

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a landscape. It features rolling hills in the foreground, with the nearest hill in deep shadow. The hills in the distance are shrouded in a thick mist or fog. A bright, glowing light source, likely the sun or moon, is positioned on the horizon to the left, creating a strong lens flare and illuminating the scene with a soft, ethereal light. The sky is a mix of pale blue and white, blending into the mist.

LIVE THE POWER OF COMPASSION

Brigitte van Baren

EIGHT SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES FOR COMPASSIONATE EARTH BEHAVIOUR

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POWER OF COMPASSION

ONE EARTH

ONE FAMILY

ONE SPIRIT

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PREFACE

'One Earth, one Family, one Spirit' could be wording out of the Earth Charter, but we now see it on the front page of this publication: Live the Power of Compassion.

A few years ago Karen Armstrong brought us the Charter for Compassion, a document that urges the peoples and religions of the world to embrace the core value of compassion. The Earth Charter and the Charter of Compassion are family, and I consider myself a member of that family. Our family believes that spirituality matters and is in the public interest.

The rediscovery of spirituality, so many generations after Saint Francis of Assisi, allows us to characterize modernity as the period after the Enlightenment. Or, more correctly, in modernity we must integrate the legacy of the Enlightenment – the findings of science and democracy, the separation of powers, and representative democracy with its democratic rules – including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights setting limits to power, limits to the right to rule, even when rulers are democratically elected – with religion and spirituality. How did the Earth Charter become infused with spirituality? It's not because of the 'four times four is sixteen' principle, but because of the Preamble and The Way Forward, the beginning and the end of the Charter. The Preamble states: 'To move forward we must recognize that, in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms, we are one human family and one Earth Community with a common destiny.' The Way Forward proclaims: 'Let ours be a time to be

remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.'

In this preface I would like to clarify the connection between 'a common destiny' and 'the joyful celebration of life.' The connection is spirituality and harmony. These are twins, walking hand in hand. To live in harmony is our mission and must become our destiny. This challenge, to seek harmony, dates from the beginning of humankind, but today the challenge is a global one. Technology, in particular information technology, has created one Earth. We are faced with the challenge to form one family, with a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms. We must live up to the challenge of sustainability: to intergenerational solidarity and diversity. Diversity in harmony proves to be especially challenging.

The 'joyful celebration of life' requires first of all that we not give in to the temptation of being divided and that we not claim superiority and refrain from blaming others. This requires respect and compassion. At the ultimate of Enlightenment we learn that harmony – harmony with ourselves, with others, with humankind as a whole, with future generations, and with nature and all life forms – is as vital to our common destiny as making use of economy, technology and democracy. Spirituality therefore requires silence and compassion, and the joyful celebration of life: with 'useless' harmony and with music, art and culture, which are, by definition, not productive.

Yes, let ours be a time to be remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life...

It Starts With One
It starts with one universe
With one awakening, one choice
With one person who cares
With one teacher, one neighbour
With one dialogue, one collaboration,
one action
With one dream

It Starts With One
Caring for one plant, one tree
Looking after one bird, one squirrel
Saving one drop of water
Picking up one piece of waste
Walking one journey
one future, together
Caring for one Earth Community

This beautiful text* highlights that the individual is key – it starts with one – but the respect and compassion include the whole Earth Community. Let us become aware that there is no contradiction between God and the mystery of the Whole Creation, including Nature.

Ruud Lubbers

* This poem *It Starts with One* was written for the celebration of 10 years Earth Charter, in 2010, by Fernanda Baumhardt (Brazil), Steven Rockefeller (USA), Kartikeya Sarabhai (India) and Alide Roerink (the Netherlands).

INTRODUCTION

Created as a prelude to the RIO+20 Conference on Sustainable Development to be held in June 2012, this publication contains ideas on how anyone can develop an Earth-friendly attitude to life.

Throughout the world, we are struggling with the impact of the economic crisis and global warming, and, more than ever, we need to ask ourselves some serious questions about the way we are leading our society. In a world where people are becoming increasingly independent, while at the same time coping with the irrational aspects of life, values like power and logic no longer suffice. Different qualities, especially 'soft' ones such as self-awareness, empathy and compassion, can serve us better in dealing with unexpected and overwhelming change.

The eight principles formulated here are based on a recommendation by Alide Roerink, who is preparing the UN Sustainable Development Conference in Rio de Janeiro in her role as co-organiser of the Dutch Rio+20 National Platform. It was her idea to create an inspiring spiritual document focusing on the main life-guiding principles of development, as described in the Earth Charter. These principles are true to the teachings of St. Francis of Assisi. Huib Klamer, secretary of the Netherlands Confederation of Industry and Employment VNO-NCW and a senior adviser to Global Compact Netherlands, agreed that such a document could add value to the conference. I therefore wrote this publication based on eight spiritual principles,

leading to an attitude to life that embraces compassion for the Earth and all living beings. While St. Francis of Assisi's approach to life forms the starting point, the text is really concerned with universal human values. Therefore, I decided to base these guidelines not only on the values of St. Francis, but rather to draw on sources from a variety of religious traditions. Mystic verses are a source of inspiration that can affect us deeply, and it is only when we are touched in our hearts that we can change our attitude to life.

