



## **Radiating Photons of Goodwill, by Marc Ian Barasch**

Every now and then, I'll meet an escapee, someone who has broken free of self-centeredness and lit out for the territory of compassion. You've met them, too, those people who seem to emit a steady stream of, for want of a better word, love-vibes. As soon as you come within range, you feel embraced, accepted for who you are. For those of us who suspect that you rarely get something for nothing, such geniality can be discomfiting. Yet it feels so good to be around them. They stand there, radiating photons of goodwill, and despite yourself you beam back, and the world, in a twinkling, changes.

I appreciate these compassion-mongers, even marvel at them. But Iâ€™ve rarely thought that I could be one of them. Sure, Iâ€™ve tried to live a benign life, putting my shoulder to the wheel for peace, justice, and Mother Earth. Like most people, I adore my off spring, even when they drive me crazy; love my parents, despite the corkscrew of childhood; dote on my siblings (though there is that scrapbook of old slights); and treasure my friends (even if they sometimes let me down). Conventional wisdom wouldn't fault me for saving the best stuff for my nearest and dearest and giving the rest of humanity the left overs.

Thus it is, say the sages, that the harvest of kindness -- of kindredness -- is winnowed down to a precious few grains. For at the center of all spiritual traditions is the beacon of a truly radical proposal: Open your heart to everybody. Everybody.

Is this even possible?

Nelson Mandela once remarked that he befriended his jailers, those grim, khaki-clad overseers of his decades of hard labor in a limestone quarry, by "exploiting their good qualities." Asked if he believed all people were kind at their core, he responded, "There is no doubt whatsoever, provided you are able to arouse their inherent goodness." If that sounds like wishful thinking, well, he actually did it.

--Marc Ian Barasch, in *The Compassionate Life*  
[<http://www.bkconnection.com/ProdDetails.asp?ID=9781576757567&MLC=BKP.COMPASSION>]