



Compassion in Action, by Ram Dass

I'm explicitly making my life a teaching, by expressing the lessons that I've learned through it so it can become a map for other people. Everybody's life could be like that, if they choose to make it so; choose to respect what they've been through and to share it with others. The curriculum of service provides us with information about our strengths as well, and we discover how these contribute to genuinely help-full service. Each time we drop our masks and meet heart-to-heart, reassuring one another simply by the quality of our presence, we experience a profound bond which we intuitively understand is nourishing everyone. Each time we quiet our mind, our listening becomes sharp and clear, deep and perceptive; we realize that we know more than we thought we knew, and can reach out and hear, as if from inside, the heart of someone's pain. Each time we are able to remain open to suffering, despite our fear and defensiveness, we sense a love in us which becomes increasingly unconditional. Acting with compassion is not doing good because we think we ought to. It is being drawn to action by heart-felt passion. It is giving ourselves into what we are doing, being present in the moment "no matter how difficult, sad or even boring it feels, no matter how much it demands. It is acting from our deepest understanding of what life is, listening intently for the skillful means in each situation, and not compromising the truth. It is working with others in a selfless way, in a spirit of mutual respect. --Ram Dass