Each quotation is followed by a concise, practical explanation that will help you integrate these principles into your daily life. Acknowledging basic values such as serenity and simplicity can inspire us to adopt a more authentic attitude to life, where we are willing to learn to be empathetic, helpful and gentle. We will then be able to respond more effectively to subtle signs of impending change or conflicting interests in society. Consideration and compassion are the key values allowing us to experience that we are all connected in one way or another. For these reasons, our gentle actions will benefit not only society as a whole but allow us to help ourselves as well.



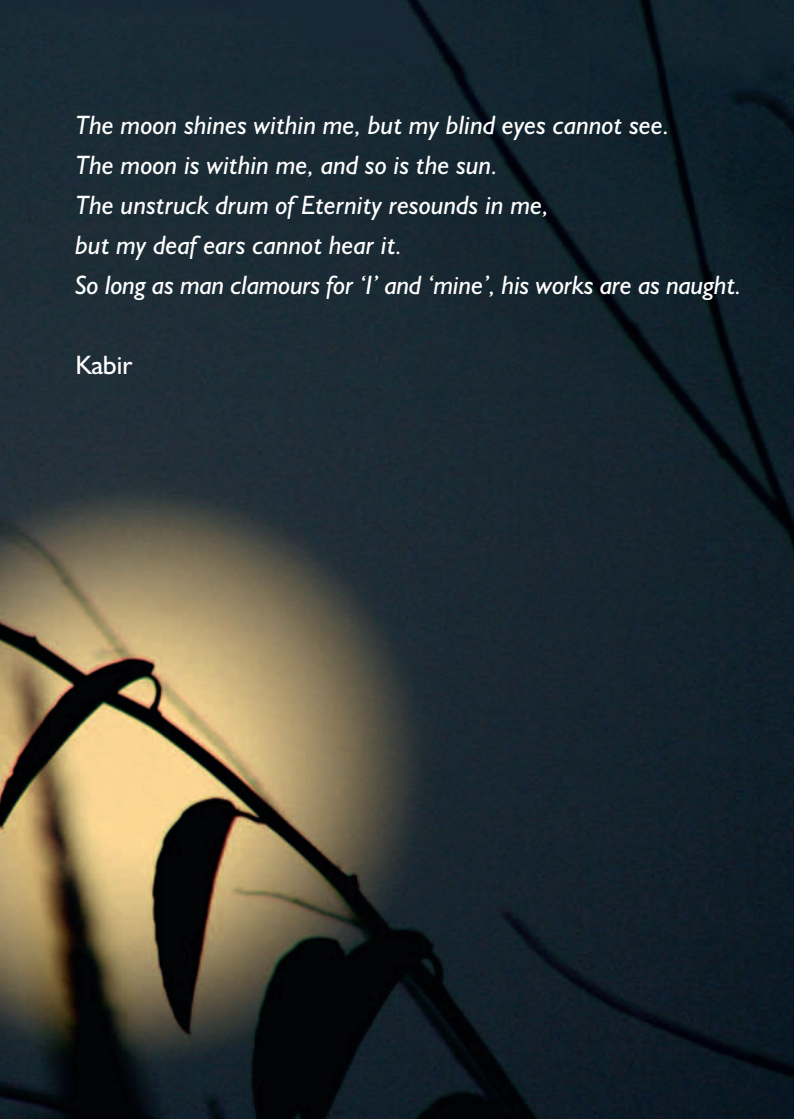


Rad der Religionen - Gisela Drescher

EIGHT SPIRITUAL
PRINCIPLES
FOR COMPASSIONATE
EARTH BEHAVIOUR

**Consider yourself
as a reflection of nature**





*The moon shines within me, but my blind eyes cannot see.
The moon is within me, and so is the sun.
The unstruck drum of Eternity resounds in me,
but my deaf ears cannot hear it.
So long as man clamours for 'I' and 'mine', his works are as naught.*

Kabir

Consider yourself as a reflection of nature

In mysticism, the sun and the moon have traditionally symbolised the divine. This is reflected in the human soul, where the individual personality becomes subordinate to a greater whole.

We all harbour a deeper being, but it eludes us because we are distracted by our continuous stream of thoughts. This state of mind causes us to lose touch with our true selves, to the point where we are barely even aware that we are part of nature.

