

# WORKSHOP 1

## Cultivating Psychological Courage and Flexibility from the Dynamics of Compassion and Prosociality

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and Professor Paul Gilbert



### Bio:

**Dennis Tirch** is the Founder of The Center for CFT in New York and President of The Compassionate Mind Foundation USA. Dr Tirch is the author of eight books, and numerous chapters and peer reviewed articles. Dr Tirch regularly conducts Compassion Focused ACT and CFT trainings & workshops globally. He is a Fellow of ACBS, a Diplomate, Fellow & Certified Consultant for The Academy of Cognitive Therapy, & Founding Fellow and Past President of both the NYC-CBT association, & NYC-ACBS.

**Laura Silberstein** is the Director of The Center for CFT in New York and a board member of the Compassionate Mind Foundation USA. She serves as an Adjunct Assistant Professor at Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Dr Silberstein-Tirch is the co-author of four books and has published research on psychological flexibility and emotions. Dr Silberstein-Tirch regularly conducts trainings and workshops on Compassion Focused ACT and CFT internationally. She is the President of NYC-ACBS & The Compassion Focused SIG of ACBS.

### Abstract:

A growing body of research demonstrates that when our capacity for compassion, caring, and secure attachment is activated, it facilitates broad and flexible response patterns, even in the presence of threatening situations that would normally narrow our range of behavioral options. This workshop explores how the evolved dynamics of attachment and affiliation can help us to foster psychological flexibility and courage that are essential to living lives of meaning, purpose and vitality.

We will examine how biological systems can respond to their environment with mixtures of rigid, automatic and stereotypic responses (typically threat focused) or with openness, changing, novel creative and flexible responses (typically when feeling safe). However, threats, defensive responses that need to be quickly available, can create neurobehavioral segregation disabling availability and integration of many essential and empowering competencies, such as empathy distress tolerance and flexible action. Participants will engage in experiential exercises and didactic learning opportunities to internalize how compassion and secure attachment dynamics provide a foundation for response flexibility and capacities for integration. CFT helps people create compassion motives and grounding states that access and cultivate stable physiological and psychological integration from which flexibility courage and well-being arises.