

Compassion Journal #7 Togetherness

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**1. How does the main effect of being different reveal a deeper level of sameness?**

America was the target of a horrific attack on September 11, 2011, which claimed many lives. This incident caused a level of sameness in this country I had never seen before. Sameness in the sense that even if one did not physically lose a loved one, the destruction and anguish were felt by everyone. What brings people together is showing God's compassion and not having the same anger or anxiety. The Christian community is brought together rather than forced to stick together. It is critical to understand that displacement is meaningful when people come together in new ways and is not a goal in and of itself. If a displacement does not evoke oneness, it is not valid. A profoundly new sense of solidarity is triggered by genuine displacement. Each type of detachment must meet the standard of revealing the shared ground on which we all stand. A caring unity is mysteriously realized through displacement.

**2. Discuss the authors' statement, "This new, non-competitive togetherness opens our eyes to each other. Here we touch the beauty of the Christian community."**

The writers' assertion exemplifies why it is necessary to give up the ambition to stand out or be unique. We must let go of our needs to find our unique niches in life. Our primary focus should be living in harmony with others and being content with them. We only realize how much we must contribute to one another when we are vulnerable. As we come together as a community, we each contribute our unique gifts to finish the task for everyone. Togetherness keeps our skills from becoming a source of competition and maintains the same things about the community.

**3. What do the authors mean when they say, "Every time we pay attention, we become emptier, and the more empty we are the more healing space we can offer." What example do they use? What examples can you share from your experience?**

We learn to empty ourselves when we share the treasures of others. When people open themselves, they remove themselves from the situation and focus on others, allowing them to see their values. We are so focused on our own needs that we need to remember to think about the needs of others, which makes it hard to pay attention to our community. We need to be more conscious of others and attentive to what they say rather than making the conversation about ourselves. We can only empty ourselves when we give others our full attention and make them the focus of our interests. Many people find it hard to listen because they lose interest quickly. However, if we want to meet the needs of others, we need to be good at active listening. By doing this, we can focus on and demonstrate genuine concern for the individual going through difficulties. People feel the comfort that might dispel fears and anxiety when we demonstrate that we care about what they are going through. Hurricane Sandy left a terrible trail of damage in its wake. Numerous people perished, families were split up, and the tide carried houses away. The destruction was severe here on Staten Island. I still recall asking my pastor what we could do to aid the hurricane victims.

I'll always remember his response. "Andia, what are you going to do?" he questioned. "Bring me answers, not problems." His response perplexed me, but I went home and thought about his query. I prayed about it, and God responded to my prayer by answering my request. He instructed me to enter the neighborhoods and provide for the needs of the residents as best I could. And in my case, that meant feeding them. I will always remember that event. I never considered it to be emptying myself, but after reading and comprehending what oneness is, I can see that I do in this circumstance.