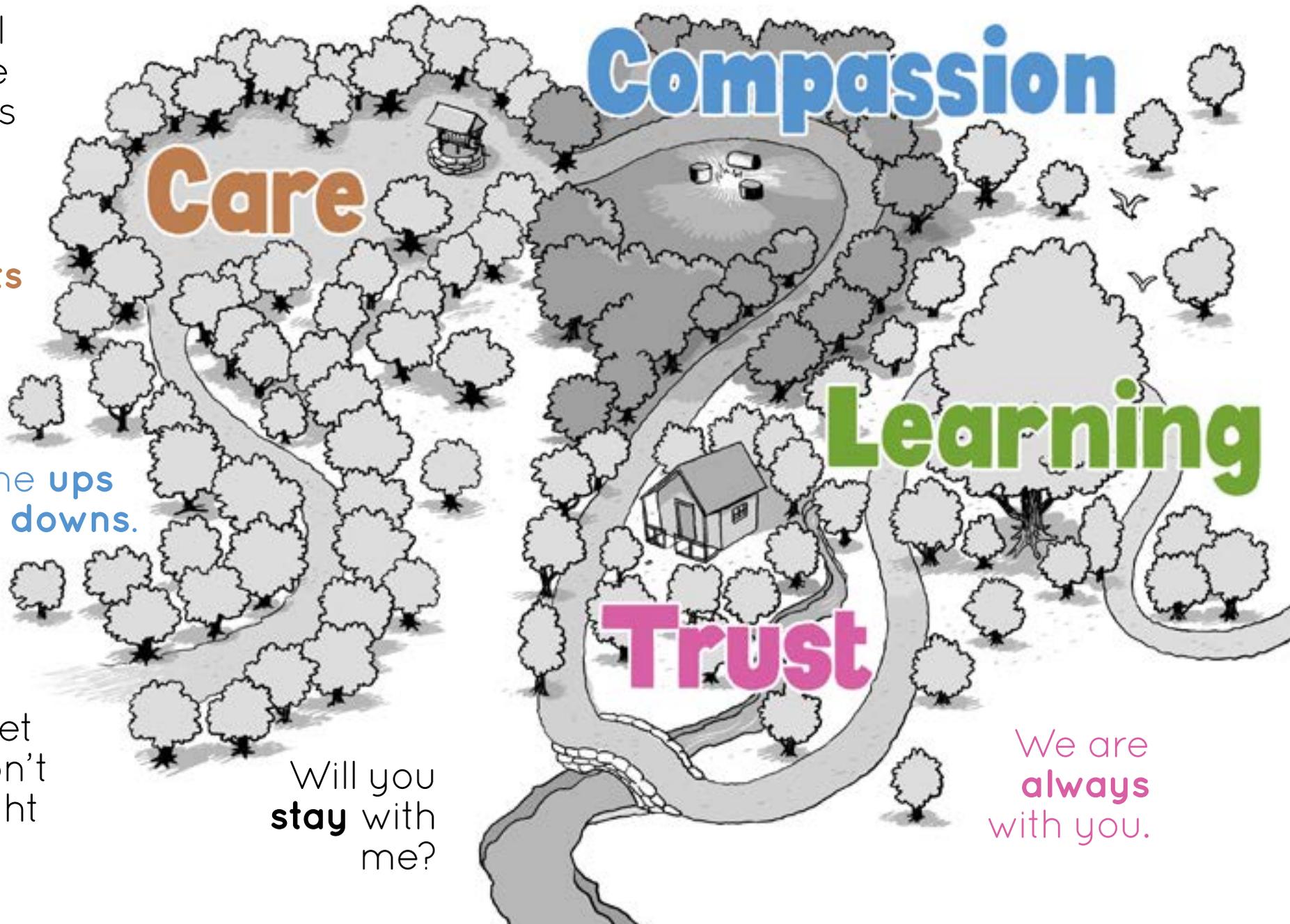
There are some **twists** and **turns**.



Some **ups** and **downs**.

What if I get **lost**? If I don't find the right **path**?

Will you **stay** with me?



We are **always** with you.

# Care





Hello.

What is  
**caring?**



Caring  
is being  
**present.**

Being consciously,  
intentionally, **with me** in  
this moment and bringing  
nothing from the past.



Creating a **space**  
for me to fully  
express myself.

So the opposite  
of talking then...  
**listening?**

The opposite  
of talking isn't  
**just** listening...

