

JOURNEY IN... YEAR TWO THE DIVINE WITHIN SCIENCE

This lesson's Big Ideas:

- When we recognize that the Divine that is within us is also in every other human being, we feel compassion for ourselves and for others.
- Compassion, the deep understanding and sharing of another being's feelings, can be cultivated and nurtured.
- Acted upon, compassion contributes to our own well-being and the greater good of the entire world.

Lesson Materials

- Poster of human brain with select functions marked, including areas that respond to compassion
- Videos,
 - "Animals to the Rescue"
 - "Through a Dog's Eyes"
 - "Animal Heroes"
- TV/DVD/VCR

TEACHER REFLECTION AND PREPARATION

🕒 Ahead of time

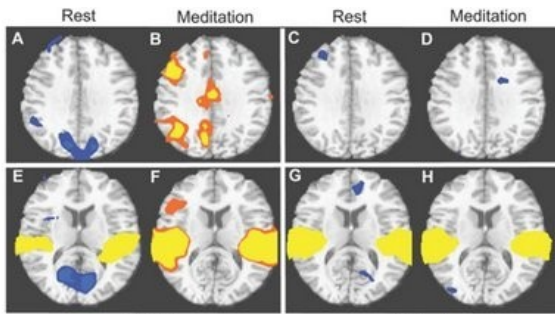
Jesus said to them, "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Rabbi, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And he will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." - Matthew 25:35-40

When you begin to touch your heart or let your heart be touched, you begin to discover that it's bottomless, that it doesn't have any resolution, that this heart is huge, vast, and limitless. You begin to discover how much warmth and gentleness is there, as well as how much space. - Pema Chödrön

A human being is a part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feeling as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. - A. Einstein

If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.

- The Dalai Lama



Areas showing a negative (dark blue, $p < 0.01$, blue, $p < 0.005$) or positive (orange, $p < 0.01$, yellow, $p < 0.005$) impulse response on average across 10 seconds in responses to all emotional sounds for the 15 novices and 15 experts at $z = 31$ compared to baseline (figs. A–D) and $z = 13$ (figs. E–H) (voxel-by-voxel paired t test compared to 0, corrected at $p < 0.01$). Lutz A, Brefczynski-Lewis J, Johnstone T, Davidson RJ (2008) Regulation of the Neural Circuitry of Emotion by Compassion Meditation: Effects of Meditative Expertise. *PLoS ONE* 3(2): e1897. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0061897

GATHERING AND FOCUSING

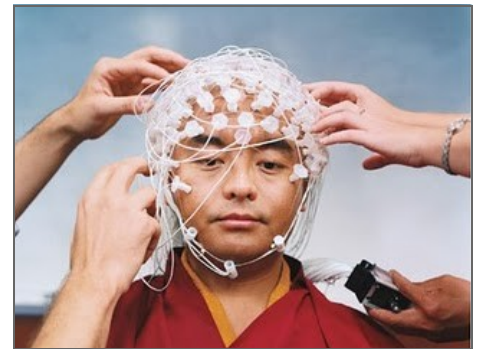
🕒 5 minutes

Compassion and our brain:

When you've felt compassion for someone, when you've really understood their fear or sadness, how has your body responded?

Our brain responds to people in distress! Here's a map of our brain and where our thoughts and feelings tend to happen. Look where compassion comes from: it's as complicated a thought as _____ and as simple as breathing! People can teach their brains

and hearts to feel more compassion for a bigger and bigger circle of people. There are monks who practice compassion in their prayers and meditation so much that their whole brains light up with loving thoughts.



PRIMARY ACTIVITY ONE ANIMAL NATURE

🕒 45 minutes

People aren't the only beings who feel compassion and act on our caring impulses. There are lots of examples of compassion in nature, too! Have you heard any stories about animals that have acted in caring, compassionate ways? Do you think that this means the animals think and feel like us? I wonder...

We have three videos of animals who help or save other animals or people. Several clips will be cued up or indicated on the DVD player. We'll watch a little bit at a time and then talk about it.

View the video, "Animal Heroes", a clip at a time. Pause to enjoy some discussion together in between clips.



Wondering Together:

- How did the animal act in this video story?
- Why do you think the animal acted like that?
- Are humans the only creature capable of compassion?
- Have there been stories where people have felt or acted the same way?
- I wonder if animals think more or feel more?
- What other stories have you heard or seen where an animal acted to help or save another being? Does this come from compassion?
- What lesson can we learn from the animal in this story?
- Should human beings feel compassion for animals?

CLOSING AND LEAVE-TAKING

🕒 2 minutes

Gather in a circle, assume a comfortable meditative position or take each other's hands. Speak these words, or words like them, the children repeating each line after you, the teacher.

The Holy is inside us
And the Holy is inside everyone
May we love and understand ourselves
May we love and understand others
May we love and understand the whole Universe
May our hearts be tender
May our minds shine friendliness into the world

and/or

We want others to be happy
Let us practice compassion
We want to be happy ourselves
Let us practice compassion

YOUR FIELD EXPERIENCES: FEEDBACK AND NOTES