

## Charter for Compassion

**The principle of compassion** lies at the heart of all religious, ethical, and spiritual traditions, calling us always to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves. Compassion impels us to work tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of our fellow creatures, to dethrone ourselves from the center of our world and put another there, and to honor the inviolable sanctity of every single human being, treating everybody, without exception, with absolute justice, equity, and respect.

**It is also necessary** in both public and private life to refrain consistently and empathically from inflicting pain. To act or speak violently out of spite, chauvinism, or self-interest, to impoverish, exploit, or deny basic rights to anybody, and to incite hatred by denigrating others—even our enemies—is a denial of our common humanity. We acknowledge that we have failed to live compassionately and that some have even increased the sum of human misery in the name of religion.

**We therefore call upon all men and women** to restore compassion to the center of morality and religion; to return to the ancient principle that any interpretation of scripture that breeds violence, hatred, or disdain is illegitimate; to ensure that youth are given accurate and respectful information about other traditions, religions, and cultures; to encourage a positive appreciation of cultural and religious diversity; to cultivate an informed empathy with the suffering of all human beings, even those regarded as enemies.

**We urgently need** to make compassion a clear, luminous, and dynamic force in our polarized world. Rooted in a principled determination to transcend selfishness, compassion can break down political, dogmatic, ideological, and religious boundaries. Born of our deep interdependence, compassion is essential to human relationships and to a fulfilled humanity. It is the path to enlightenment, and indispensable to the creation of a just economy and a peaceful global community.



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If you find it in your heart to care for somebody else, you will have succeeded. ~ *Maya Angelou*

Compassion is more important than intellect in calling forth the love that the work of peace needs, and intuition can often be a far more powerful searchlight than cold reason. ~ *Betty Williams*

Compassion alone stands apart from the continuous traffic between good and evil proceeding within us. ~ *Eric Hoffe*

The act of compassion begins with full attention, just as rapport does. You have to really see the person. ~ *Daniel Goleman*

Our task must be to free ourselves ... by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. ~ *Albert Einstein*

Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them humanity cannot survive. ~ *The Dalai Lama*

Compassion is the basis of all morality. ~ *Arthur Schopenhauer*