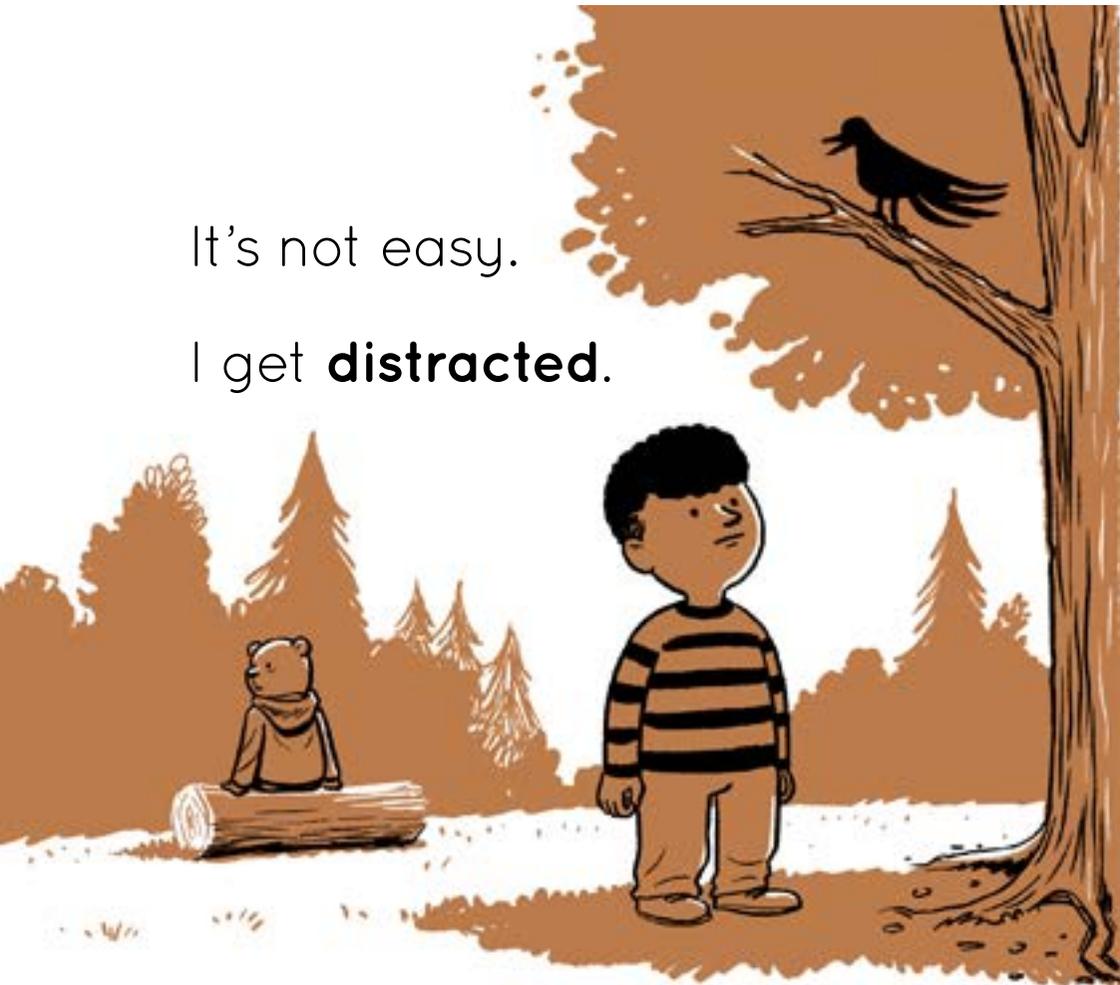
It isn't?

No.  
It's listening  
**and** waiting...

...waiting  
until the  
right word  
or action arises.



It's not easy.  
I get **distracted**.



Sometimes I'm listening  
to **fix** or to **argue** or to  
tell my **own story**.

Caring happens when  
you **leave aside** your  
preconcieved ideas and  
judgements.

**Judgement**  
separates us?

You don't know me,  
my life, my suffering,  
how I feel.

**I am unique.**

I need you to  
recognise that  
and choose to be  
**present** to me.



Caring is alertness  
to the **unsaid**.

I may not be able to say  
the words but my **nonverbal  
cues** will say something  
about how I am **feeling**.



How can  
I become  
more caring?



You will need  
a **strong back**  
and a **soft front**.



## A strong back?



**Listen** to the  
voice within you.

Get in touch with feelings  
of **care** and **kindness** for  
yourself.



Why is that  
important?

The more you care for and  
listen to **yourself**, the better  
you will be able to care for  
**others** and hear what is  
happening outside.



So the strong back  
will help me have  
a **soft front**....

...and an **open heart**.

