

From Many to Many: Forming the Compassionate Groups That Can Save the World



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Sorrow and Hope

Unprecedented Peril . . .

Climate catastrophe

3 billion of us cannot afford a healthy diet

8 men own as much as 4 billion people

Threat of nuclear war

Profit economies crushing well-being

Increasing tools of totalitarian control

. . . And Unparalleled Promise

Growing middle class

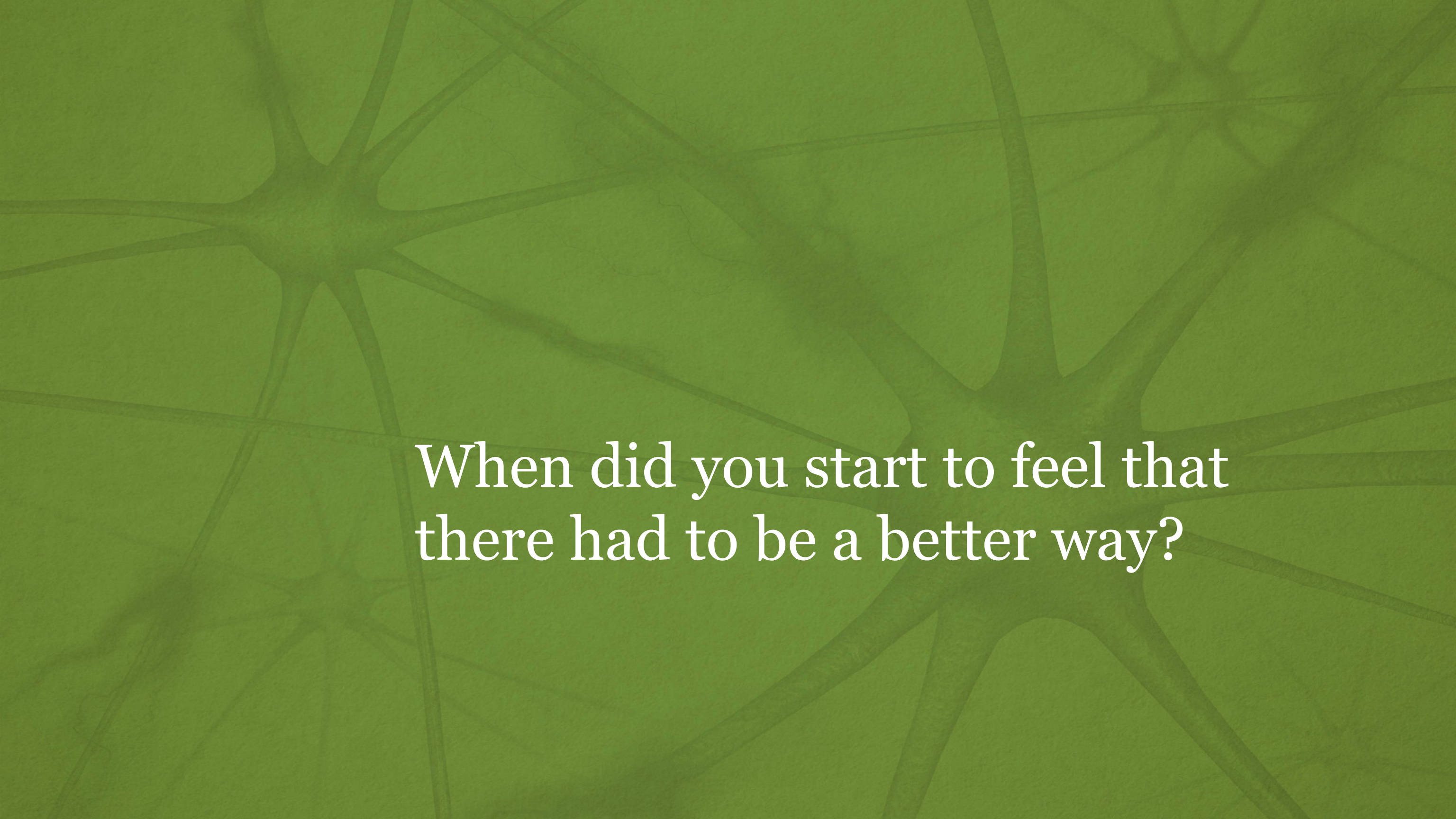
Greater power of women

Science, education, internet

Increasing civil society

Widening access to psychological tools

Worldwide, a growing sense of: Enough!



