

The Children's Charter for Compassion Activity Book



children's charter for
compassion



Introduction

The Children's Charter for Compassion is an organization based in Toronto, Canada. Founded and created by Erin Henry, mother of two Max and Quinn, who at the time were just 7 and 4 years old. It was inspired by the original Charter for Compassion launched on November 12, 2009, worldwide by Karen Armstrong.

At the time there was very little heart and mind education which became Erin's purpose in composing the Children's Charter for Compassion for any and all who would benefit globally.

Its primary goal is to provide a means for children and those around them to understand how to treat themselves and others with love, kindness and ultimately with compassion. By implementing The Golden Rule, "do unto others as you will have done to yourself", world peace can be achieved. It begins with our children.

Children's Charter for Compassion Through the Eyes of a Child

Compassion means to feel what others are feeling – whether it is pain, fear or sadness, but also happiness and joy. Compassion is inside of all of us. It doesn't matter how old we are, our gender, orientation, where we call home, which language we speak, if we pray or not or the colour of our hair, eyes or skin. We can show compassion for all others.

When we are acting with compassion, we treat others as we wish to be treated. We are being kind to ourselves, and all others including animals, nature and our planet. We are trying to make ourselves and all others feel strong and hopeful in order to create a world which is a more caring, joyful and respectful place for us to live. When we do good things for others we make them happy, and it naturally makes us happy too.

When we are acting with compassion, we are guided to keep doing whatever we can to make sure we are all treated fairly. We choose not to hurt others with nasty words, harmful social media, unkind facial expressions, or physical force. We say no to bullying of any kind. We accept and be ourselves and encourage others to do the same. We welcome and embrace the chance to learn from all others and celebrate our differences as well as our similarities. We feel connected to each other wherever and whoever we are and see this as a powerful strength.

From this moment on, we have the opportunity to:

- Make the decision to try and begin and end each day with compassion.
- Work to accept and respect each other's differences in our choices, beliefs, abilities, religions, cultures and traditions.
- Choose to begin and end each day with a kind heart towards others and ourselves.
- Treat others as we would like to be treated.

A compassionate, supportive and understanding world begins with me. I will make this promise to show compassion to myself and all others and play a part in making our world a more peaceful and happier place for all.

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Differentiating Compassion From Related Constructs



Compassion is often misunderstood and easily confused with related but distinct constructs (Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, & O'Connor, 1987). While it is important to define compassion, it is equally important to define what it is not. Constructs including empathy, sympathy, pity, and altruism will be highlighted in order to emphasize how they differ from compassion.

Empathy

Compassion is often confused with empathy and sympathy, most likely because each of these constructs is thought to be associated with helping. Unlike compassion, empathy does not incorporate the readiness to act in order to relieve the suffering of others, rather it is the ability to understand another's feelings and become one with that person's distress.

De Waal (2008) described empathy as the capacity to be affected by and share the emotional state of another and identify with the other, adopting his or her perspective.

Sympathy

Similarly, sympathy is the feeling of care and concern for someone which is often accompanied by a wish to see them happier. Sympathy is the experience of feeling sorrow for someone else's misfortune but not necessarily a shared perspective or shared emotions.

With compassion, there is recognition of the other person's emotional state and a desire to act in order to help.

Pity

Pity is commonly confused with compassion, however, the two concepts are very different – feeling pity for another is essentially an acknowledgment of their plight.

Pity refers more to feeling concern for someone thought to be inferior or weaker than oneself and is by definition, rooted in a hierarchical sense of superiority over someone else (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002).

Compassion, on the other hand, does not consider the object of suffering to be weak or inferior in any way. Instead, it encourages a broader vision through common experiences (Ibbett, 2008).

Altruism

Altruism is acting out of concern for another person's well-being, while compassion encapsulates an openness to experiencing suffering and responding with genuine concern, and without judgment (Jinpa, 2010). It is also worth noting that compassion can exist in the absence of altruistic behaviour.

Love

According to Jazaieri (2018), compassion is functionally distinct from the two most common forms of love; romantic love and the love of a parent for a child.

The fundamental difference between the two is that compassion likely involves a complex combination of multiple positive and negative emotions. Where love is generally associated with positive affect and experiences, compassion is about being open to the experience of suffering.

Deeper Thinking



Think about the four situations below. What would be one phrase to describe a sympathetic, empathetic or compassionate response?

Scenario 1

Floods in Pakistan have killed 1,717 people. It is the world's deadliest flood since the 2020 South Asian floods and is described as the worst in the country's history.

Sympathetic _____

Empathetic _____

Compassionate _____

Scenario 2

Nineteen children and two adults were killed in a shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas on May 24, 2022.

Sympathetic _____

Empathetic _____

Compassionate _____

Scenario 3

More than 350 million children face the reality of extreme poverty and that means facing hunger every day.

