

2008 TED Prize Wish “Charter for Compassion” – Karen Armstrong
March 31, 2020 21:27



Karen Armstrong talks about the Golden Rule and the role of religion in the world. In December 2011 her book was published called, Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life.

Discussion Questions:

1. What surprised you in this TED Talk? What new insights did you gain?
2. What do you know about Judaism and Islam and their connection with Christianity? What would you like to know about all major religions? What would you want people of other faiths to know about Christianity?
3. Does it matter what we believe? Why or why not?
4. How do intelligent people from good families become terrorists?
5. Does action or behaviour always precede understanding and belief?
6. What do believe is the role of religion?
7. When have you ever looked at someone differently from the way you had seen them up to that point? What enabled that switch?
8. How is religion influenced by culture and by politics?
9. How have the events of 9/11 influenced you and our world?
10. How do we nurture compassion for enemies and the stranger?
11. Why do you think Karen Armstrong’s wish won the TED Prize?
12. What do you think of the Charter For Compassion? How can we promote it and propagate it?
13. Optional Exercise: Look at the Golden Rule in various religious traditions and reflect on the similarities and differences.

Charter For Compassion

The principle of compassion lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions, calling us always to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves. Compassion impels us to work tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of our fellow creatures, to dethrone ourselves from the centre of our world and put another there, and to honour the inviolable sanctity of every single human being, treating everybody, without exception, with absolute justice, equity and respect.

It is also necessary in both public and private life to refrain consistently and empathically from inflicting pain. To act or speak violently out of spite, chauvinism, or self-interest, to impoverish, exploit or deny basic rights to anybody, and to incite hatred by denigrating others—even our enemies—is a denial of our common humanity. We acknowledge that we have failed to live compassionately and that some have even increased the sum of human misery in the name of religion.

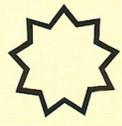
We therefore call upon all men and women to restore compassion to the centre of morality and religion ~ to return to the ancient principle that any interpretation of scripture that breeds violence, hatred or disdain is illegitimate ~ to ensure that youth are given accurate and respectful information about other traditions, religions and cultures ~ to encourage a positive appreciation of cultural and religious diversity ~ to cultivate an informed empathy with the suffering of all human beings—even those regarded as enemies.

We urgently need to make compassion a clear, luminous and dynamic force in our polarized world. Rooted in a principled determination to transcend selfishness, compassion can break down political, dogmatic, ideological and religious boundaries. Born of our deep interdependence, compassion is essential to human relationships and to a fulfilled humanity. It is the path to enlightenment, and indispensable to the creation of a just economy and a peaceful global community.



BAHA' I FAITH

Lay not on any soul a load that you would not wish to be laid upon you, and desire not for anyone the things you would not desire for yourself
Baha'u'llah, Gleanings



HINDUISM

This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you
Mahabharata 5:1517



BUDDHISM

Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful
Udana-Varga 5:18



CONFUCIANISM

One word which sums up the basis of all good conduct... loving kindness. Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself
Confucius, Analects 15:23



ISLAM

Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself
The Prophet Muhammad, Hadith



TAOISM

Regard your neighbour's gain as your own gain, and your neighbour's loss as your own loss
T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien, 213-218



JUDAISM

What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour. This is the whole Torah; all the rest is commentary
Hillel, Talmud, Shabbat 31a



SIKHISM

I am a stranger to no one; and no one is a stranger to me. Indeed, I am a friend to all
Guru Granth Sahib, pg. 1299



JAINISM

One should treat all creatures in the world as one would like to be treated
Mahavira, Suttrakritanga



ZOROASTRIANISM

Do not do unto others whatever is injurious to yourself
Shayast-na-Shayast 13:29



NATIVE SPIRITUALITY

We are as much alive as we keep the earth alive
Chief Dan George



UNITARIANISM

We affirm and promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part
Unitarian principle



CHRISTIANITY

In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets
Jesus, Matthew 7:12



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