



Presentation Speech for Valarie Kauer

Presented by Anum Mulla, Charter for Compassion Board of Trustees

It gives my heart and soul immense pleasure, not only as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Charter for Compassion, but also as a South Asian woman in the field of compassion-based education to stand here in front of you to honor one of my role models Ms. Valarie Kaur - a trailblazer of compassion, a social justice activist, lawyer, filmmaker, and Sikh American thought leader who founded the Revolutionary Love Project - a movement that envisions a world where love is a public ethic.

Valarie is much more than an inspiration. She is a truth-teller and a guide of what is perhaps one of the most beautiful ways of connecting with another at the root of our shared humanity. We define compassion as the wish to alleviate the suffering of another and the depth of it in Valarie's work needs no introduction. Inspired by her own pain and that of those around her, Valarie has spent what seems like many lifetimes transcending hate with love - and she has done it with an extraordinary embodiment of resilience and grace.

The hate crime that involved her Uncle post 9/11 propelled her to tell the story of his family's pain and humanness, in hopes of bridging the notion of 'stranger'. She dug down to the root of the problem — a lack of understanding of our innate oneness with one another. This one choice ignited a global movement of standing in the truth of our pain and transcending it with revolutionary love to reclaim justice.

In her TED talk, Valarie asks "Who have we not yet tried to love"? Asking a question of this difficult nature is the touchstone of her work. Her philosophy of Others, Opponents, and Self, teaches us to place importance on the power of recognizing our common humanity and our undeniable interdependence.

For others she tells us to 'see no stranger', for our opponents she implores us to 'tend to their wounds', and for ourselves, she empowers us to 'breathe and push' - without any of which no change that is true can unfold. Her philosophy reverberates the need to cultivate an awareness and understanding of another's suffering on both sides of the coin. '*I see no stranger*' - is a powerful line that Valarie has repeated in each of her talks, and as the title of her book, it truly coins her profound response to hate with loving compassion.

Valarie's journey has been a constant reminder to us that it is our compassion that truly activates our humanity and has the power to connect us even in times when the dichotomy of the human mind creates barriers to divide us. She makes clear that we stand on a nurturing earth, one that has no ground for displays of extremism, hate, or discrimination, one that invites us to see each other not as strangers but as individuals having a shared human experience that we can, if we try to - transcend with love. And perhaps that is one of the many valuable lessons we can learn from Valarie - that even though it takes an enormous amount of resilience to transcend darkness with the light of compassionate love, it is possible for us all.

And so today, we honor Valarie for the exemplary embodiment of compassion in its most organic form of authentic and revolutionary love. It is through examples like these that we look to inspire the world. Thank you Valarie for speaking truth to power, and creating ripples of change over and over again.

I invite Ms. Ashely Torres to accept the 2023 Charter for Compassion Humanitarian award on behalf of Ms. Valarie Kaur.

Thank you