

The Energetics of Compassion

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In the traditional path of yoga, the first steps are *yamas*, or social precepts and *niyamas*, or personal precepts. Each of these precepts each consist of five practices. The five practices of the *yamas* are 1) *Ahimsa*: non-violence, 2) *Satya*: truthfulness, 3) *Asteya*: non-stealing, 4) *Bramacarya*: chastity and 5) *Aparigraha*: non-covetousness; while the five practices of the *niyamas* are 1) *Savsa*: cleanliness, 2) *Santosa*: contentment, 3) *Tapas*: fervor for study, 4) *Svadyaya*: study of self and 5) *Isvara pranidhana*: surrender to God. In total, these ten practices compose the moral and ethical observances that are necessary to move forward in our personal evolution.

The traditional Judeo-Christian religion also has ten precepts, called the Ten Commandments. The overlap between the Ten Commandments and the yogic observances is only partial. However, neither set mentions the concept of "Compassion". Why is this so?

The definition of compassion is "to be conscious of another's distress together with a desire to alleviate it". Compassion can be thought of as the summary of all ten precepts of either culture (and most others). A guru once said that the Ten Commandments can be summarized as "do unto others...", and that everything else follows. To be conscious and intentional when we act toward another (or ourself!) optimizes the rightness of that action and sets a trajectory for life that is healthy.

Modern physics informs us that all the universe is made of one "stuff"--this stuff is called energy. The human body, while material, is composed of energy, and so is human thought and consciousness. Human consciousness can be thought of as energy that has become aware of itself (of its existence). So, as the modern physicists and the ancient yogis both tell us, we are all one, all connected to everything else, since we are all made of the same stuff. And so, our acts of compassion, or lack thereof, can have far reaching effect: the one acting on the One.

Rudolf Steiner, the originator of "anthroposophy" (and upon whose work the Waldorf schools are based) suggests in his book, "How to Know Higher Worlds" that thoughts are as real as objects. The energy of thought, since it is made of the same stuff as everything else, effects, and can be affected by all other parts of the universe. So our

thoughts, both individual and collective, can have important effects. A good reason not only to act compassionately, but to think compassionately.

But if this is true, what about all the negative thoughts that we have not yet contained, or those of others who are evil? David Hawkins suggests in his book *Power Versus Force* that one act of "higher" intent can balance out numerous acts of lower purpose ("evil"). In essence, the positive energy of a higher act has much more energy than the negative energy of lower acts. Therefore, each act of compassion has the potential to erase, or counteract, numerous uncompassionate acts.

Rupert Sheldrake, a biologist, has proposed a theory called "morphogenic fields". Morphic means "shape", and so morphogenic fields are proposed to influence shape (and thought) across both space and time. Just like electromagnetic fields, though invisible and untouchable, these morphic fields can connect consciousness, especially among those of the same species, separated by thousands of miles. Unlike electromagnetic waves, these morphic fields do not seem to decay over distance. The effects of these fields have been subject to scientific study and have been proven to be real. They can explain certain phenomena that traditional science can not explain--such as the development of a fetus, or the ability of an idiot savant to play complex music on a piano without a moment of practice or training. They also can explain esoteric concepts such as "the collective unconscious". Morphic field theory also suggests that not only do our thoughts and feelings cross space, but also time. They explain how some characteristics are passed from generation to generation without requiring changes in the genes.

In conclusion, if it is not sufficient to act compassionately on a moral or ethical basis, understanding the effects of our actions on our community, our species, and the future, through these energetic mechanisms should give us pause. We must also work to act compassionately toward ourselves. Commercials are designed to make us want a product or service by making us dissatisfied with what we are and what we have. Furthermore, our society romanticizes violence. Therefore, to act compassionately toward ourself and others can be challenging.

So how do we enhance our compassion? One of

the best methods is a yoga practice. Yoga theory has always been energetically based. The postures and breathing work, which in America seem to be all there is to yoga, are only a small part of what yoga is about. The eight-fold path is designed to ultimately, purify our consciousness, so that we can become more aware of these energies, and of our true nature.

This path pulls our behavior, then our bodies, then our minds into balance, purifying our consciousness so that we are less fooled by the materialism of our senses (and our society), and more sensitive to the energetic, mystical, spiritual aspects of our existence.

IMPORTANT NOTE: This general information should not be used to make decisions about medical care without the involvement of a knowledgeable practitioner.

For More Information

- O See my previous articles on: Detoxification, Elimination and Simplification and What We Really Need
- O My website, www.c4oh.org, has helpful articles on related topics
- O Bateson, Gregory: Steps Toward an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution, and Epistemology. New York: ISBN (reprint) 0226-039-056.
- O Joy, W. Brugh: Joy's Way. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979. 0874-770-858
- O Eden, Donna: Energy Medicine. Tarcher, 1999. ISBN 1585-420-212.
- O Hawkins, David. Power Versus Force: The Hidden Determinants of Human Behavior. Hay House, 2002. ISBN: 1561-709-336.
- O Oschman, James: Energy Medicine: The Scientific Basis. New York: Churchill Livingstone, 2000. ISBN 0443-062-617.
- O Peck, M. Scott: Road Less Traveled. New York: Touchstone, 1978. 0684-847-248.
- O Sheldrake, Rupert: The Presence of the Past: Morphic Resonance & the Habits of Nature. Inner Traditions International, 1995. ISBN 0892-815-37X.
- O Steiner, Rudolph. How to Know Higher Worlds : A Modern Path of Initiation (Classics in Anthroposophy). Steiner Books, 1994. ISBN: 0880-103-728.
- O Wilber, Ken: A Brief History of Everything. Boston: Shambala, 2000. ISBN 1570-627-401.

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