

The Principle of Compassion

The Principle of Compassion recognizes the cooperative nature of the human race. We are individuals that are part of a great and evolving society. We are both independent and interdependent. Our societies are what makes us strong, but those societies are made up of individuals who have to be secure and taken care of individually in order to maintain our {In:individualism}.

We are one planet, we are all here together, and if we all help each other out, life will be better for all of us.

No person is an end unto themselves. We are all totally interdependent. When we are born we are helpless and we depend on others to take care of our needs. The same is true when we are old or when we are sick or injured. There are times in our lives when we care for others, and times in our lives when others care for us. Compassion is absolutely essential for the human race to survive. Without compassion all of society would fall apart and we would become extinct.

The Church of Reality subscribes to the {In:Philosophy of the Open Hand}. We are altruistic, generous, giving, sharing, loving, selfless, and caring people. We honor loving-kindness, friendliness, goodwill, benevolence, fellowship, amity, concord, charity, and non-violence. Our compassion is based on the reality of our interdependence, that we are strong collectively, and our independence, that we can be secure individually. We take care of each other, and we are taken care of.

A common view of evolution or "survival of the fittest" is depicted by two strong males fighting to the death. The victor, upon killing his opponent, mates with the females passing his superior genetics on to the next generation. People use this simplistic view as an argument for selfishness. That humanity is naturally selfish and that in the absence of a deity that there is no logical basis for selflessness. But that is a simplistic view.

The human race didn't evolve based on the strength and survival of humans as nomadic individuals. It's clear that if you take any person and drop them off in the woods, even with survival training, that they are far less equipped to survive than almost every other animal is. In that respect humanity is more like bees and although we are individualistic in many ways, we are part of the hive and our evolutionary path is based on interdependence. So it is not just in our selfish best interest to be generous, it is something that is crucial to our mutual survival.

Kindness, generosity, compassion, and selflessness are the result of human evolution.

It seems logical that a species having evolved using a strategy of interdependence would evolve an emotional and instinctive makeup that would support the evolutionary adaptation. What if bees, for example, decided to keep the nectar for themselves and not share it with the queen and the rest of the hive? That might work out for the individual bee, but that bee wouldn't contribute to future generations. (Bee might not be the best example since worker bees don't reproduce.) But - the point is, species that survive through cooperation evolve an instinct to cooperate.

Therefore one can conclude that humans evolved compassion, generosity, altruism, and selflessness and that universal love and the spiritual experience of community and caring for one another is hard coded into the human brain from birth just like eating, fear, sex, and hunting are. It turns out that our evolution is the basis for our morality and that there is an evolutionary basis for the natural laws that include compassion and giving.

Humans also have selfish qualities as well. We all have our own personal needs and these needs need to be taken care of. Obviously a person is a mixture of self interested and selfless and that isn't in itself a conflict. Often one's self interest is good for the community. A goal that many people try to achieve is to make your hobby your job. Some people do altruistic work and love what they do. The issue is if you are doing things for selfish reasons, that is harmful and draining to society. If so, then there has to be a balance between the conflicting interests. Sometimes with some imagination a person can make changes to alleviate the conflicts. In the Church of Reality - we are creative - and we apply {In:wisdom}

to situations and figure out fair balances between individual needs and community.

The Church of Reality believes in Original Virtue - that people are intrinsically good.

The Church of Reality believes in {In:Original Virtue} which is the assumption that people are fundamentally good. This is in contrast with the assumption of original sin that presumes that people are intrinsically evil. In reality people are naturally good and when they aren't then we try to be compassionate and help the wayward soul back on course to become a normal productive member of the community. The Principle of Compassion embodies empathy for others and treating others the way you would want to be treated in a similar circumstance.