When did you start to feel that there had to be a better way?

Systemic Causes of Suffering

Compassion opens to suffering,
and brings caring to it,

moved to relieve suffering
and to change its causes.

Throughout history,
much suffering has been caused by
systemic political and economic forces
that served some at the cost of many.

The same is true today.

If compassion is truly to relieve suffering,
it must think big enough to address these forces,
not just individual or interpersonal factors.

First fish: *Good morning, how's the water?*

Second fish: *What's water?*

Here's the headline:

The way we live today,
the way we've lived for the past 10,000 years,
is a vast and suffering-saturated departure
from the biological blueprint
we evolved for living together.

Hunter-Gatherer Politics

Humans have walked the earth for 300,000 years.

Until farming-and-herding emerged 10,000 years ago, they lived in small hunter-gatherer bands.

Dependent on each other for raw survival, the foundation of social life was “caring-and-sharing” – compassion and justice – rather than the “holding-and-controlling” of other primate species.

The callousness and cruelty
in holding-and-controlling
still found expression
in frequently violent competition
for scarce resources between bands.

But holding-and-controlling was regulated inside the band by three conditions inherent in hunter-gatherer society.

Imagine spending your days with the same 50 people, few possessions, and your fates bound together – living with:

- Common truth
- Common welfare
- Common justice

Common **truth** – Day after day in small groups, the facts become obvious. Did the leader's plan work? Is someone eating more than their share?

Common **welfare** – What happened for some happened for all. The self-interest of leaders was tied to the good of the group.

Common **justice** – Leaders had to face their people every day, and face consequences if they mistreated them.

Politics is about decision-making,
sharing resources,
regulating power,
protecting the vulnerable,
and cooperative action.

With our big social brains, **a politics for the common good** emerged naturally from the three conditions of hunter-gatherer life.

We humans are best able to govern ourselves when:
the **truth** is readily apparent to all,
the **welfare** of the few is tied to the welfare of the many,
and leaders face **justice** for their actions.

This is how we evolved to govern ourselves.

***But this is not how our world works today –
and vast suffering is the result.***

Concentrated Wealth and Power

In hunter-gatherer bands, there were (and are) hierarchies of wealth and power – though constrained by common truth, welfare, and justice.

But farming-and-herding enabled growing concentrations of wealth and power – ending common truth, welfare, and justice . . .

unleashing the primal strategy of holding-and-controlling inside most societies, and it's kind of been Game of Thrones ever since.

Un-common **truth** – Greed and corruption behind closed doors. Truly fake news spread virally. Attacks on truth-tellers, journalists, and scientists.

Un-common **welfare** – The good fortune of some is usually separate from the struggles and often poverty of the many.

Un-common **justice** – “Rich man’s law, poor man’s law.” Governing elites not held to account, and insulated from the people they harm.

The Un-Common Good Today

Half of us live in a dictatorship, just 6% in full democracy

Many inequalities for women and other groups

Children dying of hunger: 10,000 a day, 3+ million a year

Stolen wealth – trillions of dollars – from slavery and colonialism

8% of the world's people hold 85% of its riches

Political influence is tied to money:

- USA, 2000-2016: fossil fuel industry spent \$2 billion against climate action
- Worldwide, \$1 trillion in bribes paid each year

I'm not saying that all those with wealth and power have gained it unfairly or ignored the common good.

Wealthy benefactors have supported wonderful things.

Wise, large-hearted leaders have made great contributions.

