

# **The Seven Assumptions of a Compassion Philosophy**

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## **Assumption 1 - Compassion is defined as empathy plus wisdom.**

**Compassion is the willingness to help relieve the suffering of living beings (including yourself). To do that one must hear that suffering through empathy and then act wisely to reduce that suffering. Please see the "Theory of Compassion Development" paper on this website.**

## **Assumption 2 - Compassion is relational.**

**Assumption 1, by definition, assumes a relationship. In order to know the suffering of another being one needs to stand in relationship with that being and come to some understanding of their suffering. It is not an abstract extrapolation of what one assumes to be the nature of suffering but rather the shared experience of suffering with the being within the compassion space. The application of wisdom to the discovery of well being is also relational. How one understands the relational aspect of compassion is tied to their "relationship stance" and their history with compassion experiences.**

## **Assumption 3 - Compassion is instinctually linked to our survival.**

**Compassion is part of human nature. We are not the strongest species and we are born quite helpless. At birth we need protection and nurturing. At more advanced years we need to work within a collective in order to survive.**

## **Assumption 4 - Compassion follows a normal distribution in society.**

**Some people demonstrate more compassion than others. If compassion could be measured reliably than there would likely be a mean value of compassion representing the majority of society. Above that mean would be people demonstrating more compassion and below that mean would be people demonstrating less compassion. These differences in compassion may be attributed to differences in biological make-up, environment, training (including barrier removal) and belief.**

## **Assumption 5 - Compassion can be developed.**

**Given the proper conditions, people can show an improvement in their understanding and practice of compassion. From assumptions 3 and 4, there are various levels of compassion (or compassion phenomena) ranging from instinctual to a radiant, sacred, compassion. The compassion developmental level which a person attains shapes their understanding and practice. One can expand their compassion through practice, and also through exposure to more advanced compassion experiences. One's openness to this process is called compassion readiness.**

## **Assumption 6 - Compassion directly influences wellbeing.**

**There is a connection between the success of help offered to another and the level of compassion that accompanies that offer.**

## **Assumption 7 - Compassion flourishes with support.**

**There is a process of "passing it on" where compassion flourishes under conditions of support. Compassion discourse, training, and environments of support are needed to help us move toward a culture of compassion.**