

Self-Compassion Can Help End Polarization in 2024, Says Métis Author and Actress

Communities across North America are deeply divided by politics, culture wars, and differing ideologies. Andrea Menard offers a solution for healing.

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA, December 28, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As 2023 wraps up, most people would like to be filled with hope and goodwill for themselves and others. But after the widespread turmoil and uncertainty of the last several years, too many are feeling cynical and suspicious of one another. Governments, communities, and sometimes even families are deeply divided...and it feels like there's no way to heal the rifts.

The new year is a chance to set things right, says Andrea Menard. She says by embracing self-compassion, people can begin to bridge harmful divides.

"After years of global, political, and social unrest, you—and everyone you know—are likely living in survival mode," says Menard, founder of the Sacred Feminine Learning Lodge and author of [Seeds from the Sacred Feminine: A 52-Card Wisdom Deck with Handbook](#) (Mango Publishing, 2023, ISBN: 978-1-64250-956-4, \$34.99). "It is very easy to become polarized in this state because feelings of fear and powerlessness override our ability to simply share our position without needing to defend it and be 'right.'"

"It's true that we face many challenges and problems today," she adds. "But when we succumb to polarization, things only get worse."

By treating oneself with compassion, individuals can begin to heal and invite others to do the same, says Menard, an Indigenous thought leader of Métis heritage, and one of the co-stars of the CTV/CW popular new series *Sullivan's Crossing*. She says there are simple ways to begin this transformation: people can take part in land-based practices, reconnect with their body, and awaken their Sacred Feminine energy to balance the masculine energy and systems that draw people toward assertive, competitive, and action-driven behavior. These acts of self-compassion help people respond to division in a way that serves the whole of humankind, she asserts.

Menard says the land-based teachings in her 52-card wisdom deck, *Seeds from the Sacred Feminine* can assist in that healing. These insights help people connect with the Sacred Feminine energy that promotes compassion, stillness, intuition, collaboration, empathy, and creativity—something she says is deeply needed in a masculine-dominated world. This way of

being creates a gentler, more inclusive world where individuals care for the well-being of self and others.

The Seeds from the Sacred Feminine wisdom cards and handbook offer gentle reminders to help people connect to their feminine spirit and find their way back to their center. The messages in this deck provide direct insight and offer simple guidance to help people rearrange their life in a more harmonious manner; become less reactive; practice self-care; and experience the stillness, intuition, gentleness, and creativity they crave.

“Self-care isn’t a frivolous or fluffy concept,” says Menard. “It’s a pathway to processing the trauma we’ve all experienced as political and ideological rifts have deepened all around us.”

Menard shares the following insights to those who want to embrace compassion, reduce stress, and begin their return to harmony.

Polarization emerges out of fear. When a problem frightens people, they seek a solution that matches their worldview. This provides a sense of safety, and people find community in groups that feel the same way they do. The echo chamber of likeminded opinions convinces them that “their” side is right and that the “other” side is wrong, and possibly even dangerous, and suddenly, everyone is polarized.

It also makes people easier to manipulate. It is easy for people to be manipulated when they are not grounded in what is real (which, again, is the land, their bodies, their emotions, and simple aspects of life that reduce stress like enjoying a meal with loved ones, walking in the great outdoors, and enjoying music). When a person’s heart rate speeds up, or when they feel stressed or agitated, it could indicate that they’ve been triggered.

“The more we feel the need to defend our truth, the easier we are to manipulate,” says Menard. “If you find yourself angry and needing to stand up for your position, ask yourself how it happened. Is it serving you? Is someone else benefitting from your angst? What if your fighting energy is being harnessed and used to forward someone else’s agenda? You may find you don’t want any part of this suffering.”

It’s best to address “survival fear” with compassion. If polarization is caused by a deep, primal fear, then everyone (including loved ones and enemies) are walking around just trying to survive. They are all overwhelmed with stress hormones that create irritability, exhaustion, and overstimulation. This is the underlying source of a polarized society: Two sides are fighting for survival the best way they know how. Does this not deserve a compassionate response?

“In Indigenous teachings, we are taught that human beings are interconnected to all other living beings,” says Menard. “What happens to one is experienced by all, eventually. To live in a harmonious way with each other, we must find harmony within ourselves. And harmony is born of compassion.”

There is power in the practice of being still. The speed of the world is dizzying, observes Menard. The physical body has trouble keeping up. Menard says this is why it is important to cultivate the gentle habits like meditation or simply being quiet for a bit.