Still: wealth and power have been used routinely throughout history to hide the facts, decouple private gains from public welfare, and shield leaders from justice – all to gain even more wealth and power.

Whew.

So much suffering due to these structural factors.

Take a moment to contemplate it.



What can we do?

Go Big

Our problems are big.

We must do what our ancestors did,
and come together in ways that are
big enough to solve them.

Entrenched interests compete at the marketplace level . . . but cooperate at the political level: spending hundreds of billions of dollars each year to influence policy in both legal and corrupt ways.

Prosocial groups usually do the opposite: friendly with each other at the local level . . . but rarely combining their resources at the political level at a scale that can compete with entrenched interests.

Compassion has been growing worldwide,
typically practiced one-to-one or one-to-many.

Now we need to unleash the power
of **many-to-many**,
and form **a truly global coalition**
at the scale of the whole human tribe.

So we've established the Global Compassion Coalition for the **science, education, application, and advocacy** of compassion, with a Board, Advisory Council, and key staff.

Mission: *Restoring compassion and justice in the foundation of all societies*

Purposes:

- Help our members do what they do even better
- Drive influence campaigns in our culture and politics
- Pursue a flagship project – ending child hunger? capping climate change? – that also builds civil society

We're launching in 2023, which will include:

- major website
- compassion+ information, symposia, projects
- regular newsletter/magazine
- developing a Compassion Index
- facilitating micro-grants for researchers and activists
- the first annual Compassion Prizes
- the first annual Festival of Compassion
- moving toward the influence campaign and flagship project
- and much, much more

January, 2023 will have our formal launch –
but before then **we'd love you to join this
growing coalition!**

To learn more,
go to www.GlobalCompassionCoalition.org.

Go Wide

Neuropsych Benefits of a Wider View

Draws us into the present

Relaxes the contracted “me, myself, and I”

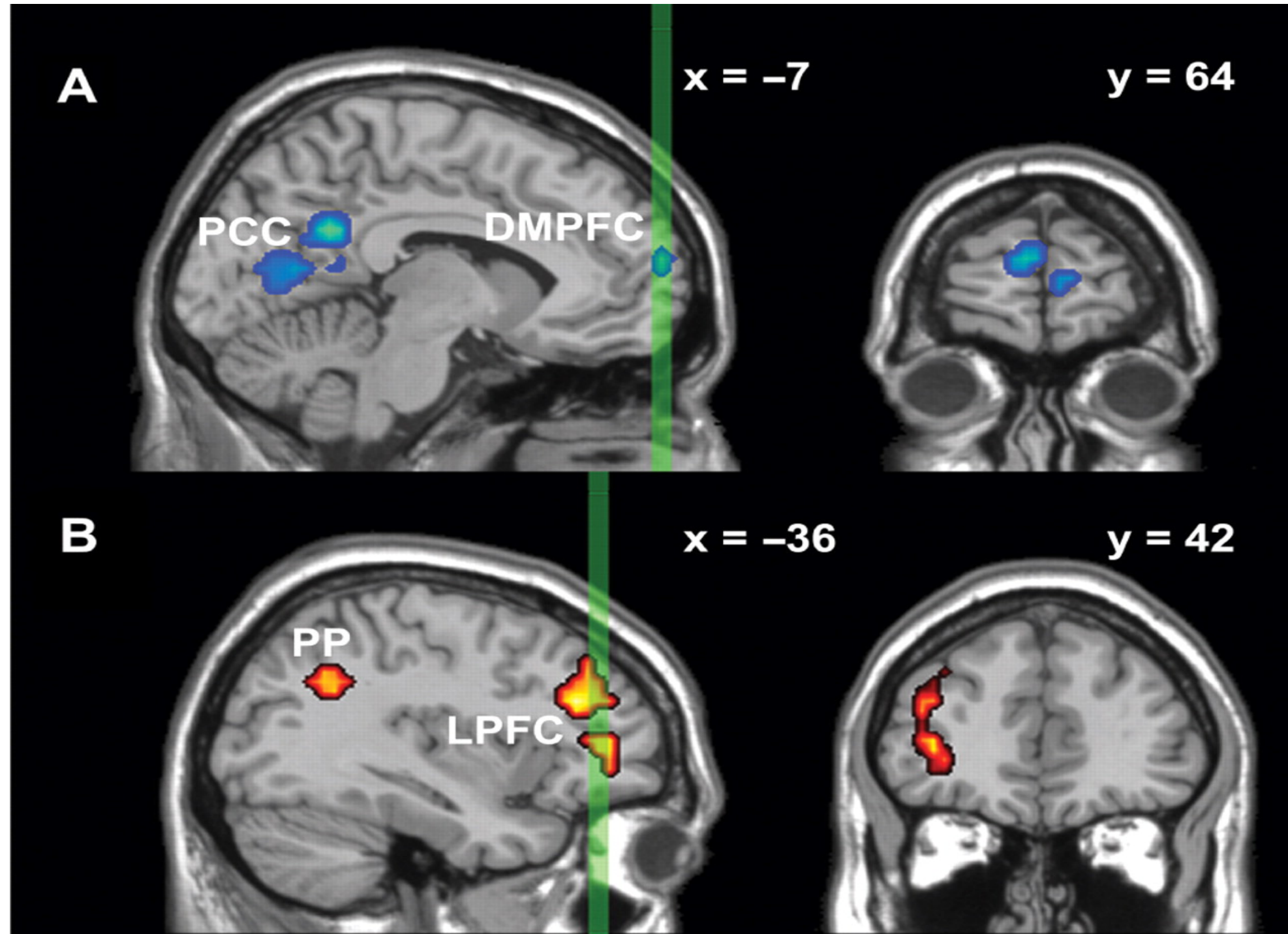
Calms stressful “doing,” and strengthens the sense of “being”

