



## Charter for Compassion

### Fact Sheet

*The Charter for Compassion is a document that transcends religious, ideological, and national differences. Supported by leading thinkers from many traditions, the Charter calls on us all to activate the Golden Rule around the world.*

#### **What is the Charter for Compassion?**

- In 2008, Karen Armstrong won the TED Prize for her wish to create a Charter for Compassion. Karen's desire was to remind us that the principle of compassion lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions, calling us always to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves.
- The following year, Karen collaborated with religious leaders around the world to write the Charter for Compassion. It asks people of all faiths, ethnicities and political stripes to make compassion a clear, luminous and dynamic force in our polarized world.
- When the Charter for Compassion was unveiled in November 2009, it sparked a global movement to restore compassionate thinking and ACTION to the center of religious, moral and political life.

#### **Highlights**

- The Charter for Compassion celebrated its one-year anniversary at the United Nations in November 2010. A [video narrated by actor Rainn Wilson](#) from *The Office* describes the Charter's progress and acknowledges supporters such as His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Sir Richard Branson, and Queen Rania of Jordan.
- The Charter has inspired community-based acts of compassion all over the world:
  - **Seattle** – The first city to affirm the Charter for Compassion also launched a 10-Year [Campaign for Compassionate Cities](#).
  - **Sharjah, United Arab Emirates** – Officials in the UAE supported the Charter for Compassion and Karen Armstrong's tour included a lecture at the American University of Sharjah. Read Karen's [Huffington Post piece](#) about her trip.
  - **Australia** – A historic recognition ceremony at Parliament House in Canberra marked the first instance of the Charter being recognized in a parliament anywhere in the world. The ceremony included representatives from the Australian government, opposition parties, indigenous community, diplomats, NGOs, and religious and youth leaders. The current plan is to bring the Charter to the educational systems of Australia.
  - **Canada** – On the one-year anniversary of the Charter for Compassion, supporters in Canada kicked off a national campaign to affirm the Charter country-wide.
  - **South Africa** – As the eyes of the world were on World Cup in South Africa, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu and Reverend Peter Story unveiled the Charter for Compassion at the Cape Town Inter-faith Initiative.
  - **Holland** – In one of Holland's oldest cities, Leiden, the city council signed the Charter for Compassion and involved local schools, businesses, and social organizations. They all met again a year later and celebrated with a special children's concert honoring the Charter.
  - **Pakistan** – Current initiatives include compassion-based curriculum and activities for the academic, corporate, and media sectors. Pakistan is hosting a lecture series to coincide with the publication of *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life* and will explore compassion in the Islamic historical context.
  - **Presbyterian Church of the United States** – The entire congregation adopted the Charter for Compassion.



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### ***Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life***

- Karen Armstrong's new book is an impassioned and practical guide that will help us create a more compassionate world. It's at local bookstores and available online now.
- The Twelve Steps book complements the Charter for Compassion. The action-oriented steps begin with "Learn About Compassion" and close with "Love Your Enemies."
- The book helps us have compassion for ourselves and explains how to develop a practice called mindfulness. Armstrong also discusses suffering, sympathetic joy, the limits of our knowledge of others, and how to expand our circle of concern to include everybody.
- The Charter for Compassion team invites people around the world to create Reading Groups and discuss the book within your community. Resources for Reading Group organizers are available at [www.charterforcompassion.org/learn/readinggroups](http://www.charterforcompassion.org/learn/readinggroups).

### ***Get Involved***

- [Make a Commitment to the Charter for Compassion](#)
- [Affirm the Charter for Compassion](#)
- [Share Your Story of Compassion](#)
- [Tell Your Friends about the Charter for Compassion](#)
- [Join the Facebook Discussion](#)
- [Organize a local Reading Group](#)

### ***For More Information***

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### ***Local Organizations***

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