



Pause With Purpose

...to refresh

...to grow

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Bringing Compassion Home

The plight of the suffering has never been easy to look at. From the Bible story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-35) to the news stories of today, we hear of people who see others in distress and turn the other way. We also hear, however, of others who turn toward the need and seek to assist. Personally, we are exposed to the reality of human suffering on a regular basis. Whether it be global or local, our compassionate assistance is sought to make a positive difference in the lives of the suffering.

But what about our homes? Do we show compassion to our own family members? The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines compassion as the "sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it." Is this consciousness and desire a foundational element of our family structure, or are we too busy looking beyond our family to see the struggles and needs at hand?

Consider, for example, a short list of behaviors and attitudes that are counter-compassionate:

- criticism
- impatience
- competition
- frustration
- condemnation
- personal attacks
- judgement
- gossip
- pride

In spite of (and at times because of) our best intentions, these compassion killers invade our hearts and homes as we become performance focused and enjoyment blind. Children don't grow up fast enough and keep making the same (or new and exciting) mistakes. Spouses don't grow up fast enough and keep making We assume laziness, and miss paralyzing fear. We assume defiance, and miss weakness. We assume lack of caring, and miss confusion. We assume rejection, and miss silent cries of pain. We suffer, our spouses suffer, our children suffer.

So, what does it take to expand the presence and power of compassion in our own homes?

1. Be aware - Rather than ignoring our family or making quick assumptions, let's focus on each member of our family, keeping our eyes open for struggles as well as successes. Let's take the time needed to create an accurate picture of the issues present within our family. Now is not the time for blind assumptions or feigned ignorance.

2. Care - Compassion may start with "head" awareness, but it gains its power from sympathetic caring.

Such caring will only exist if we possess and nurture an underlying love for each member of our family, including those who may not be so easy to love. We need to care enough to face the struggles that exist and walk toward them (or even into them) in order to assist the one in need.

3. Share - Compassion requires action, sometimes bold and daring, sometimes sensitive and gentle. It compels us to share what we can to alleviate the suffering. Within the family, five forms of sharing are especially effective. They include:

- a. an apology -
 - "I'm sorry. I was wrong. Please forgive me for hurting you."
- b. encouragement -
 - "I believe in you."
 - "I have confidence in you."
- c. support -
 - "I stand with you."
- d. blessing -
 - "I care about you."
 - "I value you."
 - "You are precious to me."
- e. truth -
 - clear away confusion, dispel deception, reaffirm the security and strength of the family

Compassion - don't come home without it!



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CONTACT INFORMATION

Your thoughts and comments are warmly welcomed. I would also be happy to share with you more about life coaching and how it can assist you to be your best, personally and relationally, at home and at work.

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Spirituality and Compassion

He claimed to be an atheist offended by the insensitivity of the Christian God. He pointed to the baby Jesus of Christmas, referring to Him as the one who would grow up to create a hell in which to torment people forever.

How sad ... and yet what a clear example of how untruth and lack of knowledge can combine to rob us of earthly joy and eternal peace.

Christmas is actually an ideal time to recognize the incredible compassion our Father God has for us, His adopted children. Ever since we introduced rebellion and defiance into God's creation, the world as a whole has struggled under the weight of the resulting curse and consequences. Our broken relationship with the Father only promised the further misery of permanent separation from His grace and love, since we were incapable of restoring it through our own efforts.

But God never lost touch with us. He was, and is, aware of our struggles and cares deeply for us. He provided a solution for the mess we made, and shared it with us initially in the form of the baby Jesus. That baby, the Father God's only son, grew up to be a man who, rather than creating a hell to torment people in, died and went to hell in our place so we won't have to! Price paid; relationship with the Father restored!

Now that is compassion in action!

MERRY CHRISTMAS!!



"Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them, humanity cannot survive."

- Dalai Lama