

THAT MARVEL . . .

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with response to another's situation?

"Right, it's trying to understand their perspective or viewpoint. From a deeper standpoint, though, compassion is based on being able to understand another person's unique spiritual being, their identity and individuality. It goes beyond just trying to put yourself in someone else's shoes. It goes deeper—to understanding their spiritual selfhood."

In his healing practice, Ballard views compassion as something more than a good thing to show toward patients.

"I think it's the essential thing. If you see compassion as based on spiritual recognition, that's really at the heart of spiritual healing. You're seeing someone else from the standpoint of his or her spiritual integrity, so that's foremost in what you're going to be holding in thought about them as you pray for them."

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Kathleen Brehony would agree on compassion as essential in healing. Some healing professionals see compassion, or a loving connection with patients, as an aid in treatment, but perhaps not as the focal point of care. "I think that's a mistake," she says. "Compassion comes from Latin words meaning 'to suffer with.' I think compassion is essential. More and more, psychology and medicine are moving in the direction of trying to help the whole person, not just their symptoms. I think that's long overdue."

"Actually, it's a remembrance in a way, because that was the original nature of medicine. But then we became more technologically advanced—which, by the way, I think is a great thing. But in the process of becoming more scientific, we've lost sight of the fact that a human being is a whole person, and that when we can embrace that person as a human being [ourselves], not just as professionals, but in a way that allows us to fully identify with and understand

and have feelings for that person's reality, I think that we do a better job. People forget that the word *psychology* comes from the Greek word meaning *soul*."

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Ron Ballard wants to take soul-knowledge a step further. "If we recognize that the Creator has created all to be its expression—made in the infinite's "image and likeness" [in a phrase from the Bible's book of Genesis]—then in a sense we really can say that when we're seeing others from a spiritual perspective, we're seeing the definition of God. We're seeing the way that God is revealing and defining and expressing Himself [to humanity]. And to me, that's the ultimate compassion—recognizing in others God's own likeness."

Would that explain why compassion is spontaneous? Why there's no waiting period for response to another's need when that response is actually reflecting God's nature?

"Exactly," Ballard says. "It's so important that we recognize that,

COMPASSION IN ACTION

A life put back together

Ron Ballard tells about a woman who came to him for help. She had lost her job, her marriage was on the rocks, and her relationship with her kids was deteriorating. "Everything was falling apart. That's where the compassion came in. It wasn't just a matter of feeling empathy for her problems. My treatment involved recognizing that there was still divine substance in her life. The things that God was imparting to her and expressing in her were the basis of starting again, to get her life back together.

"We prayed to discern all of the things that God was supplying to her, and we cherished each one of those gifts. The more that we recognized the spiritual substance and resources that God

was giving, the more she saw her life coming together. Eventually, she and her husband began to reconcile. She and the children began to understand each other's point of view. Also, she saw that she actually had needed the time away from work just to be able to reflect and to put things together, and when she had done that, she found a number of new opportunities for employment.

"Compassion in this case wasn't just feeling empathy for her situation, as much as it was recognizing who she really was as an expression or manifestation of God, and that what God was supplying in her life was permanent."