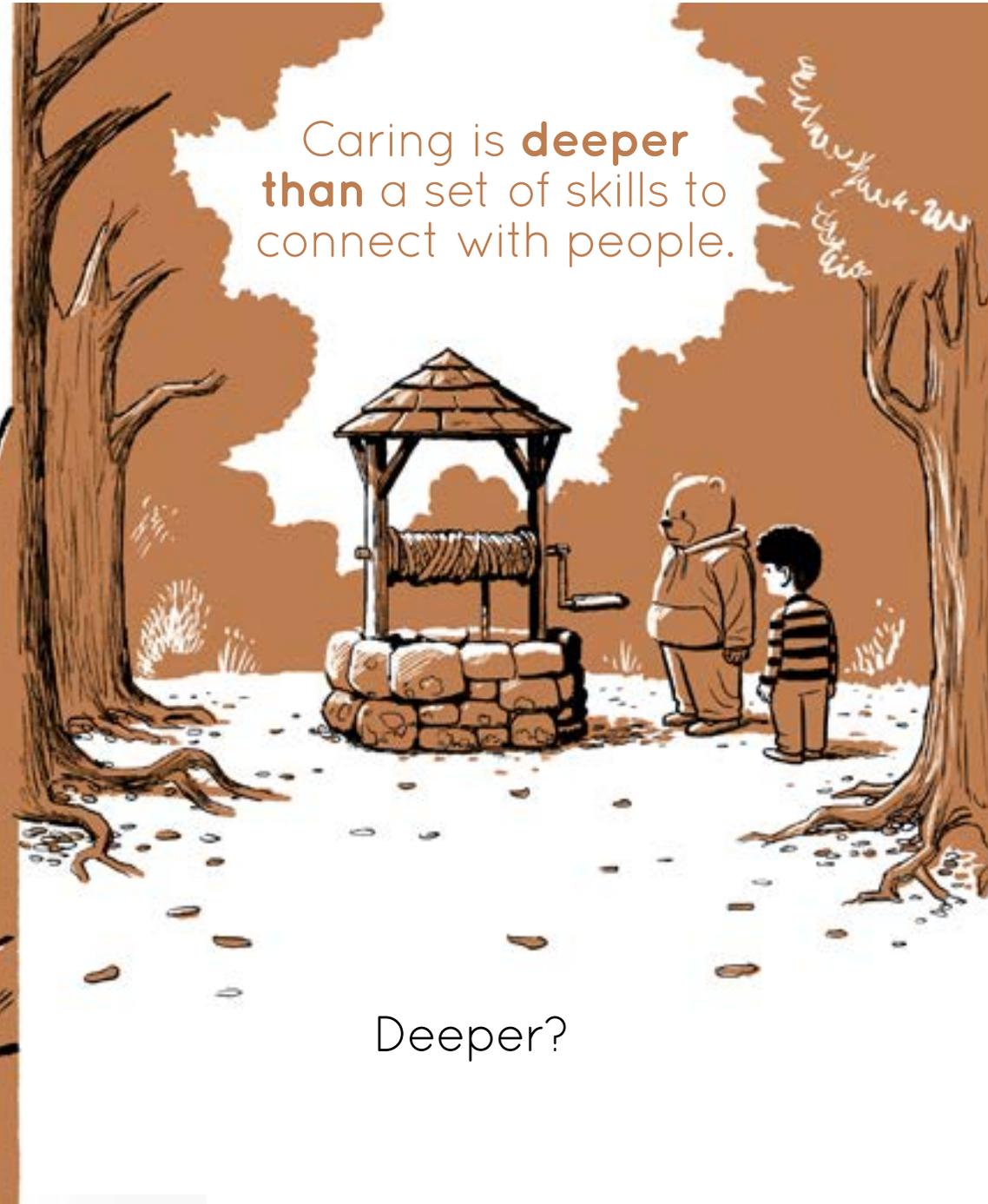
Is caring speaking  
from an **open heart**?

You may not need  
to speak at all.

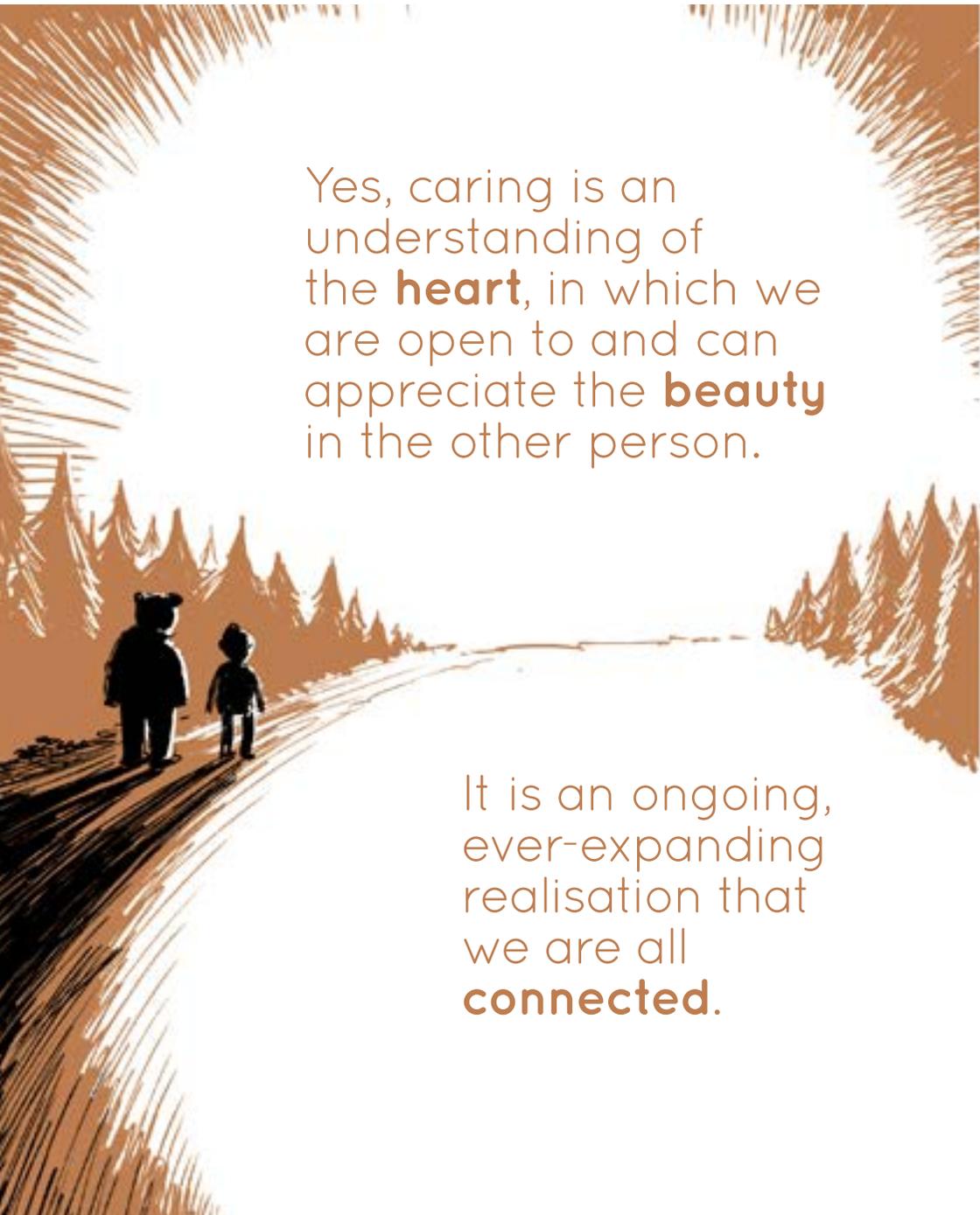
You can  
offer care  
with your  
**eyes** and  
your **silence**.



