



One evening, an elderly Cherokee brave told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people.

“My dear one, the battle between two ‘wolves’ is inside us all. One is evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority and ego.

The other is good. It is: joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith.”

The grandson thought about it for a moment and then asked his grandfather: “Which wolf wins?”

The old Cherokee replied, “The one you feed.”

COMPASSION

com·pas·sion — sympathetic pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others.

What Is Compassion?

By Dacher Keltner

Compassion literally means “to suffer together.” Among emotion researchers, it is defined as the feeling that arises when you are confronted with another’s suffering and feel motivated to relieve that suffering.

Compassion is not the same as empathy or altruism, though the concepts are related. While empathy refers more generally to our ability to take the perspective of and feel the emotions of another person, compassion is when those feelings and thoughts include the desire to help. Altruism, in turn, is the kind, selfless behavior often prompted by feelings of compassion, though one can feel compassion without acting on it, and altruism isn’t always motivated by compassion.

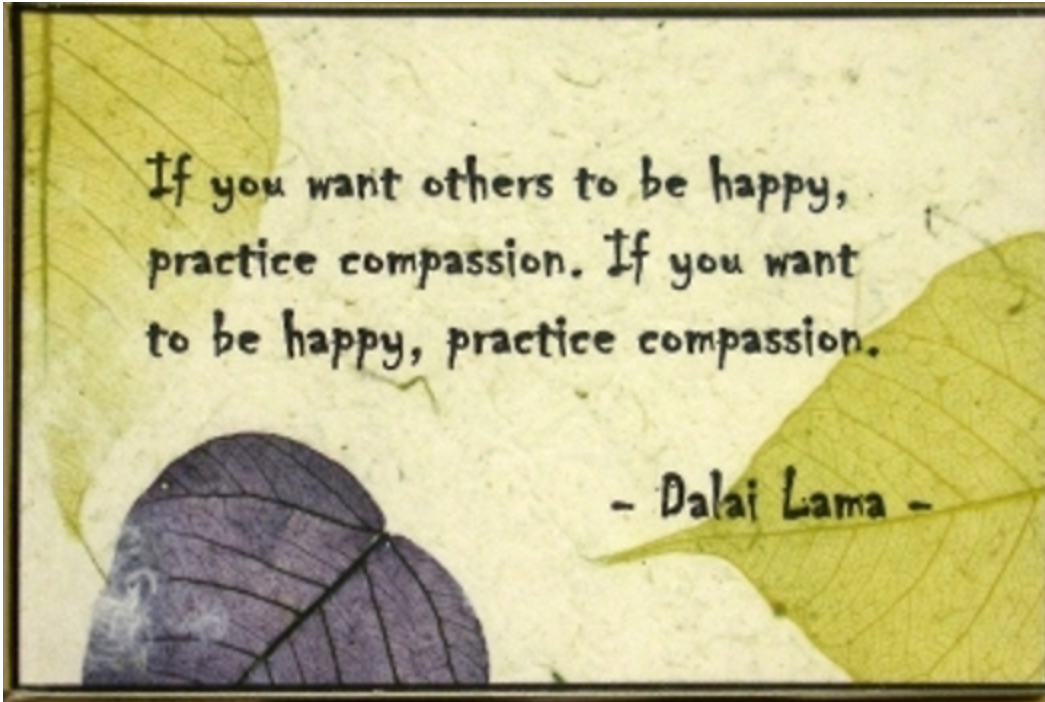
While cynics may dismiss compassion as touchy-feely or irrational, scientists have started to map the biological basis of compassion, suggesting its deep evolutionary purpose. This research has shown that when we feel compassion, our heart rate slows down, we secrete the “bonding hormone” oxytocin, and regions of the brain linked to empathy, caregiving, and feelings of pleasure light up, which often results in our wanting to approach and care for other people.

Why Practice It?

Scientific research into the measurable benefits of compassion is young. Preliminary findings suggest, however, that being compassionate can improve health, well-being, and relationships. Many scientists believe that compassion may even be vital to the survival of our species, and they’re finding that its advantages can be increased through targeted exercises and practice. Here are some of the most exciting findings from this research so far.

- Compassion makes us feel good: Compassionate action (e.g., giving to charity) activates pleasure circuits in the brain, and compassion training programs, even very brief ones, strengthen brain circuits for pleasure and reward and lead to lasting increases in self-reported happiness.
- Being compassionate—tuning in to other people in a kind and loving manner—can reduce risk of heart disease by boosting the positive effects of the Vagus Nerve, which helps to slow our heart rate.
- One compassion training program has found that it makes people more resilient to stress; it lowers stress hormones in the blood and saliva and strengthens the immune response. Compassion training may also help us worry less and be more open to our negative emotions.

- **Compassion could improve our mental health:** One research review found that practicing compassion meditation improved participants' emotional life, positive thinking, relationships, and empathy.
- **Brain scans during loving-kindness meditation, which directs compassion toward suffering, suggest that, on average, compassionate people's minds wander less about what has gone wrong in their lives, or might go wrong in the future; as a result, they're happier.**
- **Practicing compassion could make us more altruistic.** In turn, it may also help us overcome empathic distress and become more resilient in the face of others' suffering.
- **Compassion helps make caring parents:** Brain scans show that when people experience compassion, their brains activate in neural systems known to support parental nurturance and other caregiving behaviors.
- **Compassion helps make better spouses:** Compassionate people are more optimistic and supportive when communicating with others.
- **Compassion helps make better friends:** Studies of college friendships show that when one friend sets the goal to support the other compassionately, both friends experience greater satisfaction and growth in the relationship.
- **Compassion helps make better doctors:** Medical students who train in compassion feel less depressed and lonely, and avoid the typical declines in compassion that happen during medical school.
- **Feeling compassion for one person makes us less vindictive toward others.**
- **Restraining feelings of compassion chips away at our commitment to moral principles.**
- **Employees who receive more compassion in their workplace see themselves, their co-workers, and their organization in a more positive light, report feeling more positive emotions like joy and contentment, and are more committed to their jobs. A compassionate workplace culture is linked to less burnout, greater teamwork, and higher job satisfaction.**
- **More compassionate societies—those that take care of their most vulnerable members, assist other nations in need, and have children who perform more acts of kindness—are the happier ones.**
- **Compassionate people are more socially adept, making them less vulnerable to loneliness; loneliness has been shown to cause stress and harm the immune system.**



The Art of Emotional Composure

If you're having trouble feeling and practicing compassion and want to experience its personal beneficial effects and monitor your emotions better – the answer is truly at your fingertips! Refer to the BASIC POWER TAPPING WORKBOOK and follow the proven system to own the tool of Emotional Composure. You'll quickly learn to feel more sympathetic towards those around you and free both yourself and others from suffering, because when others around you suffer, you do too.

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