We are essentially microcosms, composed of earth, water, air and fire, just like the greater whole. The human body consists mostly of water, which is essential to survival, as is the air we breathe. Although water and air are basic necessities of life, we are unaware of these elements, which are taken for granted. In fact, we mostly live in a state of physical unawareness and are therefore incapable of truly communing with nature. Preoccupied as we are with our thought processes, we are insufficiently aware of our senses. We don't take time to listen to the sounds of nature, such as the wind or birdsong, and we don't notice the moon rising in the sky. Only if we can focus on hearing and seeing will the hidden dimensions of nature become visible. We will then become aware of how the sound of the rain can

influence our mood or how the sunlight affects us. It is through these experiences that we can truly feel our affinity with nature, as expressed by Kabir in his poem.

Furthermore, he suggests that human efforts have little meaning as long as they are dominated by the ego. We can only contribute in a meaningful way if we become less self-centred. But the question is, are we willing to do this? Practising humility appears to be difficult for us, despite being considered a virtue in almost all religious traditions. By yielding, we learn to make ourselves smaller if the circumstances demand it, for example because things turned out differently than expected. If we go with the flow, we can open up our minds and acknowledge our own powerlessness, becoming resilient enough in the process to take a new step. At the end of his poem, Kabir writes that our work must be permeated with fervent longing for true insight. He expresses this as: 'The flower blossoms before the fruit; when the fruit appears, the flower has gone.' The flower here represents the desire that culminates in the fruit of true insight. By realising that our being is reflected in nature, we can make wise decisions because they are taken at the right time, in harmony with nature and life itself.

**Take your time
to abide in silence**



*Although there is silence everywhere,
it will not appear,
if you feel
that it must be silent.
(...)*

*Silence is everywhere, always,
as soon as I don't feel
that it has to be silent*

Silvia Ostertag

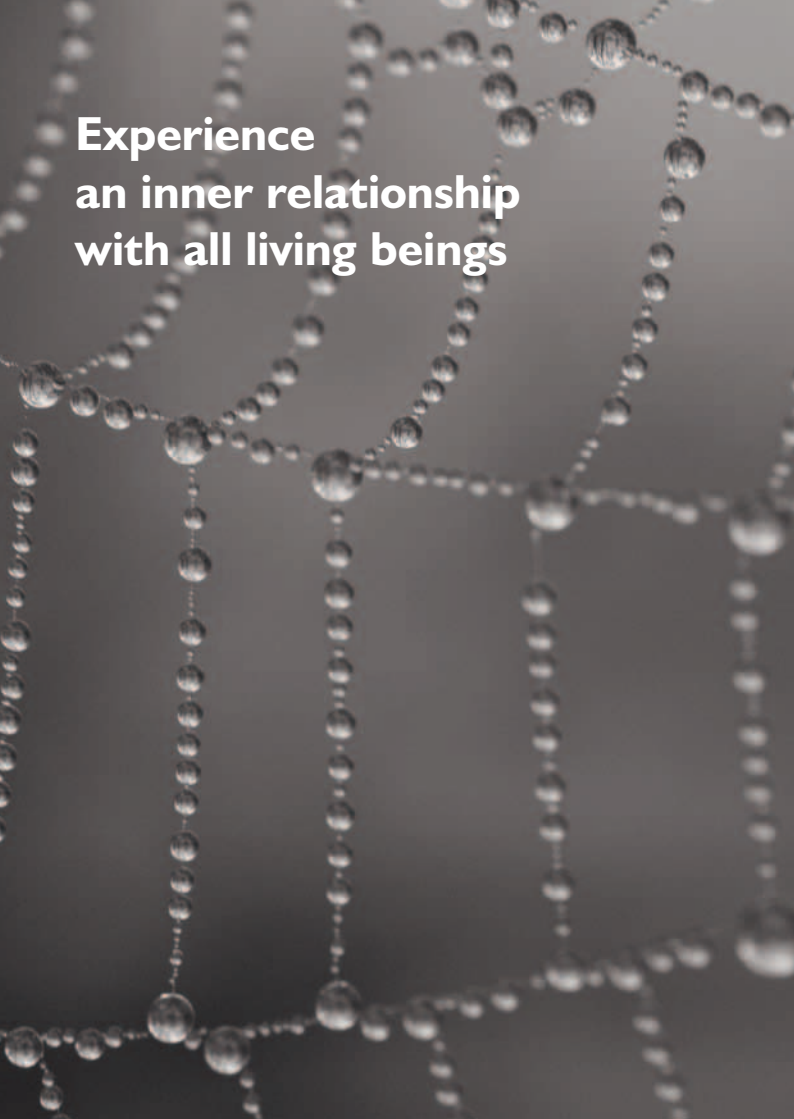
Take your time to abide in silence

In our busy lives, it seems hard to find peace and quiet. We are overwhelmed by external impulses every day – thoughts drive us and won't leave us alone. We are so caught up in thinking that we can no longer imagine calming our mind. Nevertheless, our world does consist largely of silence; it is its most vital element. As long as the wind blows, it produces a constant rustling of tree leaves, until the wind falls still and everything becomes quiet. Along with sounds, there are ripples on the water. When the wind quiets down, the water becomes calm and everything is reflected clearly on its surface. This also applies to the thinking mind: once it has quietened down, the mind becomes clear, and our true being becomes visible below the surface.