Caring is **deeper**  
**than** a set of skills to  
connect with people.



Deeper?



Yes, caring is an understanding of the **heart**, in which we are open to and can appreciate the **beauty** in the other person.

It is an ongoing, ever-expanding realisation that we are all **connected**.

# Compassion





Hello.

What do you think  
**compassion** is?



A relationship  
between equals.

It's sitting in  
the darkness  
with me.



Recognising  
my pain without  
trying to **fix** it.



I like  
fixing  
things.



We Know.

If I'm not fixing, then  
what am I doing?



Remember, you are  
a human-**being** not  
a human-**doing**.

**Doing** is so much  
easier for me.



I know.  
For now, I need  
you to '**be**' with me.



What can I do  
while I am being?

Listen to me.  
Look at me.  
Tap into your own  
emotions and  
imagine what it is  
like to walk in my  
shoes.

When I am **still** I can see  
and hear your emotions  
more clearly.

Is there a difference  
between compassion  
and empathy?

Compassion is a **value**.



Empathy is the **skillset**  
that brings it to life.



What are  
the **skills**?



**Be open** to what you  
are seeing and hearing  
without judging me.

Recognise my **emotions**.

Ask me **questions**  
to understand.

**Reflect back** to me  
what you see and hear.

And, **ask** how  
you can help.

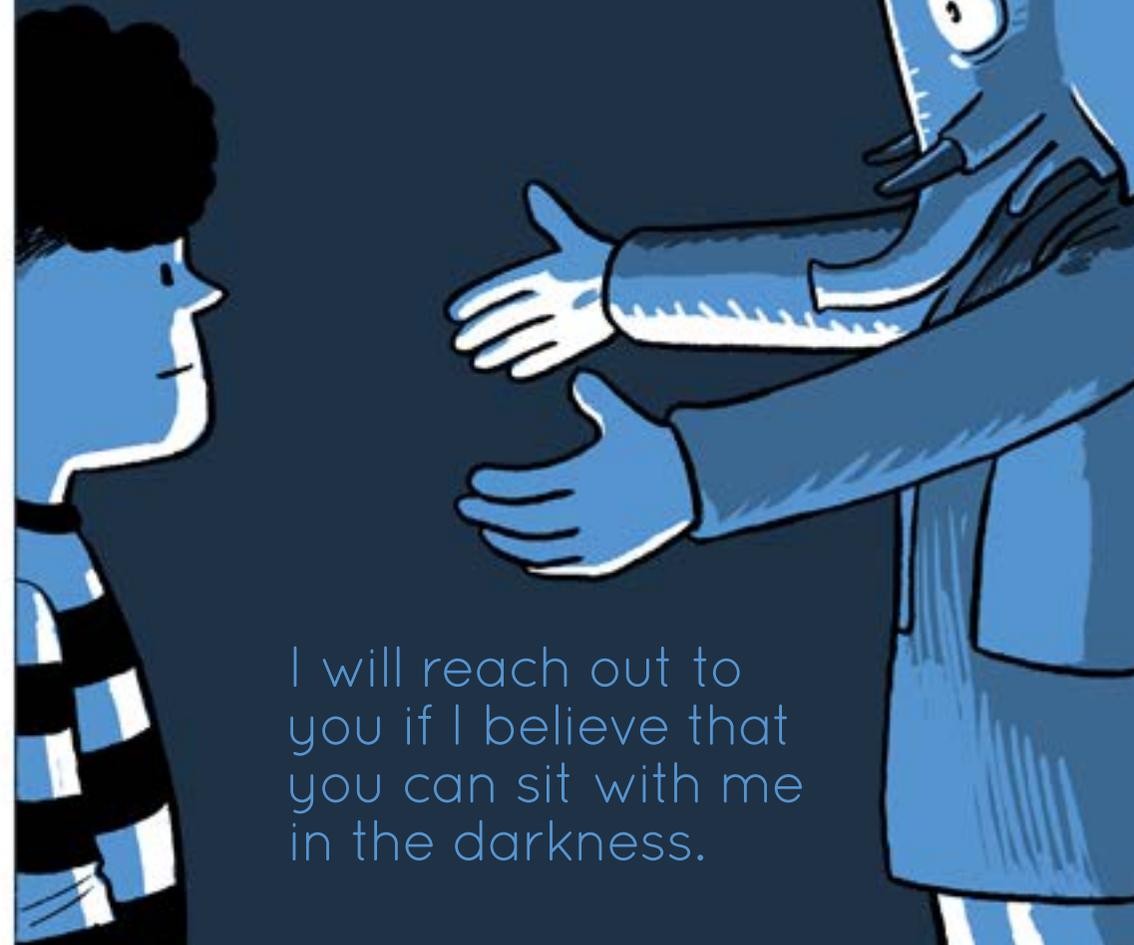
Sometimes,  
I worry that  
I will get it  
**wrong**.



