



KELLY BRYSON

MA, MFT (MARRIAGE & FAMILY THERAPIST)

DEDICATED TO TEACHING THE LANGUAGE OF COMPASSION

Many children don't have the benefit of an "Ozzie & Harriet" upbringing and such was definitely the case for Kelly Bryson. In fact, when Kelly's parents found themselves strapped for cash (which occurred frequently), they resembled another infamous duo instead – Bonnie & Clyde. To support their four young children, the pair would hit the road and venture outside the city limits of Phoenix, Arizona, robbing gas stations along the way.

Small wonder that Kelly's father was eventually arrested and imprisoned. And no wonder, too, that the Bryson family spun out of control thereafter. His parents divorced and his mother married five men in rapid succession and was often gone for weeks at a time, leaving he and his siblings to fend for themselves. Several years later, one of the replacement dads assaulted Kelly's sister, resulting in the children being separated and sent to foster homes.

Like the Dickensian tale his life resembled to this point, things only got worse during the next chapter. On his 9th birthday, Kelly's aunt arrived to retrieve him from the state's care and took him to her home in Florida. Stern and tyrannical in the methods used to run their household, his aunt and uncle abused him physically as well as verbally, and their rigid rules forbade other children from coming to visit. So the day he turned 16, he left there, befriended by his concerned high school principal who permitted Kelly to live with him in his home for the next two years, eventually arranging for him to receive a scholarship to attend the University of Florida.

While there, Kelly enjoyed his studies, but began enjoying drugs more resulting in his dropping out of college just shy of completing his bachelor's degree. Instead, he got involved with a guru and lived in an ashram-style house for the next twelve years, deeply immersed in Raja Yoga eastern philosophy. Eventually, he experienced what he refers to as a "wake-up call" and left the group, relocating to Orlando. Taking a job managing a coffee-shop style restaurant which he came to detest, he nevertheless stuck with the job long enough to finish the remaining coursework for his BA in Psychology. Thereafter, Kelly moved to Georgia to work towards his Masters in Humanistic Psychology which he obtained three years later.

A Ph.D. program in Leadership being offered in San Diego was unique in the nation at the time and inspired Kelly to head west in pursuit of additional education. There, he met Virginia Satir, internationally recognized for her creativity in the practice of family therapy. Ms. Satir discerned, and rightly so, that he was in need of deep healing around family issues. While following her wise counsel, he continued his studies, acquiring his MFT license (Marriage and Family Therapist) rather than the doctoral degree and began treating individuals and couples. Another critical meeting introduced Kelly to Dr. Marshall Rosenberg, Director for the International Centers for Nonviolent Communication. Meeting at a conference, he was impressed with Dr. Rosenberg's ability to arrive quickly at the heart of a conflict between couples and resolve key issues in a matter of minutes. Soon after, Kelly began nonviolent treatment workshops for businesses as well as individuals and founded the Center for Compassion in San Diego. Their corporate clients have

included the staff of Tony Robbins, Paul Mitchell Systems, and Bristol-Myers Squibb et al.

Kelly's most profound work, however, has concentrated on some of the world's most high profile hot spots. Having served for nearly two decades as an Authorized Trainer for the International Centers for Nonviolent Communication (with centers in 37 countries), he has witnessed firsthand dramatic breakthroughs in century's old conflicts in Northern Ireland, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia, Montenegro, and the Occupied Territories of Palestine.

He's characterized this work on the international frontlines as "satisfyingly selfish," challenging the traditionally negative connotation of the word *selfish*. Instead he embraces the Ayn Rand ideology of selfishness -- that to create balance between the individual and the collective [society], they should mutually serve *each other*. Kelly's message of "balancing passion for self with compassion for others" is the foundation of his newly released book, *Don't Be Nice, Be Real - A Handbook for Compassionate Communication* (October, 2002, APC Books) and brings a life of hard won lessons to fruition.

Committed to a life of teaching and service, Kelly and his partner, Debbie, reside in San Diego, and are the parents of a 2 yr. old daughter, Mataya.

These days, Kelly is *selfishly satisfied* conducting ongoing workshops, addressing businesses and organizations nationwide, and continuing his therapeutic practice which is designed to enhance and nurture the lives of others.

In light of the path he's tread, Kelly Bryson knows whereof he speaks in providing counsel for a journey of self-discovery and healing...

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sam@MarketingAndPR.com