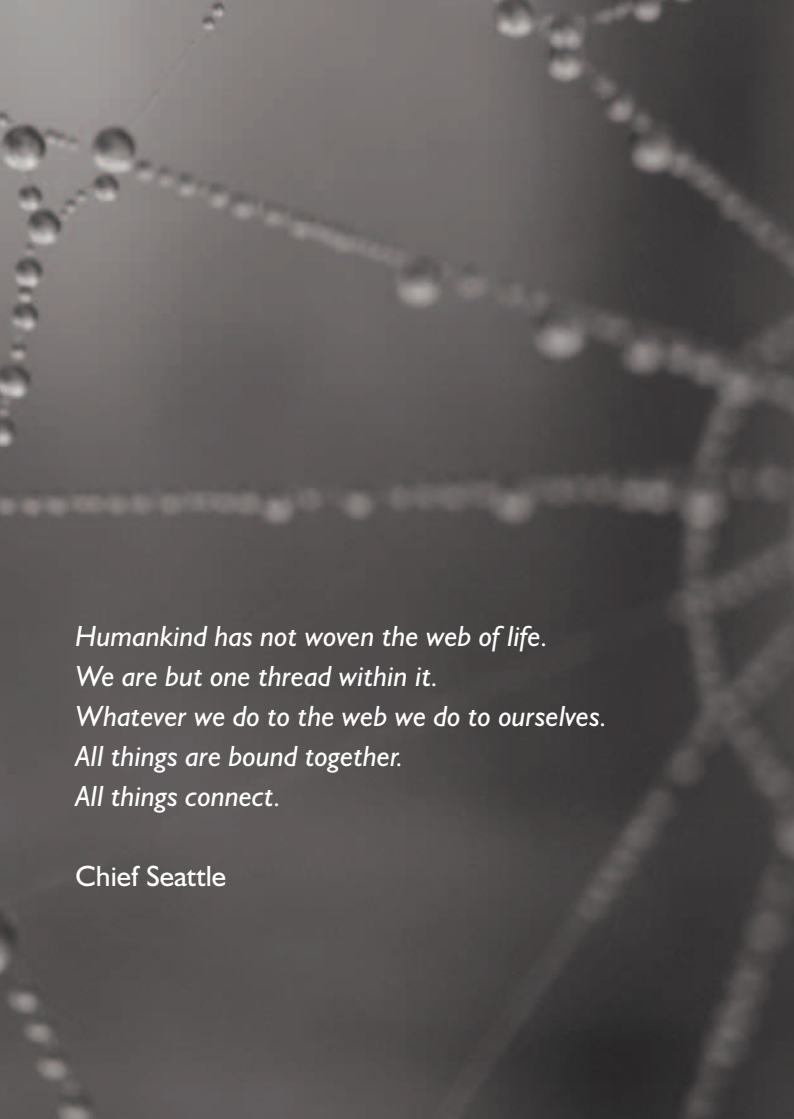
How do we achieve such serenity? By breathing in and out more deeply, we create inner peace. The deeper the breath flows into our body, the emptier our head becomes. By continuing to breathe calmly, turbulent thoughts quieten and we can gain new insights. But in our busy lives we are trapped in rational thought, which can only catch certain signs. In silence all our senses are activated, along with the cells in our body, allowing us to perceive many more shades of

meaning. The quieter we are, the more nuances we discover. This is also evident in nature: the sun rises without a sound and illuminates the landscape, and in winter the snowflakes quietly transform the landscape into a white expanse. Given the constant noise of our society, we will need to reserve time to listen to the silence within ourselves.

Peace and silence can be found anywhere once we become aware of the quiet moments that arise spontaneously each day. All those times we have to wait, for instance, because a friend or colleague shows up late for an appointment, give us an opportunity to reconnect with ourselves. We can choose to turn off the telephone and computer for a while and experience the peace. Through such simple actions we create space for ourselves. Only by observing without judgement can we follow our breath and let our awareness sink into our body. This creates a quiet space in our head that energises us and enhances our interaction with others. By way of the breath, which is available as long as we exist, we can connect with that stillness within at any time. And the beauty of it is, that it doesn't necessarily have to be silent for us to do so.



