

Stand Up! Speak Out!

COMPASION: Do You Feel My Pain? Guide for Discussion, Reflection or Role Play

Compassion literally means “to suffer with.” Our ability to imagine what it feels like to stand in someone else’s shoes gives us a deeper understanding of how *the other* feels, how their pain feels just like ours. The inspiration to write this song in Spanish and English came from the writer’s love for the Spanish language, and particular appreciation for the Spanish word for compassion, which is an exceptionally musical one.

English Vocabulary and Translation of Spanish Words & Phrases

apathy: an absence of feeling; no feeling; having no *empathy* or *compassion*
compasión: Spanish for *compassion*; pronounced *comb-pahs-YON*
compassion: the ability to imagine how someone else’s pain feels, and the desire to lessen their suffering
empathy: the ability to feel someone else’s pain by knowing or imagining what it’s like to *be* that person
social status: the power an individual is *perceived* to have by his/her peers; a popular kid has a lot...
eso nos hace humanos: *That’s what makes us human* in Spanish
tén compasión: *have compassion* in Spanish
tantos heridos: *so many (are) wounded...* in Spanish
por mudos testigos: *by silent bystanders...* in Spanish (*testigo* = witness; *mudo* = mute, silent)
todos somos seres humanos: *we are all human beings...* in Spanish
no somos de palo: *we’re not made of wood...* in Spanish (*palo* = a stick)
necesitamos compasión: *we all need compassion...* in Spanish
ten valor: *have courage...* in Spanish
ponte de mi lado: *stand with me...* in Spanish (literally: put yourself by my side)
oye, mi hermano, mi hermana: *Listen, my brother, my sister*
tenemos que tartar: *we need to treat each other*
con amor, carino, y mucho respeto: *with love, kindness, and a lot of respect*
para tener compasión: *to have compassion (for one another)*

Do you feel me, do you suffer with me, do you feel my pain?

1. In many pop and hip hop songs, the artist asks for your *empathy*, saying, “*Do you feel me?*”
Scenario A: Imagine this artist is actually a close friend and sent you a message on Facebook, sharing this pain, disappointment, or hurt with *you*. Write back, showing how you really *do* feel their pain. Imagine you’ve *been there*. What would you say to try to comfort them? **Scenario B:** Think of someone you *don’t* know or idolize (*don’t use their real name*): the bus driver, a store clerk, a classmate you don’t really know. Imagine they’re suffering the same (or worse) pain: someone they like was mean to them, their family lost all their belongings in a fire; a cousin they were very close to just died. Write to them *as if they were your best friend*. What would you say to lessen their pain? *Write what you would hope someone would write to you, if you were in pain.*

When you hear me cry, a tear comes to your eye / I see your humanity

2. Showing our humanity means showing the parts of ourselves that all human beings share: we all experience pain, joy, hunger, thirst, we want to feel safe, and be loved. We are all *included* in humanity. But cliques and bullying are all about *excluding*: dividing people into cool/not-cool, friends/enemies, popular/not-popular, accepted/rejected. We want to *belong* to a *good group*, but:
a) How do we judge who is *in* and who is *out* of our circle of friends, clique, or club: by shared interests or by personal characteristics? **b)** Can we enjoy being *in* without keeping others *out*?

I know you know what it’s like / Eso nos hace humanos... / It takes courage to care

3. **Scenario:** Jenna has moderate *social status*—not super popular, but liked by most. She’s in a big group (including high status kids) when Marcus, a student with a physical disability, limps past, trips, recovers, and continues on his way. Many in the group laugh and make mean comments. Jenna doesn’t join in, but she doesn’t stand up or speak out either. What’s she afraid of? Why does it take *courage to care*? What do we risk by showing we care? What would *you* have done?

Ten valor, ponte de mi lado [have courage, stand with me, stand by my side]

4. **Scenario:** Joseph, a star athlete, is having one of his legendary parties. But you were not invited, because Joseph believed a rumor that *you* said he stole someone’s iPod. You never said that and your friends know it. But they don’t speak up for you because they don’t want to miss the party. You call your cousin and tell her how you feel, and why you’re disappointed in your friends.