

# Joy of Compassion (5 of 5) Joyful Action

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## Summary Keywords

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Hello and welcome to this fifth talk on the joy of compassion. The fifth aspect of compassion that contributes to creating a healthy, beneficial compassion for us and the world is action.

Usually, compassion is closely associated with action. It is the action of care, of doing something that alleviates the difficulties, challenges, and suffering of others or ourselves. Having joy in the activity of compassion is sometimes in short supply.

We often don't consider the activity of compassion to be a source of joy. This could be the joy of the simple activity of listening to someone or offering good wishes to someone. It could be something bigger that takes a long time. We might need to care for and tend to someone who is sick. We don't often think about seeing the activity that we are doing as something that will generate a sense of joy, well-being, or lightness so that we feel more at ease doing the activity.

The reason for that might be that the need for compassion – the suffering that stimulates or is a catalyst for compassion – is so great and challenging. There is so much injustice, oppression, and poverty. There is so much suffering and unfairness. When we try to care for and support people who are experiencing these things, we can feel our own despair, anger, urgency, or sense of overwhelm. All kinds of feelings can come along with the action and influence the way in which we do the action.

We must trust the action. We can think of it as stepping into a new phase or dimension. Yes, we can have these feelings, but in doing the action, we are stepping into a new activity, a new room, or a new world. We do not want to deny what we are feeling, but we also do not want to be held in check by or unduly caught in our feelings.

Instead, we want to have an attitude of – "Okay, now that we are prepared to offer our compassionate care for some situation, this care is what is important. This is what is valuable." We have prepared ourselves well. We have brought awareness to ourselves and to the situation. We have studied it and gotten to know it. We have become attuned to it. We are in harmony with it. We are not stressed, aversive, or indifferent to it. We are connected and at ease.

We understand the other people well. We are bringing to the situation more than just the projections and preoccupations that drive us. There is an appreciation of the people we are going to support. There is more than just the horror or distress that we feel about how terrible it is. We are taking the time to really respect these people. We consider what respect, appreciation, and valuing others mean in this situation. We are equals. We are not here to help or to fix the people or the situation. We are here to serve and support their welfare. There is an aspiration, which is a beautiful part of human beings. These are the foundations for compassionate action.

When we get ready to act, we enter the action as if the quality of the action – the way we act – is part of the message. We act in a way that people can appreciate. People can sense the ease, the calm, the generosity, the love, and the well-being with which the action is done. They don't feel our actions are a heavy burden that we carry, or that we're stressed or pushed. People feel something very different.

People can be nourished by the ease and the well-being in which we do things. They can be troubled when we are troubled. But we do not look for joy as we engage in the action. We can look for joy in awareness, attunement, appreciation, or aspiration. We do not look for joy in the action, but rather, we generate it. We step into the action with grace, ease, and peace. We try to find a nice way of doing it.

We don't want to have a sense of urgency unless there is a need to act quickly. We don't have to hurry. There is a difference between quickness and hurrying. I think of hurrying as losing ourselves. We don't have to lose ourselves when we do things fast. We can stay present. We can do it in an enjoyable way. We can enjoy doing this. We like it.

Is it okay to enjoy doing this? Do we need permission to enjoy? I propose that the enjoyment of compassion actually makes it richer and more valuable for the world and for ourselves. It helps make compassion sustainable over time. Enjoyment helps us to appreciate compassion. It feels good to be compassionate. When we enjoy it, we want to do it. There is more value in compassionate action than just helping people. It is also a value for us. We feel better. We feel lighter by doing it.

As I said, when we act compassionately, don't look for joy. Instead, act in a way that brings joy, enjoyment, lightness, or ease. Then compassionate action is sustainable over time. Better results come from it. If you are in contact with someone, one thing that might come out of the action is that your relationship becomes richer. There is a spark. There is a love, a joy, or a sense of rapport between you that feels nice.

Sometimes when I have done compassionate actions for someone, I was very dutiful and matter-of-fact in how I did it, so I didn't take the time to have a rapport with the person I was working with. I have also done compassionate action differently – not out of duty or urgency, but taking my time to do it in a respectful, kind, enjoyable way. Then I could feel the rapport grow and develop. The rapport with the people that I was supporting became more wonderful.

We want to care for those we love and those who suffer in such a way that they don't feel we are working so hard. We don't want them to feel obligated to repay us or that they are indebted to us because it was so hard, heavy, or difficult for us. We want to offer ourselves with ease, freedom, and joy. We want to offer our love to people who are going through difficult times.

This world is a challenging place to live. Human beings are challenged. Life is difficult. One of the things that can support us is that we care for each other. We care for each other with respect, kindness, the ability to listen, and appreciation. It is a beautiful thing. It is an important thing to do.

May this practice be a support in bringing our compassion and our care into the world. It is a natural outgrowth of mindfulness practice. As we let go of all the blocks, barriers, defensiveness, and preoccupations, we are left with a sensitive, caring heart. What else could we do but care for this world?

So, thank you very much. We have now completed this series on compassion. I will start a new series next week. I am thinking of doing a series on wise speech and mindful speaking. Thank you all.