**Experience
an inner relationship
with all living beings**



*Humankind has not woven the web of life.
We are but one thread within it.
Whatever we do to the web we do to ourselves.
All things are bound together.
All things connect.*

Chief Seattle

Experience an inner relationship with all living beings

The threads of the web linking us to all living creatures are invisible. Every one of us forms a small chain that connects with the other chains of this all-embracing network. Our actions continuously affect the other elements of the greater whole, whether we are aware of it or not. Many people, however, rarely consider others and simply follow their own train of thought. They perceive themselves as locked into their own inner world, cut off from the world around them. But this form of separation does not correspond to reality, as expressed in the words of Chief Seattle quoted above.

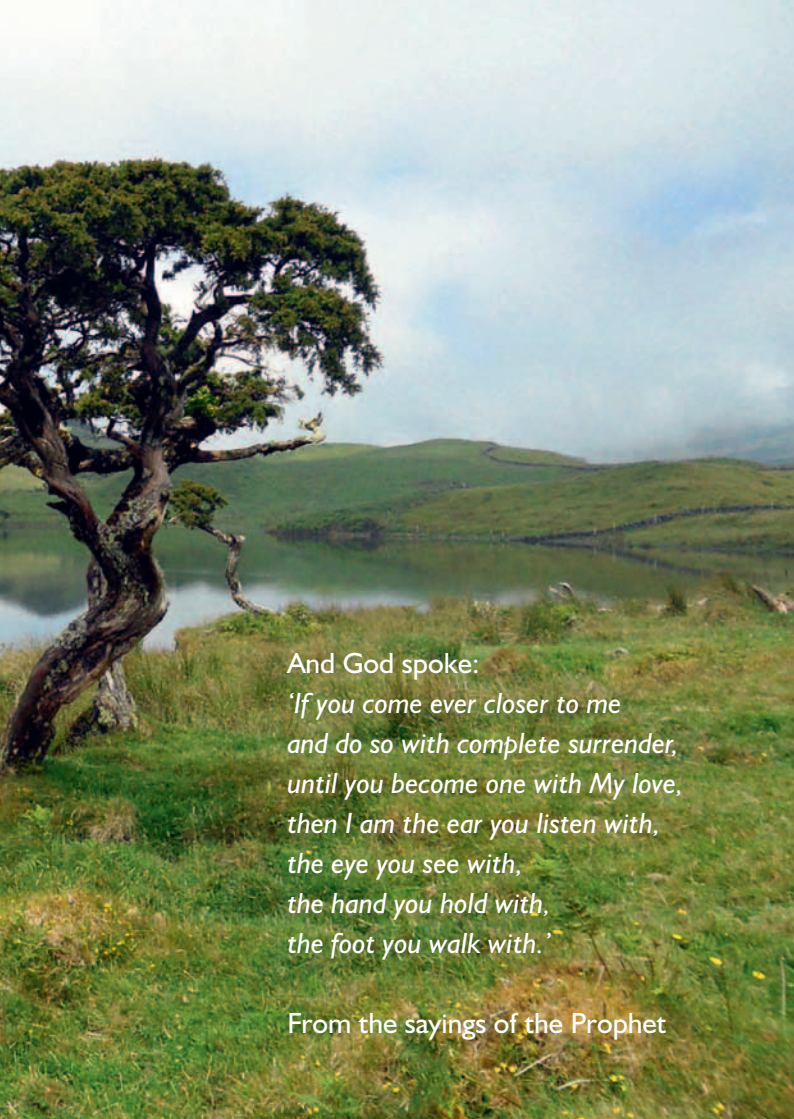
Countless, extremely subtle chains of events generate a perpetual process of action and reaction. Science has taught us that we consist of matter and energy. Energy fields are known to influence each other and even merge completely. However, in the human world this merging aspect is often blocked, because our dominant egocentrism prevents it, ensuring that we continue to feel separate. If we overcome our self-centredness, we can develop an attitude to life that is more focussed on connecting with others. This creates a sense of togetherness, making us want to reach out and help others. In our daily lives, we

will no longer promote only our own interests, but also consider those of others. Our actions will serve the common good first. We will discover that not just other people, but animals and plants too are our kindred spirits. We belong to the same organic whole. Then we can truly experience that we are part of one big family, regardless of skin colour, sex or culture. We are interconnected in invisible ways, like the fungi that appear aboveground as separate entities while their true essence, the system of fungal hyphae, runs underground. That metaphor applies to us as well: although it is not visible, at the energetic level, we form one large network. We can overcome our apparent separation by simply reaching out to one another, and, in so doing, supporting both the other and ourselves. We will soon notice that this benefits us all. Through this simple gesture, we experience our interrelatedness and connection to all other beings.



