Evolution, Compassion and Happiness

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Consciousness and Contents of Consciousness

Inner contemplation - insight

Outer investigation and measurement
Both approaches are now coming together to support and guide each other.

Central focus on *Compassion, Prosocial Behaviour and Happiness*
The interactive flow of Happiness

Self-happiness

Families
Schools
Organisations

Happiness of others

Happiness from Others

Each has its own facilitators and inhibitors
Facilitators and Inhibitors

All motives have facilitators and inhibitors

Same for Happiness

Fears, Blocks and Resistances

Suffering can be an inhibitor
Why do we need Compassion?
Life is Hard
The Two Psychologies of Compassion

Compassion can be defined in many ways but focuses on two key psychologies:

As a sensitivity to the suffering/distress of self and others with a deep commitment to try to relieve and prevent it

Two different Psychologies

– To approach, understand and (how to) engage with suffering/distress - looking into its causes - COURAGE

– To work to alleviate and prevent suffering/distress – work to acquire wisdom and skills - DEDICATION

Each more complex than might at first seem
Compassion is interested in the Big Questions

The Nature of reality and How we fit into it

Into the causes and nature of suffering
The Universe – 13.8 billion years
Age of the Earth  4.5 billion years

At least 4 major mass extinctions
Bringers of life and Death
Humanity is part of the flow life -- 99% of all species that have existed are extinct
The human brain is the product of many millions of years of evolution – a process of conserving, modifying and adapting.
Mind as a multi-self

The seeds of mind
Which do we cultivate?

Highly dependent on social context

War
Tribalism
Greed
Abuse
Wound
Slavery
Torture
Sadism
Hatred

Peace
Equanimity
Fairness
Care
Heal
Liberate
Nurture
Protect
Forgive

Highly dependent on social context
Compassion begins with a reality check
Insight builds wisdom

• We are gene-built - with evolved brains designed to struggle to survive, to want, grasp and avoid pain
We arise from the Genetic Lottery
Compassion begins with a reality check
Insight builds wisdom

- We are gene-built - with evolved brains designed to struggle to survive, to want, grasp and avoid pain

- We are all born, grow, decay and die - and are susceptible to many diseases and injuries – life with tragedy – pain and suffering – more than impermanence

- We are socially shaped – from our gene expressions, to our sense of self and values – baby kidnap
Compassion begins with a reality check
Insight builds wisdom

The multi-dimensions of interdependency

Not our fault as we all just find ourselves here!
Why Compassion?

• Compassion is helpful and is associated with well-being and moral behaviour – and therapy

Deeper Level

• There is something terrifying and deeply tragic at the heart of human existence

• There is anger, fear and grief that we are normally dissociated from – until it knocks on our door

• Terror management with dissociation from reality is normal but a deeply problematic human way of dealing with reality
Old Brain Functions

- **Motives**: (harm-avoidance, food, sex, caring, status)
- **Emotions**: (anger, anxiety, sadness, joy)
- **Behaviours**: (fight, flight, shut down, courting, caring)
New Brain Troubles

Self-monitoring
Self-criticism
Fearful Imagination
Fear of feelings
Emotional avoidance
Shame – sense of inferiority
Rumination
New Brain Competencies:
Imagine, Plan, Ruminate, Self-monitor, Self-identity

Old Brain Functions
Motives (harm-avoidance, food, sex, caring, status)
Emotions (anger, anxiety, sadness, joy)
Behaviours (fight, flight, shut down, courting, caring)
New Brain – ‘Can keep the threat going’

New brain:
- Ruminating
- Imagining worst outcome
- Self-criticising

Old brain

Threat System Level

Time
Brain-body responds to its own internal creations
So What to do???
Mindfulness as harnessing our inner Observer

**New Brain:** Imagination, Planning, Rumination, Integration

**Old Brain:** Emotions, Motives, Relationship Seeking-Creating
Mindful Brain

Mindfulness

New Brain: Imagination, Planning, Rumination, Integration

Old Brain: Emotions, Motives, Relationship Seeking-Creating
Tricky Brain and its problematic loops

My mind

Natures Mind
Types of Affect Regulator Systems

- **Incentive/resource-focused**
  - Wanting, pursuing, achieving
  - Activating

- **Non-wanting/Affiliative focused**
  - Safeness-kindness
  - Soothing

- **Threat-focused**
  - Protection and Safety-seeking
  - Activating/inhibiting

- **Anger, anxiety, disgust**

- **Drive, excite, vitality**

- **Content, safe, connected**
120 Million year evolving system to regulate threat
Sympathetic nerves to heart

Increases HR

Parasympathetic nerves to heart

Slows HR
Safeness - connecting and the parasympathetic system: The Vagus Nerve

- PNS influence on heart rate – slows beat down during outbreath
- Associated with affiliation, tend & befriend, general positive emotional tone
- Sensitive to safeness
Two Types of Positive Feeling

Hedonic

Achieving, obtaining, gaining, and holding, self-focused competitive.