Compassion doesn't  
have to be **perfect**.



The essence of  
compassion is  
that it is **non-  
judgemental**.



I will reach out to  
you if I believe that  
you can sit with me  
in the darkness.

I think I might need to take  
time to know and understand  
**myself**, my **emotions** and  
my **behaviours**.



When you  
can regulate  
your own  
emotions, it  
will be easier  
to sit with  
mine.

My suffering is a  
**reflection** of yours.



Everything is **related**  
to everything else.

We **resonate** when  
we are connected.

# Trust



Hello.



What is **trust**?

Trust is about  
**warmth.**



Warmth?

Mmm-hmm.  
Warmth and  
**competence.**

How can I build  
trust between us?

**Balance** your warmth  
and competence.



Lean into  
warmth first.

I need to  
know that you  
**care** for me...



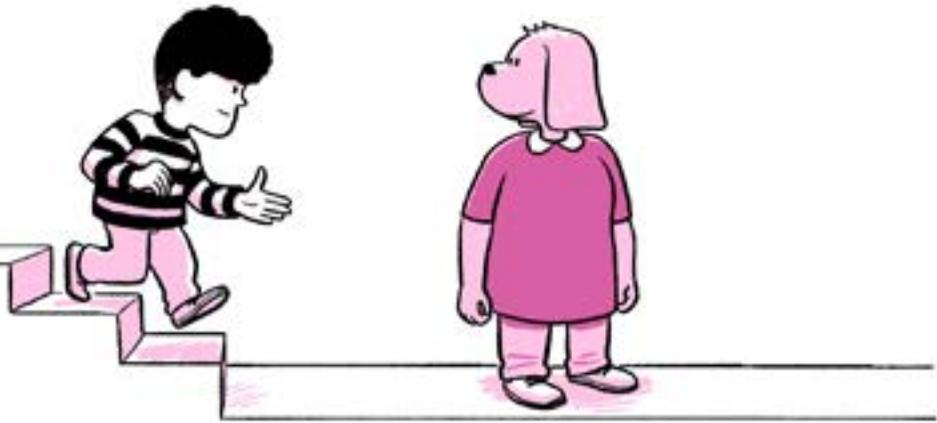
... then I will  
feel **safe**  
with you...



...and believe  
that I can **rely**  
on you.



What does  
warmth look  
like to you?



Walk beside  
me on this  
journey.

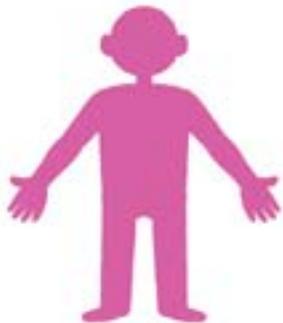
Get to know who I am.

Get on to **my level**.

It helps me level with you.

Keep your **body posture** open. I will open up more to you.

Each **warmth cue** you use builds a little more trust.



What is a warmth cue?



Making **eye contact** with me builds trust.



**Smiles** and a **kind facial expression** show your warmth and humour.



Use **head tilts** to show your curiosity...



**...nods** when I am speaking for encouragement and agreement...



**...eyebrow raises** for engagement...



... and **touch** to show your support.

Mirror me nonverbally  
with your body language,  
facial expression and the  
kinds of words I use.

What will that do?

This will help  
us to get on  
the same  
wavelength.

**Then** a sense of  
connection and  
trust will  
emerge.



What about  
my **voice**?

Use a calm, gentle,  
**warm tone** of voice.  
This conveys a sense  
of care and support.

Your warmth will  
trigger mine and  
I am more likely  
to see you as  
trustworthy.



What else?

Trust begins  
with feeling  
**heard** and  
**respected.**

Start a  
**conversation**  
with me.

Open a **safe space** for  
me to tell my story.

You need to be just  
as comfortable  
**asking questions**  
as giving answers...

Why is that important?

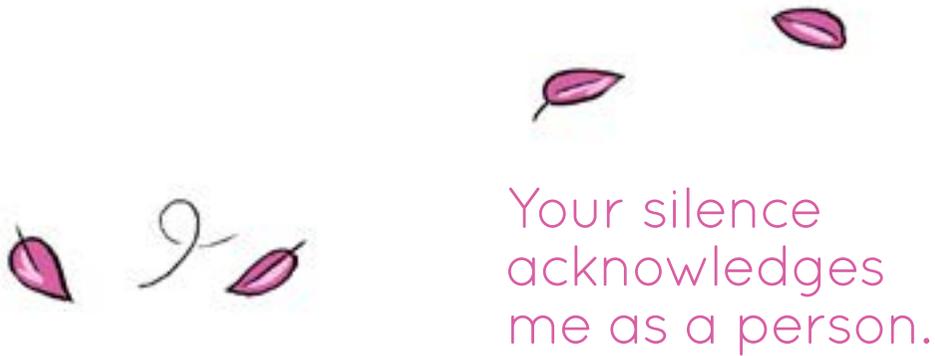
You cannot know what matters  
to me until you **ask** me!



