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SWK499: Integrative Seminar (NA)

January 21, 2023

“Reflection #1 – Introduction”

1. What does it mean to be compassionate? (What is the Latin?)

The author depicts compassion to be an expression of kindness and gentleness to those who have experienced hurt and suffering through the navigation of life’s quest to compete for survival and attainment of ambitions. Compassion can be defined as the embodiment of empathy and a response to that person(s) needs. The Latin word for compassion is “pati” and “cum” and when combined it means “to suffer with”.

2. Why is compassion not a natural phenomenon?

It is not the nature of man to allow compassion to be the central human motivational factor that governs our human responses. Since we are always in competition in life our first reaction gears towards our own self-preservation, we then attempt to avoid misery and anguish. The view of intentionally empathizing with other’s pain and suffering can be construed as personal penance, self-retribution, or an uncommonly unnatural desire.

3. If compassion is at odds with individual freedom, why?

The text explains that a person(s) who is unfortunate by whatever means of circumstances or fate negates to make use of their freedom to better their lives and in the process is more likely to contest the principles that promotes individual freedom. A truly compassionate society will favor shared resolutions at the cost of the individual’s self-determination.