Listen with all your senses





And God spoke:

*'If you come ever closer to me
and do so with complete surrender,
until you become one with My love,
then I am the ear you listen with,
the eye you see with,
the hand you hold with,
the foot you walk with.'*

From the sayings of the Prophet

Listen with all your senses

By surrendering to the divine we can merge with His love, and all our senses will be suffused by the One. Reality, however, tends to get in the way: we live in a restless environment, and this disquiet affects our mood and demands much of our attention. For these reasons we are generally incapable of accepting reality consciously and fully. To expand our field of perception, as suggested by this poem, we would have to surrender completely to the divine. The question is, how do we achieve this state of complete surrender?

This is why it is important to learn to be silent and calm down. If, for example, we assume an attentive, serene inner attitude, we enter our inner energy field, allowing the physical awareness to grow intensely and activating every cell in our body. This allows us to experience the essential reality of our inner world. It is like 'seeing with a hundred thousand eyes' as depicted in a drawing by Hildegard van Bingen, a 12th-century German mystic. In this illustration she wanted to express the mystical experience of reality. This involves seeing more, not just with our physical eyes but with our whole being. Each cell in our body becomes an eye, and we ourselves become one giant eye. Sights infuse our body, and we actually undergo the experience. That

is what the poem quoted above describes: a surrender of body and soul so that the essence can penetrate every cell. Of course, we can keep asking: 'who is doing the seeing, who is doing the hearing, and who is living my life?'

If we repeatedly ask such questions without expecting to find an answer, this will create a powerful dynamic. By asking ourselves questions, we get closer to the essence of life: the real being contained within. We need to use all our senses to discern the subtle movements of this deeper being in ourselves, in others, in all that is alive.

Act with heart-mindfulness





*They're your children, too,
The people in your employ;
Think of them
As you would
Your own beloved children.*

Hakuin

Act with heart-mindfulness


Do we dare to open our hearts to ourselves and allow in the gentleness? Do we have the courage to apply these softer values, both for ourselves and in our relationships with others? Is it possible to learn to act not just on our rational thoughts but with our hearts as well? Many of us are too cerebral and trust the thinking mind implicitly, while ignoring the more subtle signs of the heart. Can't we learn to treat our fellow humans considerately and lovingly, regardless of their origin or background? While we differ greatly in form and colour, we all belong to the same human species.

By focusing more on the heart, we can create a direct link between heart and mind. Then we can learn to act with a compassionate heart and a receptive mind. We will learn to see the right middle way in all contradictions, and the thinking will merge with the feeling in a kind of oneness. If only we had the courage in times of stress to let in the painful emotions and to really feel, instead of always running away from difficult situations. This may temporarily create deep feelings of powerlessness, when we have no idea which path to take. But just feeling this pain and powerlessness is actually a maturation process that will lead to valuable insights.

Such an empathic attitude will allow us to interact with others very differently, with our capacity for empathy serving the whole. If we break through the enclosing shell of the ego and transcend our personal interests, the common interest will prevail. We will come to regard our fellow humans, animals and our natural environment as equal partners. In addition, we will experience the mutual connectedness in the depth of our hearts, and will approach others with consideration and warmth, as if they were our own children. In this way, there is no need for us to deny the rational mind and can we learn to act with sense and sensitivity.

**Be simple
and modest**





*Bowed down then preserved;
Bent then straight;
Hollow then full (...)
A little then benefited (...)*

*He does not show himself, and so is conspicuous (...)
He does not boast, and so endures.
It is because he does not content,
that no one in the empire is in a position
to contend with him.*

Be simple and modest

In modern times life seems to be more and more complicated by the abundance of external impulses. We are justified in asking whether it is possible to simplify our life patterns. In response, we could let ourselves be inspired by Zen Buddhism, where simplicity is one of the most important virtues. This is expressed in various ways, for example in the meditation hall. It is usually an almost bare room, symbolising the emptiness of a receptive mind. And well-known are the famous Japanese Zen gardens, presenting an open space with only a few carefully chosen stones, expressing the harmonic balance between emptiness and form. Restricting the external forms allows the mind to transcend thought and become highly creative and innovative.