After you  
ask me,  
be **silent.**

Give me **time**  
to answer.

I think silence makes me  
feel **uncomfortable**...



Your silence  
acknowledges  
me as a person.



Listen **between** and **beyond**  
the words for my emotions  
and concerns.

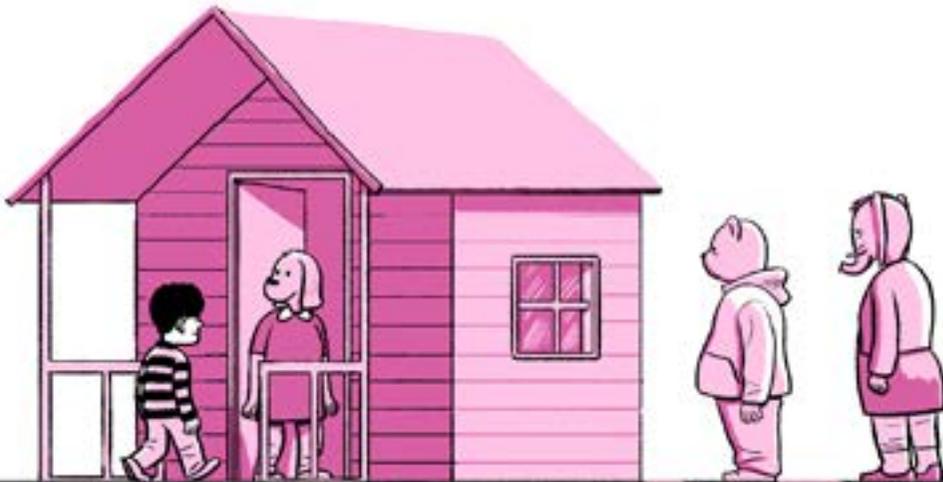


Repeat back  
to me what  
you think you  
have heard.

I need to feel **known**  
and **understood**.



What about  
when I am  
**talking** to you?



Use **plain language**,  
**small chunks** of  
information and  
**pause often** to check  
my understanding.

So trust takes time  
and patience?

Yes! They are the  
**elbow grease** of  
our relationship.



# Learning





Hello.



I have gathered a  
lot of knowledge  
over the years.

You have **a lot**  
of information  
in your head.



Sometimes all the information in my head gets in the way of seeing the 'person' in front of me.

Mmm-hmm.

What can I do?

Keep your mind **open**.  
Bring your **care** and  
**compassion** to the  
conversation.



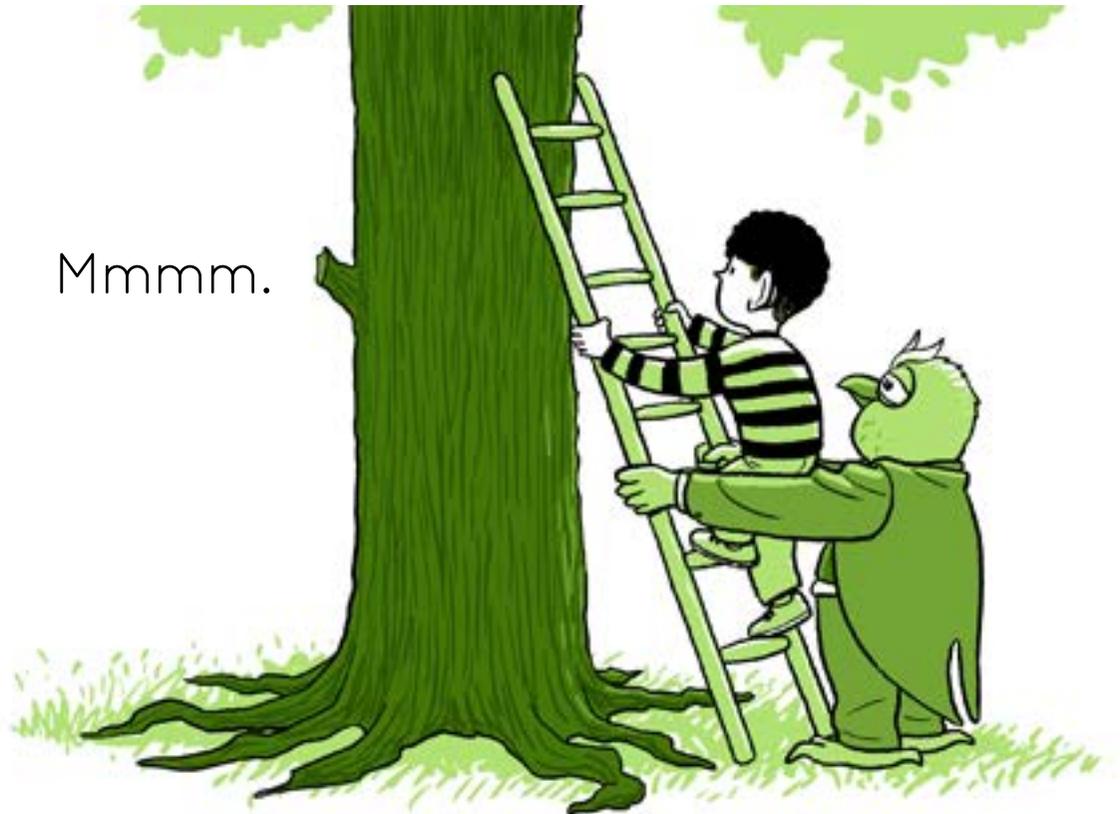
Ok. This will build trust and help you to open up to me?



