

COMPASSIONATE LOVE OF CLOSE OTHERS SCALE

Reference:

Sprecher, S. & Fehr, B. (2005). Compassionate love for close others and humanity. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 22, 629-651.

Description of Measure:

A 21-item scale designed to measure feelings of compassionate love toward close others. Compassionate love toward close others is defined as an attitude toward close others that involves behavior, feeling, and thinking that is all focused on “caring, concern, tenderness, and an orientation toward supporting, helping, and understanding the others, particularly when the others are perceived to be suffering or in need (page 630).” Close others are significant others in one’s life, including friends and family members. (Note: this is not designed to be a scale of romantic love). Respondents answer each item on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not at all true of me) to 7 (very true of me).

Abstracts of Selected Related Articles:

Sprecher, S. & Fehr, B. (2006). Enhancement of mood and self-esteem as a result of giving and receiving compassionate love. *Current Research in Social Psychology*, 11, 227-242.

Compassionate love may be the type of love that leads to the most social good for those who are its recipients. However, self-benefits may also occur as a result of experiencing compassionate love for others. Three studies were conducted in which people were asked to recall a specific experience of compassionate love and to indicate how they were affected on several dimensions (mood, self-esteem, closeness to others). In Study 1, participants were asked to recall an experience of compassionate love without specification of target. A manipulation of the context of compassionate love (relational vs. non-relational) was included in Studies 2 and 3. A comparison of compassionate love given versus received was also included in Study 3. Overall, the results indicated that people reap many positive benefits of experiencing compassionate love for others. Differences in perceived outcomes to the self based on relational context and role (giver vs. receiver) were also found and discussed.

Penner, L.A., Fritzsche, B.A., Craiger, J.P., & Freifeld, T.S. (1995). Measuring the prosocial personality. In J.N. Butcher & C.D. Spielberger (Eds.), *Advances in Personality Assessment*, Vol. 10 (pp. 147-163). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

The PSB appears to provide a reliable and valid measure of the prosocial personality / the factor structure of this instrument was essentially invariant across several different samples / the pattern of covariation among the scales and items contained in the PSB did not appear to differ as a function of the respondents' gender, age, educational background, or geographical/regional location / discuss the results of several studies that have examined how each of the PBS factors are related to prosocial thoughts, feelings, and actions

Underwood, L. G. (2002). The human experience of compassionate love: Conceptual mapping and data from select studies. In S. G. Post, L. G. Underwood, J. P. Schloss, & W. B. Hurlbut (Eds.), *Altruism & Altruistic Love: Science, Philosophy, & Religion in Dialogue* (pp. 72-88). New York: Oxford University Press.

Emphasizes the subjective experience of the person attempting to express compassionate love through a discussion of empirical research. It is concluded that one goal of research on compassionate love is ultimately to give additional insight into how compassionate love might be fostered in individuals and societies. It is argued that in order to do this well, it is important to understand the key features of compassionate love, the substrate of conditions that influence the expression, and the motives that detract from the quality of loving compassion.

Scale

- 1.) When I see family members or friends feeling sad, I feel a need to reach out to them.

not at all true of me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *very true of me*

- 2.) I spend a lot of time concerned about the well-being of those people close to me.

not at all true of me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *very true of me*

- 3.) When I hear about a friend or family member going through a difficult time, I feel a great deal of compassion for him or her.

not at all true of me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *very true of me*

- 4.) It is easy for me to feel the pain (and joy) experienced by my loved ones.

not at all true of me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *very true of me*

- 5.) If a person close to me needs help, I would do almost anything I could to help him or her.

not at all true of me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *very true of me*

- 6.) I feel considerable compassionate love for those people important in my life.

not at all true of me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *very true of me*

- 7.) I would rather suffer myself than see someone close to me suffer.

not at all true of me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *very true of me*

- 8.) If given the opportunity, I am willing to sacrifice in order to let the people important to me achieve their goals in life.

not at all true of me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *very true of me*

- 9.) I tend to feel compassion for people who are close to me

not at all true of me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *very true of me*

- 10.) One of the activities that provides me with the most meaning to my life is helping others with whom I have a close relationship.

not at all true of me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *very true of me*

11.) I would rather engage in actions that help my intimate others than engage in actions that would help me.

not at all true of me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *very true of me*

12.) I often have tender feelings toward friends and family members when they seem to be in need.

not at all true of me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *very true of me*

13.) I feel a selfless caring for my friends and family.

not at all true of me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *very true of me*

14.) I accept friends and family members even when they do things I think are wrong.

not at all true of me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *very true of me*

15.) If a family member or close friend is troubled, I usually feel extreme tenderness and caring.

not at all true of me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *very true of me*

16.) I try to understand rather than judge people who are close to me.

not at all true of me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *very true of me*

17.) I try to put myself in my friend's shoes when he or she is in trouble.

not at all true of me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *very true of me*

18.) I feel happy when I see that loved ones are happy.

not at all true of me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *very true of me*

19.) Those whom I love can trust that I will be there for them if they need me.

not at all true of me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *very true of me*

20.) I want to spend time with close others so that I can find ways to help enrich their lives.

not at all true of me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *very true of me*

21.) I very much wish to be kind and good to my friends and family members.

not at all true of me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *very true of me*

Scoring

An average score is calculated for all 21 items. Scoring is kept continuous.