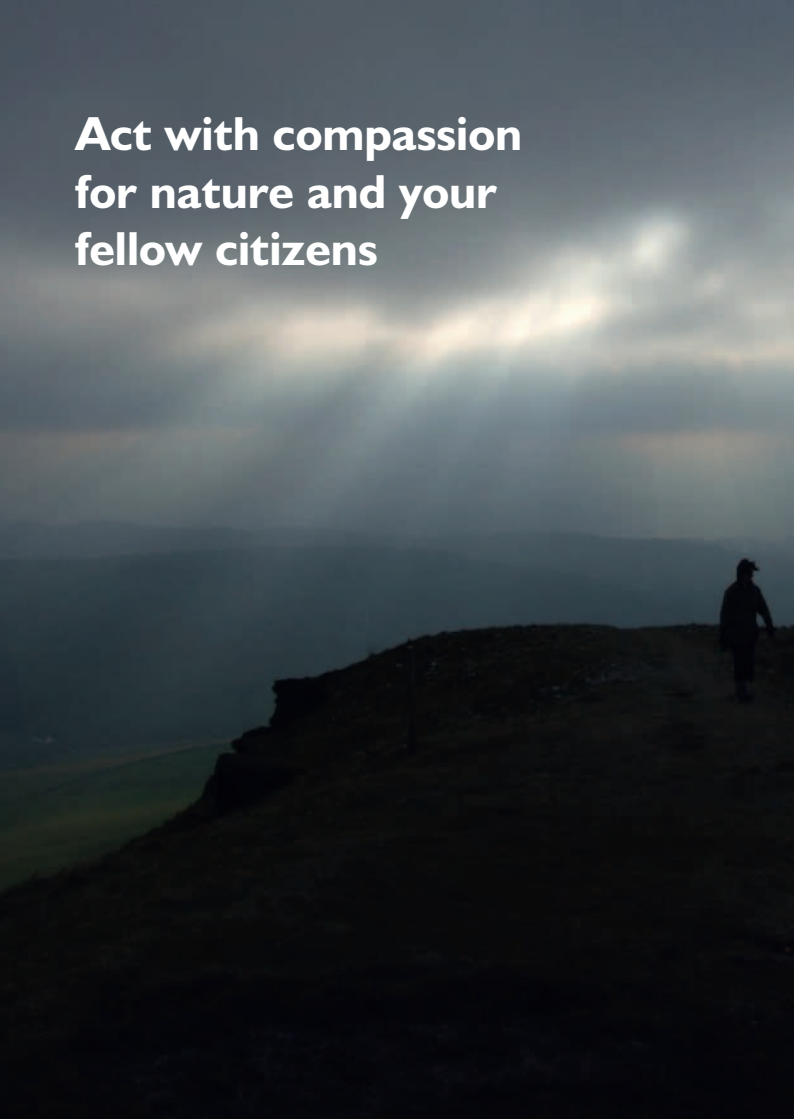
The monastic traditions also emphasize the importance of simplicity. A monk renounces all his possessions when taking his vow; all that he has is a meditation mat and a place to sleep. His actions are imbued with simplicity and mindfulness. The old Zen masters taught that a life of utter simplicity leads to unlimited mental freedom. Many of us lack that sense of freedom in our busy daily lives.


The question is whether we can rediscover the simplicity in ourselves without having to withdraw from modern life. We do not need to

give away all our possessions, but we could simplify our lifestyles and create more space for ourselves. We can easily cut down on material things like clothing and food and habits like the use of e-mail and social media. This does not necessarily lead to nihilism; it is a interesting experience to adopt a more modest lifestyle and reduce the need to constantly communicate by e-mail and phone.

Pure simplicity brings freedom and also truth: one can only act authentically. This means we can remain genuine in any situation and invite others to do the same. Based on authentic action, simplicity leads to a form of modesty, because we do not have to hold the ego up so high and put on a display. This makes us more flexible and able to move with others, and thus to experience how simplicity and modesty lead to more personal freedom.

**Act with compassion
for nature and your
fellow citizens**





*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy.*

St. Francis of Assisi

Act with compassion for nature and your fellow citizens

Is it realistic to believe that compassion can contribute to a peaceful society in a world full of conflict? Compassion is a soft force, that seems to be the polar opposite to the violence that floods the media. Nevertheless, compassion was the soft force that allowed St. Francis of Assisi to found a community that continues to exist to this day and has branches all over the world. The most essential idea he proposed was to serve, to give and to share from one's own compassion and charity. He always tried to respond with love and forgiveness wherever there was hate. Can this mentality still be followed effectively today? Are we able to forgive, despite the injustice we suffer again and again? How does one learn such an attitude to life? One vital aspect is whether we are prepared first of all to forgive ourselves for our shortcomings. We first have to feel compassion for ourselves; only then can we develop an understanding attitude towards others and approach them with compassion. The same applies to the despair we experience. Doubt can be considered a positive force because it drives us to ask fundamental questions. This allows a gentle, subtle force of confidence to grow in our deeper

layers, even when substantial facts are not yet available.


Compassion is a similar subtle force. Taoism postulates that the weak will ultimately overcome the strong. The gentleness of compassion will ultimately dissolve opposing interests. However, this requires us to face our opponent with genuine compassion.


World history is rife with examples of non-violent resistance that instigated great change. On the basis of compassion, everyone will be seen and heard as equals. A gentle, understanding attitude leads to a more dignified way of interacting with others. If we have the will to adopt this attitude of St. Francis, we will transform the grief associated with conflicts into the joy that manifests itself if we can consider different interests with equality and mutual respect.

