

Hello everyone. I am so happy you can be here tonight. I am excited to be able to present my book to you. I have put a lot of time and effort into it, and I hope some good can come of it. Unfortunately my mom cannot be here tonight as she has suffered a stroke a while ago and is in the hospital. She is weak, but appears to be on the mend. I asked her whether I should give my presentation and she strongly said yes. She is the strongest person I know, and I'm very lucky she's my mom.

To be honest with you, I am rather nervous. This is my first book. The last time I gave a public presentation was in 1987 for a high school graduation valedictorian speech. I'm 53 now, so let's just say that was a while ago. Also I have had very little content feedback, so I don't really know how the book will be received. My book editor did provide the paragraph at the end of the chapter on Lee, mom, and me. It was perfect, and I thank him for that.

Four years ago I decided that I would like to write a book about climate change and perhaps contribute to try and help offer solutions. I have a Ph.d. In physics and thought my knowledge might be helpful. After a few days of research I quickly realized that a huge fraction of the technology necessary to fix the problem, probably 90%, was already available. After a little more digging, I found that a more fundamental problem is getting the political will together. This is necessary in order to collectively decide as a society how critical a problem climate change is and how soon it needs to be solved. I then asked myself why the political will is so difficult to muster. I quickly came to the conclusion that people need to be encouraged to talk with each other about why solving the problem of climate change is so important. By talking with, and learning from each other about the problem, they might gain a better understanding. They then could generate better ideas for potential solutions to the problem, both individually, and together.

It was about this time that I started writing *Compassion for Life*. I believed it could perhaps provide a tool to naturally encourage people to discuss their problems with each other and work together on generating ideas for potential solutions.

*Compassion for Life* appeals to people's emotions. It can be used as a guide for two types of purposes. Both purposes use the same tool in the book: namely the sharing of compassion and self-compassion between two people at the same time. This type of interaction naturally produces ideas to generically improve life.

Where the two purposes differ is in regard to the emotions they try to improve. One purpose uses the tool to encourage those who are suffering pain, a negative emotion, to reduce that suffering and move toward a neutral emotion such as relief or contentment. The other purpose helps people move from a neutral emotion to a positive emotion: in other words, move towards happiness.

When the tool is used to reduce suffering, the effort required can be very substantial. I suffered from mental health issues for more than a decade. I have had to put in a lot of hard work to heal in my case. It has taken me four years to recover to the emotion of relief. When the tool is used to move from a neutral emotion toward happiness, I have found that process to occur much more quickly.

Recently I have been thinking about my future and exploring all kinds of ideas to improve my life. The ideas are starting to come to me quite easily. I am excited by what the future potentially holds for me. It has started to make me quite happy. I am so glad I was able to stick it out during my recovery. In the end, I have found out that I am much stronger than I thought I was. It is a very satisfying feeling.

As stated before, Compassion for Life appeals to people's emotions. During my transition from primarily feeling negative emotions to neutral ones, I found I was learning a great deal about myself. In fact, I believe upon reflection that subconsciously I wrote Compassion for Life in order to learn about emotions and figure out a way to help myself get better. I have referred to my book continuously looking for help, and it has indeed helped me. If this is the case, then my recovery might be a demonstration that the book can be a useful tool to aid in recovery.

We are now faced with a very big problem to solve: namely climate change. Compassion for Life discusses the emotion self-compassion which is defined as the urge to ease one's own suffering. There are many ways that climate change is starting to negatively affect each of us. We, both as individuals, and collectively, are starting to pay much closer attention to how significant this negative impact actually is.

On the individual level, this close attention is akin to us having self-compassion for ourselves. In fact, it truly is us having self-compassion. We are beginning to individually see how climate change is causing suffering for ourselves, and that personally we have a vested interest in coming up with a solution.

Additionally, people appear to be having more discussions with each other about how much of a negative impact it has on them. People also seem to be coming up with more ideas for solving it: both what they can do as individuals, and what they can do together.

I have also noticed that these ideas appear to be discussed between people more and more often, and in open settings. It is these types of discussion seeds, namely grass roots efforts, that provide the momentum to potentially grow into efforts of very large numbers of people wanting to solve the problem at hand. The grass-roots efforts of the Gorham Climate Change Group is indeed a great example of such a group.

Their ideas are truly the seeds that can potentially grow into a large movement of people who can provide the political will, to make great things happen... And it all starts with two people discussing a shared problem with each other. By sharing self-compassion and compassion at the same time, which is described in detail in my book, they naturally produce ideas about how to make the situation better and potentially solve the problem. Perhaps Compassion for Life has a good chance at helping to foster discussions about our shared problems. Such discussions may then help us generate new ideas for possible solutions, both faster, and with more input from those affected directly by the problems. I believe Compassion for Life is indeed worth considering as a tool to foster those very discussions. It is my hope that it will help us.

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