

POINTS TO REMEMBER

Compassion is, as the Dalai Lama states, "**the basic source of all happiness.**" The word compassion literally means "**to feel with.**" It is to share someone's pain so we are moved to do what we can to alleviate it.

People who live a life of compassion live with continual purpose and joy. Embracing compassion begins with equanimity—which simply means an awareness and acceptance of the equality of all persons. It helps us to acknowledge that we all know one another quite well - in the sense that we understand that **every person** on earth wants both **to gain greater happiness** and to **experience less suffering**. In other words, we all want more pleasure and less pain. We all—every person— have this in common.

So, whenever someone is acting in a way to cause harm to him or herself or to others, we understand that **they need to pursue their desire more intelligently**. This means such a person is in greater need of our compassion. When we see it this way, **we are inclined not to judge** the person, but rather to open our heart to a greater extent.

This way of assessing people is in **stark contrast** to a way many persons do who consider the world to be made up of **good people and bad people**. When we understand **there are only good people**, those who from time to time may make mistakes, we are **in tune with the teachings of Jesus**, and we are able to **live with a loving heart and a clear mind**.

On several occasions **Jesus was quoted** as stating **he 'felt' compassion**, was **'filled with' compassion**, or **'had' compassion**. And each **time he did something about it**. He fed people, forgave, healed, prayed, taught them. **He went into action—and we are called upon to do the same**.

And in **Luke10:30**, Jesus shared the Parable of the **Good Samaritan**, a powerful example of applied compassion. He shared this as an answer to a question, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" — in other words, "**How do I make my life work?**" Jesus' answer is to practice compassion.

Compassion is more than sympathy or empathy. It's seeing something wrong and doing something about it. It is an outgrowth of discovering we are, all of us, members of the same human family who are called upon to support one another. The "we" implies **self-compassion**, as well.