The Earth Charter contains the following passage on peace:

‘Recognize that peace is the wholeness created by right relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth, and the larger whole of which all are a part.’

**Relate your heart
to your business**





*If I'm not for myself, who will be for me?
If I'm not for others, what am I?
And if not now, when?*

Rabbi Hillel

Relate your heart to your business

Why am I here? That is a question that all people will ask themselves at one time or another, especially when looking back, like on birthdays or at the end of the year. Then we realize that we are still locked in the same patterns, within the same emotional context. We are probably still cold and impersonal in the way we treat certain neighbours or colleagues, despite our need to have an active social life. This year will probably be the same, won't it? But then why am I here on Earth, in this position and this place, when everything continues in the same way?

Driven as we are, we have no warm feelings for ourselves, let alone for other people. Coldly, we keep rushing about and are only concerned with matters regarding our income or our careers. The question is, can we escape our hurried and unhappy lifestyle? We can only succeed if we have the courage to reserve some time for ourselves despite the stress of our daily lives. Then we can find the freedom hidden in each moment. If we learn to surrender ourselves heart and soul to this moment, we create a mental space where we get closer to ourselves. In this place, at this moment, we can contact the deeper being that we are as well – the being that the world sees

shining in our eyes and that is reflected in the eyes of others. If we dare to really look at someone, like looking in a mirror, we will experience this instantly. Thus, we find the time to be truly present with the other. To listen intently to what he or she has to say, leading to another way of seeing and hearing. Looking with heart and soul is all that is required. Then the light of their being will be reflected in our eyes. Try to look at someone clearly and openly, for longer than you are used to, and see what happens.

Only if we really see the other can we act differently, from a warm heart. A heart that serves a greater whole in the awareness that everything is connected. The one cannot manage without the other. We form a twofold unity expressed in seeing with the heart, allowing us to interact warmheartedly with others.





ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brigitte van Baren (b. 1957) studied Dutch law before establishing Inner Sense in 1992. She gained a reputation as a coach for personal development, leadership and team development. To support her work, she created Show Your True Colours®, an unique management improvement method, presented as a game, that encourages an interactive coaching process to take place within teams. After many years of Zen training, Brigitte van Baren was confirmed as a Zen teacher in the tradition of Empty Cloud and the Sanbo Kyodan Society. In addition, she works with the Netherlands Confederation of Industry and Employment VNO/NCW and De Baak, an institute for leadership and personal development, on the presentation of Spirituality programmes. She has published six books, mainly on personal development in regard to leading positions.

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BUILDING
BUSINESS VALUE
IN A CHANGING WORLD



Our new report – *Expect the Unexpected* – shows that population growth, exploitation of natural resources, climate change and other factors are putting the world on a development trajectory that is not sustainable. If we fail to alter our patterns of production and consumption, things will begin to go badly wrong.

Corporations are, of course, not passive bystanders. The resources on which businesses rely will become more difficult to access and more costly. There will be increasing strain on infrastructure and natural systems. Physical assets will be affected by the unpredictable results of a warming world. And businesses will be confronted with ever more complex legislation.

But this is not the whole story. Consumer and investor values are changing. And as they change more corporations are recognizing that there is profit and opportunity in a broader sense of responsibility beyond the next quarter's results. The bold, the visionary and the innovative recognize that what is good for people and the planet will also be good for the long term bottom line and shareholder value.

At KPMG's network of firms we have always been at the forefront of developments that shape business behavior. We hope our new report provides a useful springboard for new thinking, debate and above all business action to deliver a future that is both sustainable and profitable. To read it, please visit kpmg.com and search for *Expect the Unexpected*.



**YOU ARE
THE
STARTING
POINT**



The human race is an amazing species It is that simple
Earth a fascinating place when you dare
We dance together in the Universe to come out of your sphere
our lives full of unbounded possibilities seducing the unknown
with a desire to connect

It could be you
making the difference
for a better humanity
great lives for everyone

The best of yourself
building top teams
leading organizations to greatness
helping people over their thresholds

Let's focus on you
and personal transformation
There is no other way
to freedom and success

Now is the time
You are the starting point
not the destination

It doesn't matter where you are When you change the way you look at things
who you think you are, or what you do the things you look at change
we can all discover
expand our awareness Looking forward to meet you :)
and get the results that we intent

Erik-Jan de Rooij

COLOPHON

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Eight spiritual principles for compassionate Earth behaviour

Throughout the world, we are struggling with the impact of economic crises and global warming. So we really need to ask ourselves some serious questions about the way we are living our lives and we are leading our society. These eight principles will provide useful key values for daily life, allowing us to act out of genuine compassion towards ourselves, others, the Earth and all living beings.

Brigitte van Baren