

Tough life and suffering

Psychology



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Although instinct makes us avoid it, "suffering" can be worthwhile if there is a good reason for it, like writing this paper. Why do I have to spend a few minutes writing this essay instead of hanging out with friends? Why do I have to spend a day of compassion? The answers came quickly: I want to learn more about others and about myself, because this world, although it's beautiful, can get pretty nasty, and if I don't learn about suffering from others, I may not know how to cope with it. I matured a bit that night.

I made a simple plan for the next day: look for the homeless guy and give him a gift, spend some time to cheer up Annie whose aunt passed away two weeks ago, listen to Jerry as he usually whines about his problems (I think I have more serious problems, but I resolved to listen and find a way to sympathize with him), and be more sensitive and caring when I meet people having a bad day. I never did this before, so I was partly excited and partly afraid.

The next day, I woke up with a terrible headache! I wanted to postpone my plan, but I decided against it because I realized that it did not tell anyone about how I felt, this could be good for me. What better way to practice compassion than to suffer in silence? I started feeling good the moment the thought came to me and looking back, I am convinced it helped that I was suffering in my own small way so I could see things from a greater perspective.

When I bumped into Mr. Gorman, I gave him a bag of fruits and wished him a good day. I thought he wouldn't even smile back because he looked terrible, but before breaking eye contact he smiled and gruffly muttered, "Thanks!" For a moment, my headache disappeared! But for the rest of the day, I managed to stay calm and composed. I think I even managed to stifle a

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grimace, even though there were times I asked myself why I was doing this at all. But I remembered my resolutions the night before, and somehow that pushed me through. In fact, I became so sensitive to the sufferings of others that I was able to console a classmate who was surprisingly quiet in class, only to learn that her mom had just been diagnosed with cancer.

It was a terrible shock as I felt the whole weight of her suffering in my heart, but it too disappeared when she thanked me because, after she unburdened herself, she felt better. I felt even better when she said I was the only one who bothered to ask her about it since she wasn't really part of my crowd. We spent some minutes together sitting there when it suddenly hit me! Compassion makes us strong, both the one who suffers and the one who shares in that suffering. Really, knowing that someone cares can make suffering more bearable.

My headache disappeared the moment I got home. I couldn't believe I did it! I was happy I never told anyone about my headache because it helped me understand why people who have a tough life are stronger and more mature. As I looked back on what I had done, I realized that knowing how to face suffering and fear brings out the best in us because we think less of ourselves and more of others, and when we do that, we realize the many good things we have. Suffering still makes me afraid, but that day I learned I could take it, and that people could suffer in silence without complaining. I ended the day asking myself: " what more can I do"