Brings in useful information

Fosters a sense of connectedness with all things –

including others in common cause

Self-Focused (blue) and Open Awareness (red)



Remember:

Our biological nature is to care and to share, grounded in the truth of living together, creating societies that work for **all** of us.

Then the “three fuels of the fires of suffering” – hatred, greed, and delusion – are greatly reduced.

This is the normal human condition.

Mother Nature is on our side!

It is the abnormal,
pathological, systemic structures
of holding-and-controlling
that have fueled those fires for 10,000 years.

We just have to get normal again!

Most of the people
who maintain those abnormal structures today
are unaware of the full consequences
of their roles and decisions.

But their **incentives** maintain the status quo.

To change those incentives,
the evolution of altruism contains great lessons:

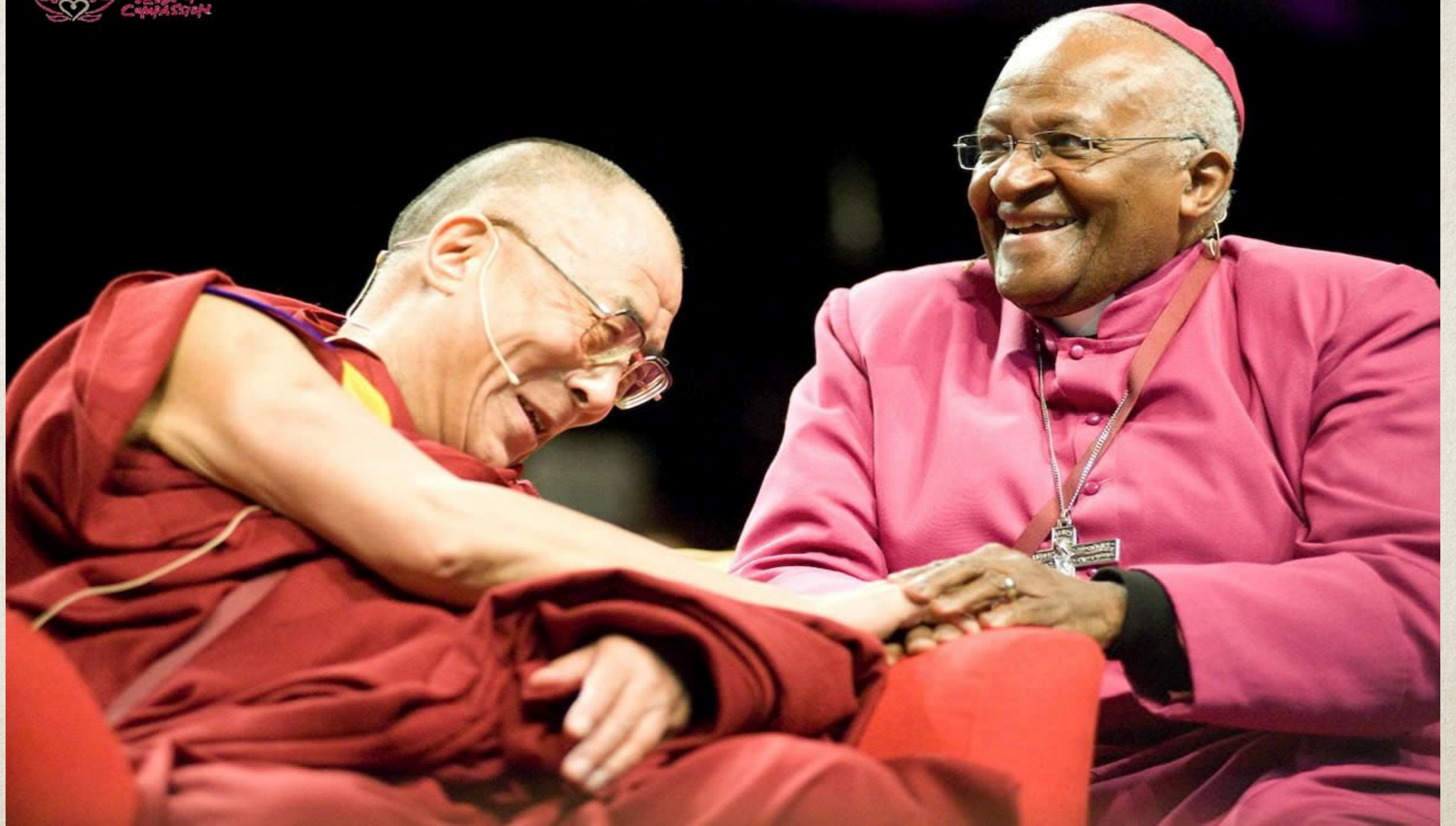
- Foster common **truth** about what's happening
- Value common **welfare** and common **justice**
- **Provide benefits** for caring-and-sharing
- **Have costs** for holding-and-controlling

At the personal level:
you can know what you see,
what you value,
and what you plan as a result . . .

without being invaded by
righteousness and hostility.

At the systemic level:
we can **recognize** structural sources of suffering
and the incentives that perpetuate them,
and we can **value** a world that – for example –
halts global warming at “just” 2 degrees Celsius,
and we can **act** effectively to change those
systemic sources of suffering . . .

while not making others into enemies.



Go Long

It took 10,000 years to get here,
and it will take a while to get to a better place.

This long view is realistically hopeful,
since it is steady effort over time
that will establish compassion
at the heart of global society.

Big Change 2100

What are your realistic hopes for the end of this century?

No child is hungry, neglected, or abused?

Global warming capped at 3 degrees Fahrenheit?

