

~ Inquiring Minds, Searching Souls ~

“ In separateness lies the world's great misery, in compassion lies the world's true strength” --Buddha #12 December 9, 2011

[Mission/Method](#) Links to past publications: [#1](#) [#2](#) [#3](#) [#4](#) [#5](#) [#6](#) [#7](#) [#8](#) [#9](#) [#10](#) [#11](#) [Post a Comment](#)

NEWSLETTER TITLE CHANGE REDEFINES ITS INTENT

The title change above is truer to my philosophy of being primarily a spiritual seeker coming from a rational background. I find that the older I get, the less I seem to know with certainty, and the more I am able to surrender to a sense of mystery. Moreover, I am suspicious of those who speak dogmatically about anything. (See [interview](#) of theologian John Shelby Spong.) Even my rational mind has always loved and followed the uncertainty and intellectual humility of Socrates who, according to Plato, said, “[I know that I don't know.](#)”

WHAT PROMPTED THE CHANGE

I recently heard that a certain well-schooled friend of mine stood up in a group of seekers interested in exploring all sorts of fantastic and fascinating theories about the coming new era of 2012; and made a plea that their exploration not get too heady since he had spent his whole life developing his mind, and now was interested in matters of the heart. What courage and wisdom.

Coincidentally (?) a week before that I wrote what my son calls [a process poem](#) on this very subject.

Matters of the mind alone can only reach so far, but must be, I imagine, guided by the heart to make this world a better place.

KEY WORDS ARE HELPERS

Three years ago the husband of one of my many cousins, who is not so accomplished in formal education but nevertheless a very intelligent,

wise, and thoughtful man, asked me the following: “What one word would you use to summarize the essence of Christianity?” I never thought of such a summary, and my stock answer might have been “love,” but his response really--as we woodworkers like to say--hit the nail on the head: Compassion.

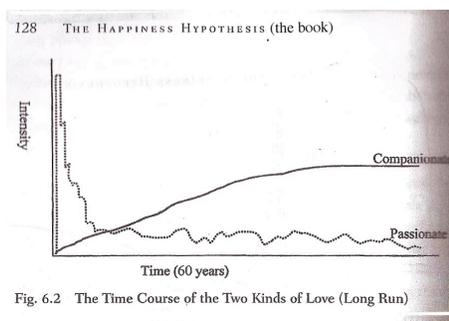
Compassion, literally from the Latin *cum+pati* means “to suffer with.” This feeling for and with another is more specific to me than the vaguer word *Love*. Compassion is closer to empathy, a word coined in the early 1900's and taken from the Greek *enpathos*, feeling with another. An interesting study for word lovers might be to find the shades of difference among the three similar words: compassion, empathy, and sympathy.

On another note, I wonder why it distresses me so much to attend funerals or watch tear-jerker movies. I wonder whether women in general are [better wired](#) to handle such stress.

Compassion in theory may be accepted now by many, but a question for more research: did it originate from the Gospels?

PASSION TO COMPASSION: A GRAPH OF LOVE'S ARDOR

I came across this interesting graph (below) comparing passion and compassion in marriage. (Nothing new here, but the terms and the graph itself caught my attention.)



THE BEAT GOES ON.. AND ON

If the average heart rate is 60 beats per minute, it would beat 86,400 times a day, and approximately 31.5 million times a year. For an 80 year old woman (the life expectancy in the US in 2005) that would be 2.5 billion heart beats, moving swimming-pool sized volumes of blood over its lifetime. This makes the 8-10 oz. heart one of the most amazing, efficient, and durable “machines” of all time!

Of course, the heart and the brain need each other to function. If this symbiotic relationship works in biology, why not with matters of the mind and those of the heart. Does the heart literally have an intelligence of its own, or are its metaphoric attributes seated in the emotional centers in the brain?

FAV FILM: *THE AGRONOMIST*

The child in me again wanted an escape film to get away from all the turmoil of the world. This documentary by John Demme was the best of both worlds. It told of [Jean Dominique](#), a radio journalist from 1959 to 1999 during Haiti's fight for freedom. Contains footage of Jean's animated interviews and those of his life-long and talented partner/wife. It features the fast-moving history of this country from, Papa and Baby Docs Duvalier, former Catholic priest Aristide, and the US history of involvement during those years. It resurrected a modern-day hero we knew nothing about. I highly recommend this to anyone who has the courage to step out of his/her comfort zone and see a passionate man of courage and compassion.

I hope you enjoyed the piece on Mary and Bob Burns, their Kasimu Educational Fund, and saw the very well done and inspiring ten-minute [movie](#). These and many others put a face on the word *Compassion*. -Joe-