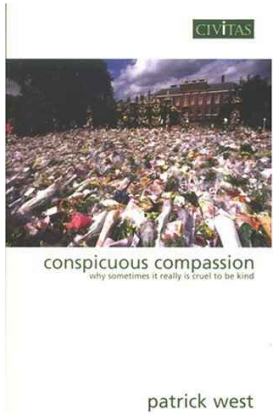


(Free) *Conspicuous Compassion: Why Sometimes It Really Is Cruel To Be Kind*

Conspicuous Compassion: Why Sometimes It Really Is Cruel To Be Kind



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We live in an age of conspicuous compassion. We sport empathy ribbons, send flowers to recently deceased celebrities, weep in public over murdered children, apologize for historical misdemeanors, wear red noses for the starving, go on demonstrations to proclaim 'Drop the Debt' or 'Not in My Name.' We feel each other's pain. We desperately seek a common identity and new social bonds to replace those that have withered in the post-war era - the family, the church, the nation and neighborhood. Mourning sickness is a religion for the lonely crowd that no longer subscribes to orthodox churches. Its flowers and teddies are its rites, its collective minutes' silences its liturgy and mass. This book's thesis is that such displays of empathy do not change the world for the better: they do not help the poor, diseased, dispossessed or bereaved. Our culture of ostentatious caring is about projecting your ego, and informing others what a deeply caring individual you are. It is about feeling good, not doing good, and illustrates not how altruistic we have become, but how selfish. And, as Patrick West shows in this witty but incisive monograph, sometimes it can be cruel.

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