



Amrita School of Spiritual & Cultural Studies



The Role of Meditation in Motivating Compassion-Driven Action

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Outline of Presentation and Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome:

By the end of this session, students will be able to understand:

- (a) The Importance of Compassion
- (b) The Positive Role of Meditation in Compassion Driven Action

- The Importance of Compassion in Our Daily Lives
- How Meditation Motivates Compassion-driven Action
- The Positive Impact of Compassion Meditation on Well-Being

The Dimensions of the Process of Compassion

Com - passio
To suffer with

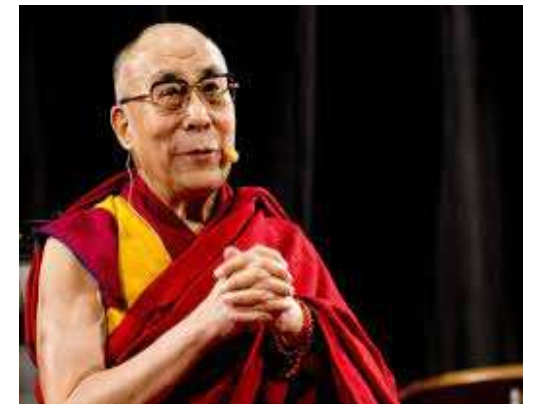
- (1) an awareness of suffering
- (2) being emotionally moved by suffering
- (3) a wish to see the relief of that suffering
- (4) a responsiveness or readiness to help relieve that suffering (Jazaieri, et al., 2012)

<http://ccare.stanford.edu/research/wiki/compassion-definitions/compassion/>

What is Compassion?

- **Compassion**, is a state in which one experiences the sorrow of another as one's own (AMMA)
- **Sympathy** is a momentary feeling that passes through the mind on seeing the sorrowful plight of another person. This feeling neither touches one deeply nor influences one greatly
- **Empathy** refers to the ability to feel the emotions of another person

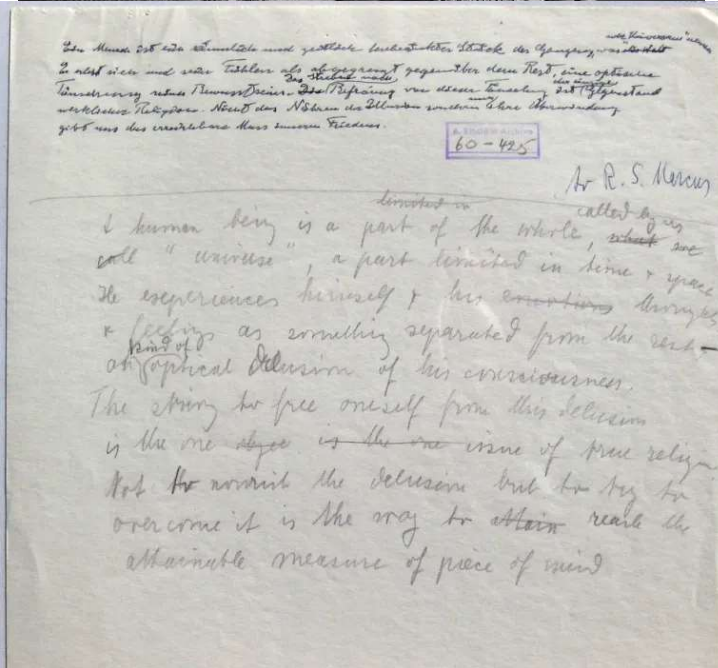
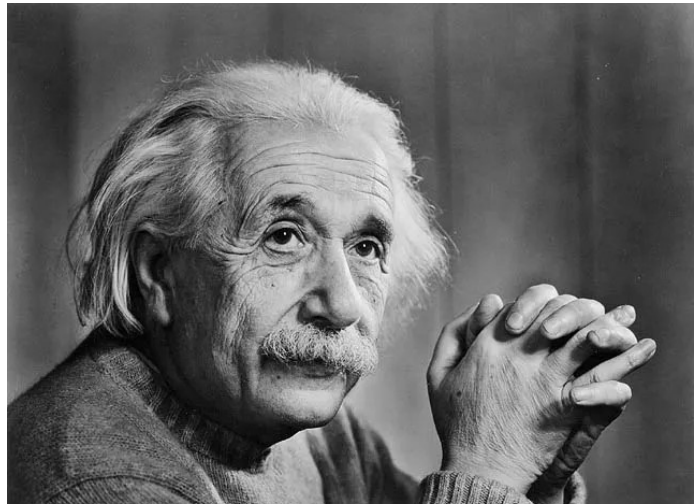
Compassion: A sense of concern for others and a desire for their wellbeing (H.H Dalai Lama)



Albert Einstein on Compassion

A human being is part of a whole, called by us the “Universe,” a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest — a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest us. **Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circles of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.**

[https://www.themarginalian.org/2016/11/28/einstein-](https://www.themarginalian.org/2016/11/28/einstein-circles-of-compassion/)



Why is Compassion Important?

- ❖ Compassion adds beauty, spontaneity and power to all our actions
- ❖ Decisions taken from compassion will always be appropriate
- ❖ Compassion is a necessity for human survival
- ❖ Compassion contributes to our physical and mental health

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How Does Meditation Motivate Compassion Driven Action ?

- Meditation increases **empathetic concern** or the ability to feel another person's emotions
- Meditation helps us in **perspective taking** or the ability to understand another person's viewpoint (Hafenbrack et al. 2020)
- Loving Kindness Meditation has been found to increase feelings of **tenderness, personal distress and reducing blame** (Ashar et al, 2016)

Mindfulness Helps Cultivate Positive Attitudes to Disadvantaged Groups

Journal of Experimental Psychology: General
2018, Vol. 147, No. 1, 93–112

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0096-3445/18/\$12.00 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/xge0000392>

Mindfulness Increases Prosocial Responses Toward Ostracized Strangers Through Empathic Concern

Daniel R. Berry, Athena H. Cairo, Robert J. Goodman, Jordan T. Quaglia, Jeffrey D. Green,
and Kirk Warren Brown
Virginia Commonwealth University

Compassion-Meditation and Individual Well-Being

- Loving-kindness meditation increases **individual well-being, life-satisfaction** and **decreases illness symptoms** (Frederickson et al, 2008)
- Compassion meditation has been found to increase **immunity** and **strengthen response to psychosocial stress** (Pace et al. 2009)
- Loving-kindness meditation leads to **positive social emotions** (Hutcherson et al. 2008)



<https://www.dreamstime.com/photos-images/wellbeing.html>

Meditation and Compassion Driven Action: Caveats

Just engaging in some meditation practice is not enough to transform us into compassionate and generous human beings

- Individual personality and personal goals
- Ethics matter (spiritual foundations of meditation – loving kindness)
- Context matters (the importance of *satsanga*)

Compassion Can Be Cultivated

❖ Loving Kindness Meditation

❖ Engaging in Community Service

❖ Performing Random Acts of Kindness

- Random Acts of Kindness could be simple acts
 - just as helping a friend
 - saying a few kind words to a disadvantaged person
 - giving a pen or pencil to a school child from a poor family
 - calling up your grandparents and telling them you love them, helping a stranger



• www.pexels.com/search/compassion/

We are all beads strung on the same thread....

For the benefit of others, and also for ourselves, we should have the attitude of caring and sharing. **We are all links in the chain of life. If one link is weakened, it will affect the strength of the whole chain.**

We are all beads strung on the same thread, love is the thread that holds us together



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https://ctb.ku.edu/sites/default/files/chapter_files/28.2.ppt

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Mastery Over Mind