Humble?

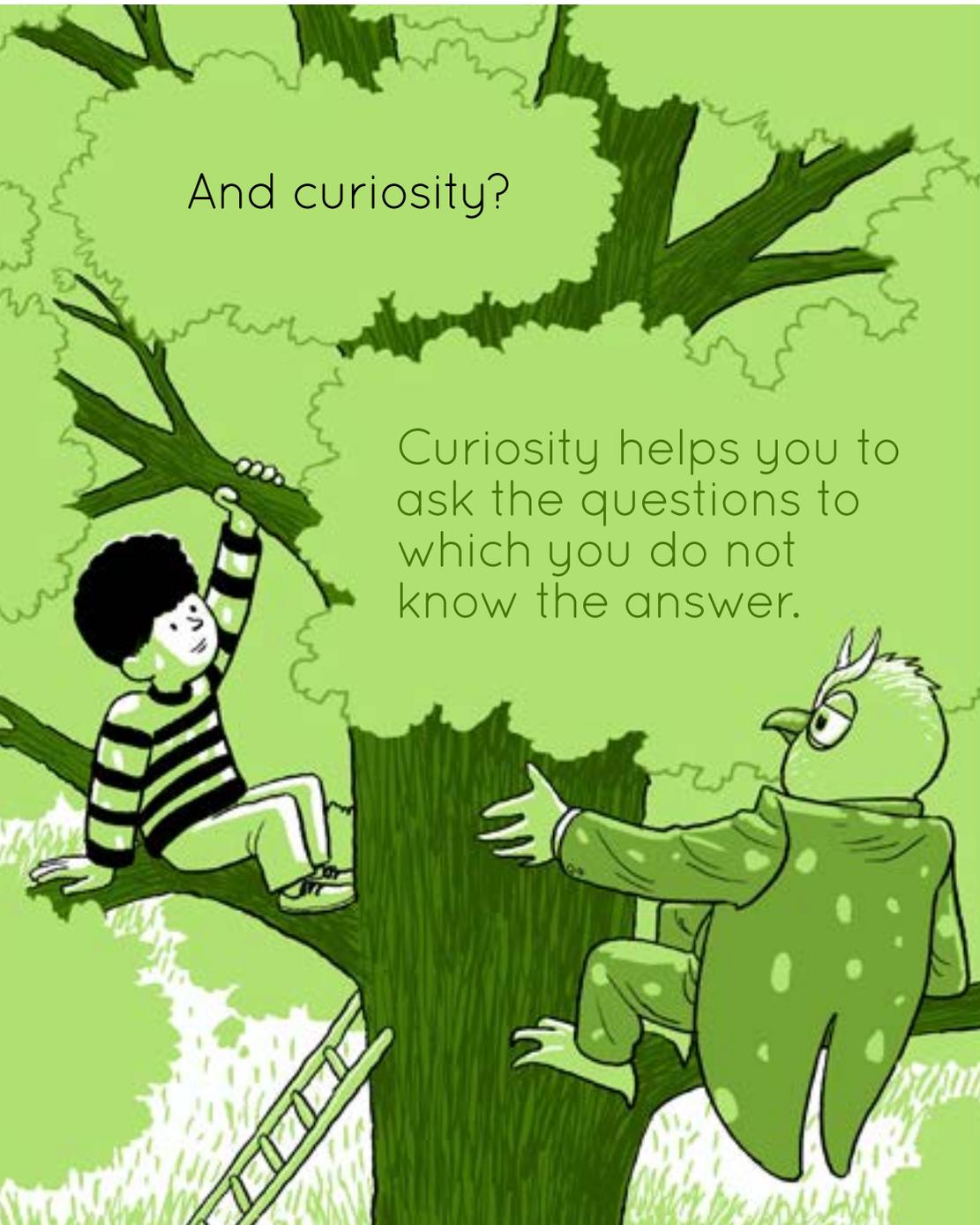
That's right!  
Be **humble** and **curious**.

Humility allows you to  
acknowledge that my  
expertise might be as  
valuable as yours.



Mmmm.

With humility, you can  
acknowledge uncertainty,  
open your mind to new  
possibilities, and allow  
my **lived experience** and  
preferences to emerge.



And curiosity?

Curiosity helps you to  
ask the questions to  
which you do not  
know the answer.



What about my expertise?

Your expertise can  
fuel a natural impulse  
to jump into action.

I like jumping!



We know!

I need you to care by  
**asking** and **listening...**

learning about what  
is important to me.

Then we can  
combine our  
learning to  
make better  
decisions  
together.



When you listen to me  
and we **work together**,  
you support my  
self-confidence and  
commitment to what  
I need to do next.



Something deep inside  
each of us wants **care**  
and **compassion**.



When we experience it,  
**trust** awakens, and our  
learning becomes  
**active** and **creative**.



Can I ask you something?

Of course.

Why do these four words feel **important**?

Care



Compassion



Trust



Learning



They are your **values**.

Values?

A way of being that is **important to you**.

It dwells **deep** inside you.

How can I live these words or... what did you call them... **values**?

When we're in touch with our values, we realise we are all **connected**.