People need to listen to the wisdom of their feelings. One's feelings know what is going on at every moment and cannot lie, says Menard. That is why they need to listen to the emotional impulse. If it is uncomfortable, it may be signaling that their thoughts have taken them astray.

"Your thoughts can feed you untruths," says Menard. "They can try to convince you that your feelings are wrong. Don't believe them. Ask your feelings what they are trying to say to you. Be curious about their message. Feelings are Wisdom Keepers, no matter where they sit along the negative or positive spectrum. Use your mind to acknowledge when your feelings have been stirred. When the mind works in collaboration with the emotions, great leaps of understanding occur. Understanding leads to compassion and a sense of well-being."

Everyone should reconnect to the Earth every day, if only for a few minutes. "Go for a walk and let your feet lead you to a place of natural beauty," says Menard. "Allow your physical body to move freely through your neighborhood or down newly discovered pathways. Sit by a body of water. Listen to the birds. Sprawl out on the grass or snow and let your back connect to Mother Earth. Feel her healing energy pass through your spine and transmute all the exhaustion and pain you have been carrying."

Hugs can be "sacred circles." "If you are keeping others at arm's length, it might be time to relax your guard a little," says Menard. "All Beings are connected and capable of great love. Let this love in. You are meant to live in community so you can express this love to others. Remember your sacred lineage and reach out to your relations. They need your love as much as you need theirs. Let them in. Your arms are made for enfolding life. When infused with love in your heart, your arms can make a sacred circle. Allow someone into the sacred circle that only you can create. You are safe. Be strong in yourself and know your boundaries, while being gentle with the world."

The Seeds from the Sacred Feminine wisdom cards can be used for a daily dose of divine feminine energy. There are several ways to use the 52-card deck, says Menard. For example, one can select one card and ask for clarity on a specific situation. Or they can choose four cards (each card representing one of the four sacred bodies) and absorb the messages or teachings they bring. A person can also simply choose a card and ask for a seed of daily wisdom. Upon receiving any thoughts, intuitions, or messages from the cards themselves, they can read the corresponding message in the Seeds from the Sacred Feminine booklet.

"We are in a divided world, but we always have the power to choose harmony," concludes Menard. "It isn't always easy, but when we discover the depths of our compassion, we can replace fear with love and begin finding common ground with fellow citizens of the Earth."

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About the Author:

Andrea Menard is the author of *Seeds from the Sacred Feminine: A 52-Card Wisdom Deck with Handbook*. She is an accomplished Métis singer, storyteller, speaker, and the founder of the Sacred Feminine Learning Lodge. An advocate for rematriation and reconciliation, Andrea helps women, men, and all-gendered people to reclaim and embody the qualities of the Sacred Feminine.

One of the co-stars of the new CTV/CW series *Sullivan's Crossing*, Andrea is a five-time Gemini-nominated actress, a 15-time music award winner, a TEDx speaker for her talk, "Silent No More," and she was named ACTRA National's Woman of the Year for 2021. Andrea's knowledge in vocal, emotional, and creative expression supports others to own their voice, express their creativity, and enhance their well-being.

From Treaty 1 territory and the Homeland of the Métis, Andrea is a proud Métis woman. For more information on Andrea's workshops, courses, music, and products, please visit her website: andreamenard.com.

About the Artist:

Leah Marie Dorion is an interdisciplinary Métis artist raised in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. Dorion holds a bachelor of education, bachelor of arts, and master of arts degree. A teacher, painter, host, filmmaker, and published writer, Dorion views her Métis heritage as providing her with a unique bridge for knowledge between all people. Her paintings honour the spiritual strength of Indigenous women and the Sacred Feminine.

Leah Dorion has sold over 150 original paintings, with several original artworks purchased by the Government of Saskatchewan Public Art Collection. She has had gallery showings of her artwork in esteemed galleries across Canada, and her original paintings have been brought together as a collection for the first time in this deck of wisdom cards. She has numerous commissioned artworks, and many of her paintings are held in private collections. For more information, please visit www.leahdorion.ca.

About the Cards:

Seeds from the Sacred Feminine: A 52-Card Wisdom Deck with Handbook (Mango Publishing, 2023, ISBN: 978-1-64250-956-4, \$34.99) is [available from Mango Publishing](#) and major online booksellers.

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