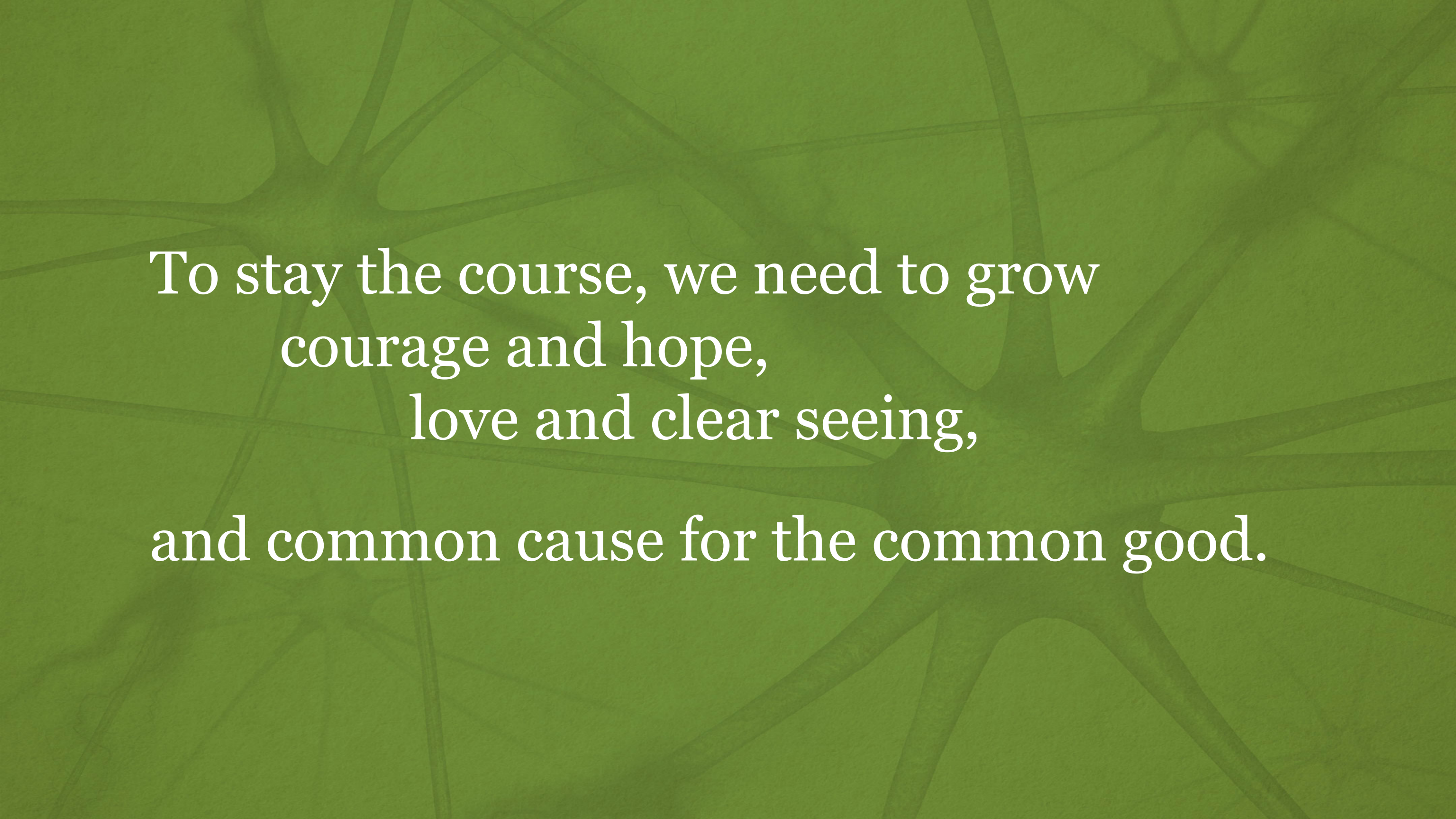
Everyone living in civil society?

All children educated, not just some boys?

Humanity living in harmony with its precious home planet?

