

Increasing your power of compassion through empathy

Through empathy, you have the very precious ability to learn from watching other people's life lessons. You watch someone learn a lesson, and you are able to learn the same lesson without having to go through the same outer circumstances yourself. This ability to learn from other's mistakes is one reason why watching certain reality television shows can actually be beneficial to your journey – if you are watching them with a spiritual focus and intention to study human nature and the laws of nature.

As with all the virtues, increasing your spiritual awareness also increases your ability to feel compassion and empathy:

- **Your compassion automatically expands when you realize that we are all one.** Humanity is one great big family. And, in spirit, all people, beings, and things are one on an even higher level. Therefore, anyone who comes before you is, in a sense, a part of you. Their joy is your joy, their pain your pain, and your compassion for them is ultimately compassion for yourself. It is from this universal view that some Buddhists make the amazingly compassionate vow to save all beings from the ocean of worldly suffering before saving themselves.
- **Your empathy naturally increases when you clear away the inner cobwebs of anger, greed, and jealousy.** Think about the following:
 - Have there been times in your life when you were happy to see something bad happen to someone who you thought deserved the pain?
 - Have you ever seen somebody achieve great fortune and instead of feeling happy for them, found yourself overcome by that not-so-fortunate feeling of jealousy?

Consider

These kinds of negative tendencies keep you from feeling true empathy for others, and also keep your own good fortune far away. However, after spirituality uplifts your body, mind, and spirit, you become like a clear mirror that is happy to see good things happen to everyone.

Spiritual Wisdom

Advice from Patanjali

Here, the ancient yoga scholar Patanjali offers helpful advice on how to respond to the different kinds of people you encounter:

- Be friendly with those who are happy.
- Have compassion toward those who are suffering.
- Have sympathetic joy toward those who are virtuous
- Be indifferent toward those who are wicked.