Down side short-lasting, addictive, socially manipulative, striving to avoid inferiority, social comparison, envy, shame, depression, anxiety
Two Types of Positive Feeling

Eudemonic

Making a contribution, meaning purpose, connectedness and

Down side – how one makes a commitment – tribalism and war as group loyalty loss of meaning - hopeless
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Each more complex than might at first seem
Compassion is interested in the Big Questions

The Nature of reality and
How we fit into it

Into the causes and nature of suffering
Mindful Compassion Brain

Mindfulness

New Brain: Imagination, Planning, Rumination, Integration
Self-Identity

Old Brain: Emotions, Motives, Relationship Seeking-Creating

Compassion
Evolution: From caring to compassion

Mammalian Caring

Human Social Intelligence
- Knowing awareness
- Empathic awareness
- Knowing intentionality

Compassion
The Compassion Motive

May we find the way to help all beings be free of suffering and the causes of suffering.

Build Wisdom from Evidence
The Process of Compassion

Wisdom
Nature of Mind
Mind Awareness

Compassionate
Mind/Self

Grounding
Stabilising
Strength

Commitment
Motivation
Intention

Each has its own facilitators and inhibitors
The Interactive Flow of Compassion

Self-Focused

Compassionate Mind/Self

From others

To others

Each has its own facilitators and inhibitors
Happiness and the Compassionate Self/Mind

Wisdom
Nature of Mind
Mind Awareness

Compassionate Mind/Self

Grounding
Stabilising
Strength

Commitment
Motivation
Intention

Each has its own facilitators and inhibitors
The Journey

Mindfulness
Mind Awareness
Compassion
Intentions and Cultivation

!
Compassion as Decent *not* Ascent?

• Compassion is not getting rid of the difficult contents of the mind but mindfully engaging with them (e.g., rage, fear, prejudice) – going into, not away from the difficult

• Mindful Compassion helps us engage, understand and contain our dark sides (natures mind) without blaming and shaming. That is the courage of compassion. The dark side fuels compassion
The interactive flow of compassion

Self-Compassion

Families
Schools
Organisations

Compassion from others

Compassion to others

Each has its own facilitators and inhibitors
Compassionate mind/mentality

- Attention
- Thinking Reasoning
- Imagery Fantasy
- Behaviour
- Motivation
- Emotions

Compassion
Threatened mind can block compassion

Threat

- Attention
- Thinking Reasoning
- Imagery Fantasy
- Behaviour
- Motivation
- Emotions
Competitive mind can block Compassion

- Attention
- Thinking Reasoning
- Imagery Fantasy
- Behaviour
- Motivation
- Emotions

Compete
Compassionate mind/mentality

- Attention
- Thinking
- Reasoning
- Imagery
- Fantasy
- Motivation
- Emotions
- Behaviour

Compassion
What we are

• We have **knowing awareness** – conscious of consciousness and consciousness is the mystery and importance --- how do we study and use it

• Charles Chalmers consciousness
• [https://www.ted.com/talks/david_chalmers_how_do_you_explain_consciousness?language=en#t-89114](https://www.ted.com/talks/david_chalmers_how_do_you_explain_consciousness?language=en#t-89114)

• We can awaken to the patterns that DNA and life circumstance creates in us which then invites us to learn to wisely start to choose – enlightened choosing is the beginning of the spiritual journey

• Compassion changes our patterns of energy flows in us and others and hence in field of consciousness itself .

• The challenge of humanity is now to wake to this reality and all begin to take responsibility for the patterns created in consciousness
Compassionate Mind Foundation

• Promote compassion via its scientific understanding - to advance how we address suffering and our potential to cause it - in all beings

• Release people from fear and suffering wherever possible - at the heart of compassion – open to connectedness.

• Courageous engagement with wise action

So Please join us and our partners in the challenge

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