Sympathetic _____

Empathetic _____

Compassionate _____

Scenario 4

The Ukraine war which began in February 2022 (according to Reuters) a year later claimed over 40,000 deaths, displaced over 14 million people and accumulated property damage of approximately 350 billion dollars.

Sympathetic _____

Empathetic _____

Compassionate _____

Compassion Cultivation Training

Compassion cultivation training (CCT) combines traditional contemplative practices with contemporary psychology and scientific research to help you lead a more compassionate life. Developed by Jinpa (2010), CCT draws its theoretical underpinnings from contemplative practices of Tibetan Buddhism and Western psychology.

CCT delivers training in compassion practices across six steps (Kirby, 2017):

1. Settling the mind and developing mindfulness skills.
2. Experiencing loving-kindness and compassion for a loved one.
3. Practicing LKM and compassion for oneself.
4. Compassion towards others through embracing our shared common humanity.
5. Compassion towards all beings.
6. Active compassion practice where one imagines taking away others' pain and sorrow and offering to them one's own joy and happiness.

Letter of Self-compassion



We are often too hard on ourselves. This can be reflected in the emotions we experience and the guilt, shame, and fear regarding how we feel.

Writing a letter of self-compassion can prompt us to be more forgiving and refocus our thinking on being more accepting, caring, and supportive of ourselves and others.

Describe an event that happened today when you felt your emotions were out of control or unwelcome:

Now, write a brief letter to yourself.

Write the letter with a message of forgiveness and acceptance for who you are and the emotions you experience.

Write as though you were talking to a close friend, and show your compassion (for example, *I am sad that you felt so angry today, that must have been distressing*).

Write down whatever thoughts come into your head. No one needs to read it. You are safe to be open regarding your feelings.

Read back what you have written. Recognize that all of us have emotions we wish we could avoid, but that we can see them as separate from who we are and share them with others – showing our vulnerable side.

Dr. Jeremy Sutton

Golden Ruleism



“Do for all others, both directly and indirectly, what you would want done for you.”

“Don’t do to any others, either directly or indirectly, what you wouldn’t want done to you.”

GoldenRuleism’s Foundation

Simple—Expansive—Beneficial—Powerful—Universal

GoldenRuleism rises from the expanded application of the moral and ethical precept most widely embraced by the majority of humanity. Many of us know it as The Golden Rule.

Though The Golden Rule is generally rooted in the world’s major religions, anyone can choose to live by it. Our Number One Rule has universal applicability.

Simply said, when we choose to live our lives in accord with the intent of The Golden Rule, we adopt sets of morals and ethics to guide us. They relate to what we internalize as “right” and “wrong” conduct.

I encourage you to explore the definitions of morals and ethics for yourself. For sake of discussion here, I’ll note that morals are subjective, while ethics are objective.

They’re related—but different. To succeed as a society, we need to constantly incorporate the omnipresence of both words into our thoughts and actions.

Because it’s rooted in principles of morality and ethicality, The Golden Rule guides us to show empathy and compassion for others—to act with benevolence in mind.

A Conversation with the Inner Child

It is important to recognize that the part of us who is still a child, needs love and support (Raypole, 2021).

Use the following questions to show compassion to the child within and recognize the difficult times with kindness.

Imagine the person you are talking to is the younger you at a time when you find life and the situation most difficult.

Discuss with your earlier selves how you felt then, and what you are going through now by going through the following prompts.

How do you (the younger you) feel about what is happening?

I feel that event/situation affects my life now in the following ways?

What could others have done for you to help?

How can I support myself now in my life?

Can you accept that you were a child and could not fix the situation? You have nothing to feel bad about.

Can I accept that sometimes the way I react is a result of my past? Can I recognize it does not have to be this way?

Review what you have written with kindness and see that while you could not control your past as a child, you do have a choice over how you react now.

The Three Orientations of Compassion



Psychological investigations of compassion have primarily focused on three specific orientations of compassion, namely: having compassion for others, receiving compassion from others, and self-compassion.

Here we will look at the differences between these orientations.

Receiving Compassion

Jazaieri et al. (2014) proposed that feeling like one does not deserve kindness from others can create fear of receiving compassion. For some, being the recipient of compassion can cause avoidance, and negative emotions such as grief or loneliness (Gilbert, McEwan, Matos, & Ravis, 2011).

Improving this orientation of compassion may enhance relationships and social connectedness. It can teach individuals to be more comfortable being the object of another person's attention (Jazaieri et al., 2014).

Self-Compassion

Defined by Neff (2007) as being open to and moved by one's own suffering, self-compassion is associated with many positive qualities. Neff (2007) suggested self-compassion positively affects coping skills, life satisfaction, emotional intelligence, social connectedness, mastery of goals, personal initiative, curiosity, wisdom, happiness, optimism, and positive affect.

A key component of self-compassion is the absence of self-criticism, which is known to be an early predictor of anxiety and depression (Blatt, 1995).

Self-compassionate people tend to recognize that imperfection and failure are often unavoidable, and so are more likely to be kind to themselves when confronted with negative experiences.

