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## **The Road of Compassion**

**by David M. Valadez**

Training is supposed to give us a practical means of becoming a compassionate person. More than simply a meditation upon compassion, or the conclusion to some sort of moral philosophy or sermon on compassion, Budo provides us with actual practices by which we can cultivate ourselves into becoming loving nurturers to the whole of the world.

Compassion itself is a collection of actions. It is not merely a feeling we hold silently within our chest. The silently held can never be compassion. Compassion comes to us, or rather comes through us, via the actions of generosity, forgiveness, and grief. It is through grief that we come to see the needs of the world. Through grief, we also see our own faults that contribute to the world's needs. Through forgiveness, we find the freedom of heart to do good, to be good, and to stay strong spiritually in the shadow of the ever-existing doubt that marks our free will. In generosity, we bring the awareness of grief and the freedom of forgiveness into the service(s) we can provide for others. Through this, we cultivate fearlessness, love, and wisdom within ourselves – that is to say that we spiritually mature. It is the spiritually mature that saves and serves the world.

So it is that through our time on the mat and in the dojo that we must find ways of tapping into grief, forgiveness, and generosity - these are the signposts along the road of Compassion. Without compassion, we are cowards, and what is supposed to be Bravery is replaced by the cheap copies of Rage and Shame. It is a dangerous thing, in other words, this path of Budo. Much wrong can grow where right is supposed to be. Woe to those that train in the killing arts but have no heart to grieve, forgive, and be generous and/or see one's role in all of these things.