

What we have learned in this chapter	Your reflections
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Golden Rule: Always treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself. • Compassion is the ability to feel another person's suffering as if it is your own, to wish for them to be free from it, and to be prepared to help them in that endeavour. • There are two psychologies of compassion: the psychology of engagement and the psychology of alleviation. • Our mind is naturally calm and clear, but experience can stir us up and obscure that calmness and clarity to the extent that we hardly remember that it is there. • Our nature is fundamentally whole and can be said to have three aspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The understanding that ourselves and everything else are interconnected. * The quality of awareness. * The natural capacity for compassion. • When we decide to place compassion at the heart of our lives, it has an immediate effect on how we view ourselves, other people and the world that we share. • Training the mind in compassion starts from where we are now and leads us through a step-by-step process that gradually reveals our self-focused habits and at the same time provides methods for accessing our innate compassion. • The stages are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Trying not to cause harm * Melting the ice in your heart * Seeing other people as just like you 	

- * Putting yourself in the other person's shoes
- * Seeing others as more important than yourself
- The instinct to seek happiness runs very deep in all of us – we simply wish to be able to live a happy life. Love, affection and the sense of being connected to others are inextricably linked to this search for happiness.
- Our 'old brain' is concerned with survival – we have inherited it from our reptilian ancestors.
- With the advent of mammals and the need to nurture their young, the first seeds of a biological basis for compassion took root.
- The 'new brain', the neocortex, is concerned with the higher functions – reasoning, thought and language, for example. It is altogether more complex, subtle and multi-faceted than the 'old brain'. For the most part, the 'new brain' is able to stand back from and regulate the primitive instincts of the 'old brain'.
- Humans have a natural tendency for empathy – the inability to bear another's suffering without wanting to try to help.
- Current research is coming up with interesting data which shows that compassion is part of our physiological make-up and that, when we engage with it, our health and wellbeing improves.
- How we work with ourselves is key in determining whether our capacity for kindness and compassion can become stronger than our instinct to protect ourselves and survive at any cost.