Research into self-compassion within healthcare professions has shown that high self-judgment is negatively correlated with compassion for others, self-kindness, and wellbeing. These results indicate that we become less compassionate to ourselves and others if we judge ourselves too harshly (Beaumont, Durkin, Martin, & Carson, 2016).

Compassion for Others

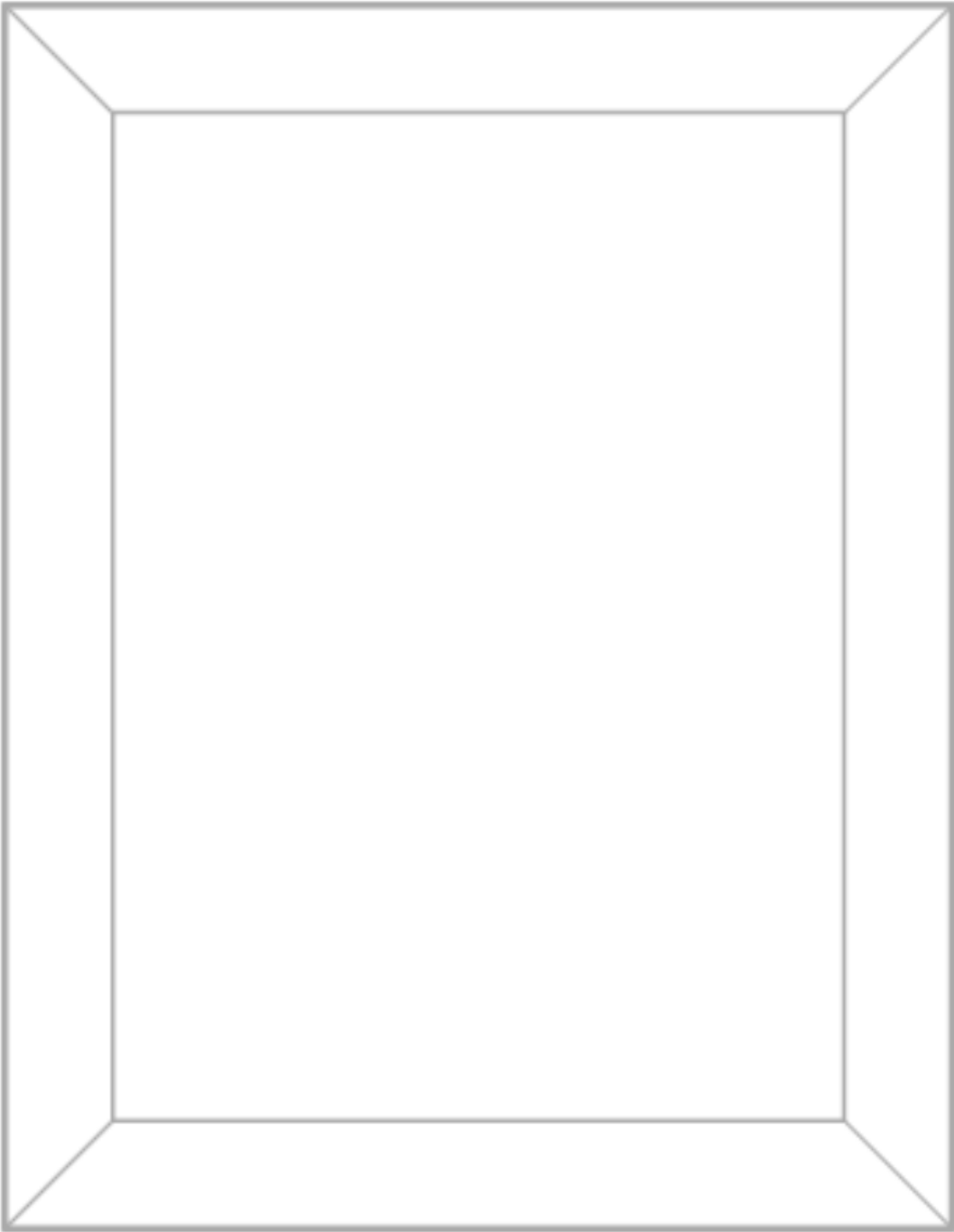
Compassion for others is evident across most cultures and spiritual traditions and is thought by some to be easier and more palatable than compassion for oneself (Jazaieri et al., 2014).

However, Gilbert and colleagues (2011) suggested that compassion for others is not always expressed and can actually be suppressed or inhibited.

It was initially thought that self-compassion and compassion for others may be related given they have the same theoretical structure and base definition. However, as they have been mostly studied separately, little is known about their relationship and to what extent they differ or resemble each other. Research has, however, indicated that the two may be different because:

1. Compassion is directed towards others as opposed to the self.
2. Individuals are often more compassionate to others than they are themselves (Neff, 2003).

Design a cover for a compassionate magazine



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