

The Compassionate Mind: A New Approach to Life's Challenges

By Paul Gilbert PhD



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In societies that encourage us to compete with each other, compassion is often seen as a weakness. Striving to get ahead, self-criticism, fear, and hostility toward others seem to come more naturally to us. Yet researchers have found that developing kindness and compassion for ourselves and others builds our confidence, helps us create meaningful, caring relationships, lowers anxiety and hostility, and promotes physical and mental health.

The Compassionate Mind reveals the evolutionary and social reasons why our brains react so readily to threats. Because of this tendency, it's easy to slip into anger, fear, and depression, and compassion can be difficult for us. This is not our fault. However, research has shown that our brains are also hardwired to respond to kindness and compassion. Building on this latest research, this book offers many practical exercises to help deepen compassion towards ourselves and others. Far from fostering emotional weakness, compassion subdues our anger and increases our courage and resilience to depression and anxiety. Wisely used, compassion arms us with the strength to pursue genuine happiness, peace of mind, and peace in the world.

This book blends compassion focused therapy (CFT), attachment theory, neuroscience, and powerful mindfulness practices to help you develop a compassionate mind, and a better you.

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The Compassionate Mind: A New Approach to Life's Challenges By Paul Gilbert PhD Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

British clinical psychologist Gilbert (Overcoming Depression) integrates neuropsychology, Buddhist practices, and Carl Jung's concept of archetypes to illuminate the human mind and its potential for meaningful connection through compassion. Eschewing the standard self-help focus on "learning to accept and love yourself," Gilbert explores the universal challenges stemming from conflict between the "old brains" humans share with other primates and the "new brains" unique to humankind (providing "our ability to think, imagine, learn and use symbols and language"). Gilbert argues that it's necessary to accept without shame or guilt our "many dark and cruel potentials," because compassion represents just as powerful a force in the human mind. Human brains, Gilbert explains, have "evolved for social relating," and his approach to self-acceptance involves "thinking about our internal world as being full of 'social-like' relationships" with different personality aspects-the angry self, the compassionate self, the competitive self, etc. He also proposes a number of familiar techniques (mindfulness, controlled breathing, visualization, journaling) to help readers increase compassion, toward our ourselves and others, while dealing with the anxiety, depression, rage, and other uncomfortable emotions relationships can evoke. Though his writing is diffuse, Gilbert has an arresting but rational perspective that should appeal to self-help enthusiasts and newcomers alike.

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Review

"For a long time, Paul Gilbert has been making seminal contributions to our understanding of compassion and how, if systematically cultivated, it can become a force for greater good both in our hearts and in the world. This book offers a deep and compelling evolutionary perspective on the human brain, mind, and culture. It demonstrates how much meaning and our well-being hinge on our innate capacity to extend heartfelt compassion to ourselves and to others. It also guides us in working skillfully with deeply ingrained tendencies such as anxiety, anger, and depression, so they do not dominate our lives and erode our health and happiness. Written with a deep sense of kindness towards all who suffer, including himself, this book is a very friendly, practical, and potentially illuminating and healing gateway to what is deepest and best in ourselves, often completely unknown or unrecognized by us."

—Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D., professor of medicine emeritus at the University of Massachusetts Medical School and author of *Full Catastrophe Living* and *Coming to Our Senses*

"In this impressive volume, Paul Gilbert offers compelling insight into a key challenge of our time: compassion. The reader will find a conceptual and practical guide to cultivating a more compassionate mind. The author gracefully integrates evolutionary neuroscience, cognitive behavioral therapy, Jungian archetypes, attachment theory, Buddhist psychology, and over thirty years of clinical experience into a book you won't want to miss. Dozens of accessible exercises make this book especially helpful for readers who want to transform their lives for the better."

—Christopher K. Germer, Ph.D., clinical instructor in psychology at Harvard Medical School and author of *The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion*

"Paul Gilbert has created a masterpiece urging us to harness the power of our minds to shape our brains toward compassion and kindness. Exploring the science of our ancient neural circuitry and weaving this with our contemporary cultural pressures, *The Compassionate Mind* takes us on a powerful journey into the origins of the challenges that keep us from living life with meaning, connection and resilience. Once we're well-prepared with this fascinating background, Gilbert shows us in useful detail the personal practices that enable us to sharpen our skills of compassion for ourselves, for others, and for the larger world in which we live. The result is not only increased happiness and better physical health, but more meaningful relationships with others, and even a better relationship to our planet. There is no better time than the present to learn these important steps to enhance our individual and collective lives, and even to transform our place in the 'flow of life' on Earth."

—Daniel J. Siegel, MD, clinical professor at the University of California, Los Angeles School of Medicine and author of *Mindsight* and *The Mindful Brain*

"Anyone who struggles with their inner critic should make sure to read this book. Professor Gilbert writes in a masterly fashion about compassionate mind training, an innovative approach which is likely to grow in importance over the next decade as the evidence for its benefits continues to build."

—David Veale, Institute of Psychiatry, King's College, London

"Paul Gilbert has come forth again with a book about the mind, its unused potential, and how to hardness that potential to one's and others' benefit. *The Compassionate Mind* is a road map to compassion for the self and towards others. It is a book for those curious enough to explore their hidden potential to attain a special kind of humanness and happiness. A ten on a scale from one to ten." —Michael McGuire, author of *Darwinian Psychiatry*

"Internationally-renowned psychologist Paul Gilbert has provided all of us with a much-needed book. Written with wisdom and warmth, Gilbert takes us on a journey through the far reaches of evolution to the very depths of our own hearts. This helpful and thoughtful guide to living a compassionate life—for yourself and for others—will be a reminder for many of us that we are all human but that we need to be more humane toward our own troubled selves. Throughout this book, the reader will feel like the author is speaking directly to him or her, and will recognize that it is possible to use the tools of modern psychology to fix what feels broken inside of us. A timely book for a time when competitiveness, materialism, and narcissism have failed us. This book provides timeless wisdom that you can use every day. It will make a wonderful gift for someone you care for, especially if you give it to yourself."

—Robert L. Leahy, author of *The Worry Cure* and president of the International Association for Cognitive Psychotherapy

"Paul Gilbert is one of the most brilliant scientists studying compassion today. In this wonderful book, he makes his theories very accessible and down-to-earth. You feel like you're having a chat in his living room with a warm cup of tea. I also love his easy-to-follow exercises, which offer concrete ways to help you

develop greater compassion in daily life."

—Kristin Neff, associate professor of human development at the University of Texas at Austin

"The increasing drive to find a competitive edge in all aspects of our lives may create efficiencies, but they are cold, heartless, and unpleasant to live with. Gilbert shows how and why this occurs, and explains why our capacity for compassion is the antidote."

—Oliver James, author of Affluenza and The Selfish Capitalist

From the Publisher

Leading depression authority Paul Gilbert presents **The Compassionate Mind**, a breakthrough book integrating evolutionary psychology, new insights from neuroscience, and mindfulness practice. This combination of techniques forms a new therapy called compassion focused therapy that can enhance readers' lives.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jack Young:

In this age globalization it is important to someone to get information. The information will make a professional understand the condition of the world. The healthiness of the world makes the information easier to share. You can find a lot of references to get information example: internet, magazine, book, and soon. You can see that now, a lot of publisher this print many kinds of book. The book that recommended to your account is The Compassionate Mind: A New Approach to Life's Challenges this book consist a lot of the information with the condition of this world now. This specific book was represented how does the world has grown up. The language styles that writer use to explain it is easy to understand. Often the writer made some exploration when he makes this book. That is why this book ideal all of you.

Carol Witt:

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Patricia Frazier:

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