

Sympathy

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Sympathy is a trait that should surge from us like a gushing fountain. Like a mother's love for her child, it should be spontaneous and impulsive. Seeing a person in distress should perturb and agitate us. Even if we are helpless to do anything practical to redress the situation, concern should pour out from us and anxiety should stir us up. We too should writhe in agony – as if we ourselves were going through it. If such a situation does not affect us in any way, then surely there is something terribly wrong. We should then make a positive effort to awaken this dormant trait.

We can revive and enhance the radiance of this trait in ourselves by simply opening our eyes to the world around us.

We can learn sympathy from the prophets of God who were an embodiment of this attribute. They were selfless well-wishers of their people. They wanted to secure their people from the wrath of God. What greater an expression of sympathy than to awaken people from their deep slumber and to prepare them for the kingdom of heaven?

We can learn sympathy from a mother; how she continues to wait on her children and serve their needs even when this means sacrificing her own needs, forsaking her own comfort and giving up her own priorities.

We can learn sympathy from individuals who, risking their own lives, attend to the sick and wounded both in times of peace and war.

And if all this is not enough to inculcate or enhance this trait in us we may think of a selfish motive: being sympathetic and kind to others makes us forget our own worries. It gives us peace of mind which is so elusive a thing these days.

And of course instances at which we need to show sympathy abound:

Attending persistently to sick relatives and friends; treating pets

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and beasts of burden with utmost humanity; doing whatever can be done for those afflicted with some calamity and praying to God if nothing else can be done; using our influence to help those in distress; not forsaking sinners for they need sympathy the most; treating those subservient to us especially servants with extreme kindness and affection; merely lending an ear to a person going through some agony; supporting the oppressed against the wicked; lending a hand to the old, the disabled and the handicapped; ignoring the weaknesses of others; welcoming guests wholeheartedly; tending vigilantly to plants ... of course there is no end to this list.

May God grant us the courage and will to overcome any shortcoming that we may have in being sympathetic.