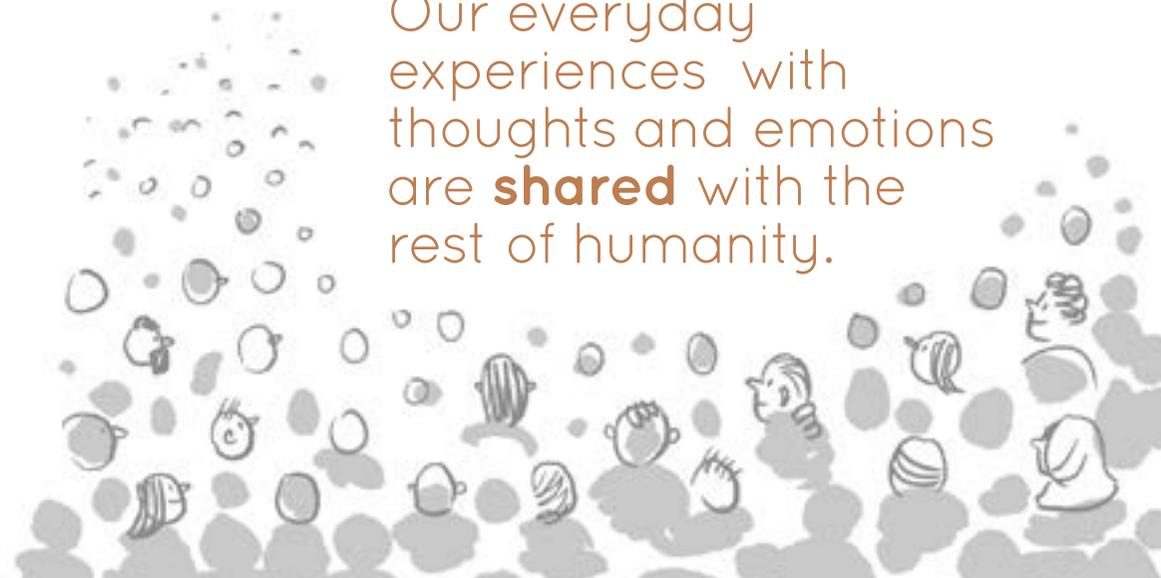


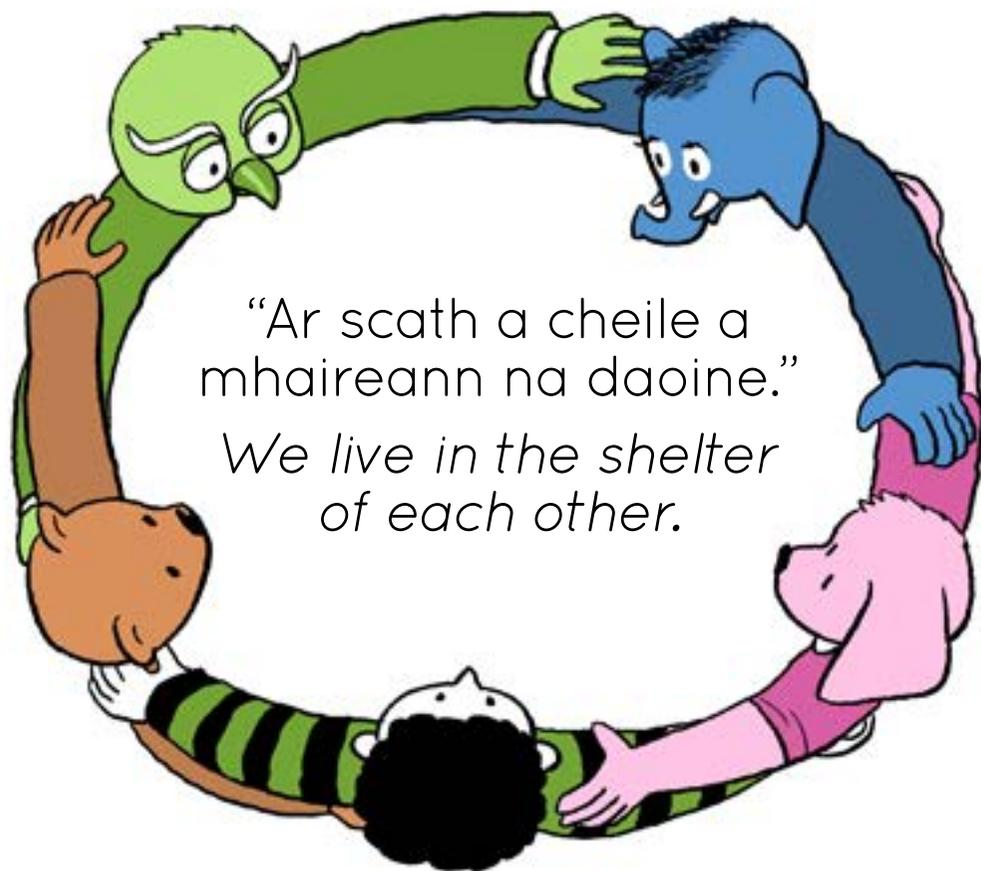
You **practice** them.

Live **into** them.

Then what you **think**, **say** and **do** will align with your values.

Our everyday experiences with thoughts and emotions are **shared** with the rest of humanity.





“Ar scath a cheile a  
mhaireann na daoine.”  
*We live in the shelter  
of each other.*



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