Research shows that having compassion for others strengthens our social bonds. According to one study, a demonstration of compassion stitches the seams of acceptance and belonging and promotes the kind of social connection that is essential for survival. The rewards of compassion go to both the giver and the receiver. For the receiver, compassion offers social support that can be emotional, informational, or practical. For the giver, a demonstration of compassion provides meaning as it cultivates the giver’s recognition of what is best within them. Together, the experience is one of meaningful social connectedness that says “we are both a part of one humanity.”

But what is compassion?
Compassion occurs when one feels empathy for another’s plight, which compels them to action.

Empathy + Action = Compassion

Compassion can be cultivated by focusing not only on suffering but also on supporting and encouraging for the good of the self and others.

Try This!

Begin to cultivate and grow your own compassion by:

1. Assessing your compassion for others. Take the Compassion Scale Quiz developed by Elizabeth Pommier, Kristin Neff, and Istvan Toth-Krialy. Then identify areas where you can take steps to improve. [http://goodmedicine.org.uk/files/other-compassion%20scale,%20tahoma.pdf](http://goodmedicine.org.uk/files/other-compassion%20scale,%20tahoma.pdf)

2. Focus on commonalities. Rather than focusing on how you differ from others, try instead to recognize what you have in common. In many ways we are all connected to the larger human experience.

3. Avoiding judgment. Don’t label what you see in others as “good,” “bad,” “right,” or “wrong.” Instead, trust that everyone is human and doing the best they can.

5 Proven Ways to Cultivate Your Compassion (Backed by Science!)
[https://www.scienceofpeople.com/how-be-compassionate/](https://www.scienceofpeople.com/how-be-compassionate/)

20 Reasons Why Compassion is so Important in Psychology
[https://positivepsychology.com/why-is-compassion-important/](https://positivepsychology.com/why-is-compassion-important/)