



Compassion, by Dalai Lama

Compassion can be roughly defined in terms of a state of mind that is nonviolent, nonharming, and nonaggressive. It is a mental attitude based on the wish for others to be free of their suffering and is associated with a sense of commitment, responsibility, and respect towards the other. Now, when people speak of compassion, I think that there is often a danger of confusing compassion with attachment. So when we discuss compassion, we must first make a distinction between two types of love or compassion. One kind of compassion is tinged with attachment -- the feeling of controlling someone, or loving someone so that person will love you back. This ordinary type of love or compassion is quite partial and biased. And a relationship based on that alone is unstable. That kind of partial relationship, based on perceiving and identifying the person as a friend, may lead to a certain emotional attachment and a feeling of closeness. But if there is a slight change in the situation, a disagreement perhaps, or if your friend does something to make you angry, then all of a sudden your mental projection changes; the concept of 'my friend' is no longer there. Then you'll find the emotional attachment evaporating, and instead of that feeling of love and concern, you may have a feeling of hatred. So, that kind of love, based on attachment, can be closely linked with hatred. -- Dalai Lama in "The Art of Happiness"

Published at www.awakin.org on Jan 17, 2000