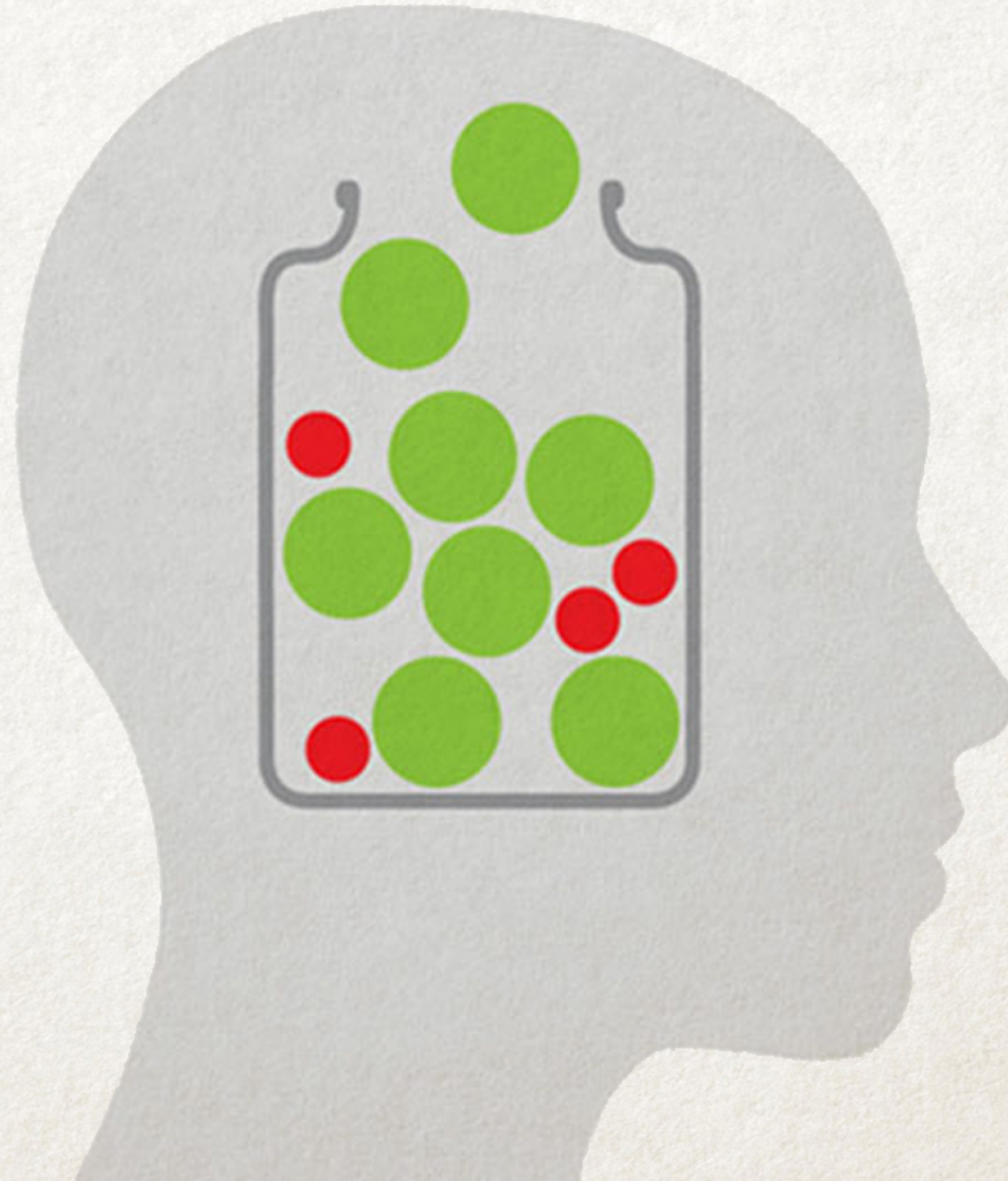
Compassion calls us to nothing less . . .

. . . and we've got a big job ahead!



To stay the course, we need to grow
courage and hope,
love and clear seeing,
and common cause for the common good.

Which Means Changing Your Brain For the Better



So let's take a few moments
to rest in the sense of this:

courage

hope

love

clear seeing

and common cause for the common good.

Each of us has been loved into being
by one or more people.

In the same way, we can love others into being.

And by joining together at the global scale
we can love into being
the world that we long for

with compassion at its heart.

Thank You

