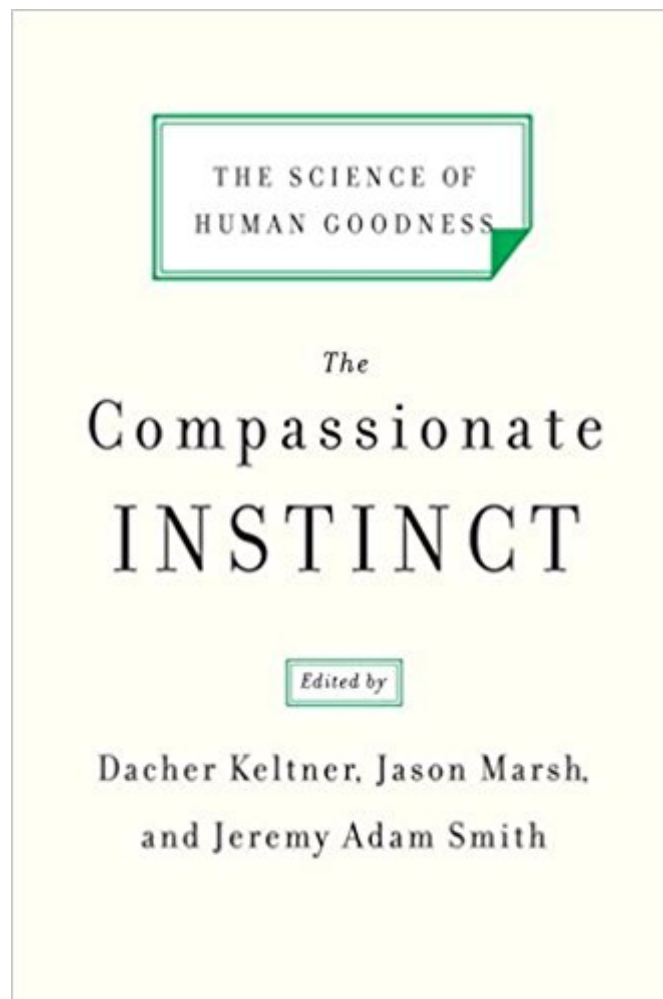




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# The Compassionate Instinct: The Science Of Human Goodness



## Synopsis

Leading scientists and science writers reflect on the life-changing, perspective-changing, new science of human goodness. In these pages you will hear from Steven Pinker, who asks, “Why is there peace?”; Robert Sapolsky, who examines violence among primates; Paul Ekman, who talks with the Dalai Lama about global compassion; Daniel Goleman, who proposes “constructive anger”; and many others. Led by renowned psychologist Dacher Keltner, the Greater Good Science Center, based at the University of California in Berkeley, has been at the forefront of the positive psychology movement, making discoveries about how and why people do good. Four times a year the center publishes its findings with essays on forgiveness, moral inspiration, and everyday ethics in Greater Good magazine. The best of these writings are collected here for the first time. A collection of personal stories and empirical research, *The Compassionate Instinct* will make you think not only about what it means to be happy and fulfilled but also about what it means to lead an ethical and compassionate life. 25 illustrations

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Why would a Palestinian ambulance driver pledge to help a wounded Israeli soldier who had killed his brother? In contemplating the remarkable commitment of this ambulance driver—and in dozens of other settings—the contributors to this volume recognize an aspect of human nature that has long eluded scientific scrutiny. But in the 35 essays and interviews here collected (all originally published in Berkeley’s Greater Good magazine), readers watch talented psychologists, neurologists, and primatologists investigate the riddles of human compassion. In the

selections gathered in the first section, contributors probe the mysterious origins of human empathy, limning an evolutionary history that has primed the human brain for selflessness. In the second section, contributors explore ways to convert our biochemical potential for altruism into day-to-day behavior. Readers learn, for example, how wise management policies can promote caring collaboration even in the cubicle labyrinth. And in the final section, contributors outline strategies—such as anti-bystander education—for fostering ethical health in society as a whole. Though uneven, this collection stimulates serious reflection. --Bryce Christensen

“The short, accessible essays...underscore empathy, forgiveness, gratitude, happiness, trust, and apology.... A readable digest of current work in positive psychology for a general audience.” - E. James Lieberman, Library Journal  
“[T]his collection stimulates serious reflection.” - Booklist

Full of good science but readily approachable by non-scientists as well, this collection of works by esteemed authors offers little snippets of amazing insights into how humans might become more compassionate. Most of the works are short synopses of larger publications by known experts in their field. The areas covered range from (mostly) the natural and social sciences to (a few on) politics and religion. Each one is quite short, making it easy to get through and grasp their key points, often in a humorous or mind-expanding way. Each is also a complete, stand-alone piece, independent of the others in the book. Poke around, delve here and there, put it aside and come back to it later -- or read them all, almost straight through, as I did. They're wonderful!!! (P.S. Don't miss the intro by Keltner or the final piece by Zimbardo and his colleague -- fabulous!!!)

As a psychotherapist in a system that has focused too long on pathology, I found this scientific look at humanity's positive traits to be inspiring. Contributions by the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu bridge science to spirituality.

Looking forward to reading it

I highly recommend this book for those studying or interested in positive psychology; it is a multifaceted look at the nature of compassion and how this positive and pro-social emotion impacts our society. It is an easy and satisfying read filled with information based on sound research done by reputable professors and researchers. Don't miss this one!

I love it. As soon as I started to read it, I bought another 3 books to give as gifts for special friends and people tuned in this vision of Life!

This is excellent material for people who have forgotten what our true purpose and potential is as humans. In a world so influenced by fear, this information is excellent for challenging the cultural programming that buries our instinct for compassionate choices and behaviors with the distortions, deletions, and generalizations our minds can deliver. An easy read, excellent for book studies and stimulating discussions.

good

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