When capitalism started, nature was abundant and capital was scarce; it thus made sense to reward capital above all else. Today we’re awash in capital and literally running out of nature. We’re also losing many social arrangements that bind us together as communities and enrich our lives in non-monetary ways. This doesn’t mean capitalism is doomed or useless, but it does mean we have to modify it. We have to adapt it to the twenty-first century rather than the eighteenth. And that can be done.

~Peter Barnes

How Did We Get Here?
Just over two hundred years ago, humankind experienced the Industrial Revolution, when machines and manufacturing processes significantly changed the living standards of a quickly increasing population. That shift brought about the beginnings of a capitalist economy, in which the means of production is largely or entirely privately owned and operated for profit, and we became accustomed to the idea of ever-expanding production and profits.

Gaps and Inequalities
Since the latter part of the twentieth century, however, we have experienced widening gaps and gross inequalities among the more than seven billion humans on Earth. We have also come to realize that our species is negatively affecting the natural habitat, the environment that we all share.

One response to these alarming observations has been a movement toward “conscious capitalism”—a realization that there is not a single “bottom line” that measures success only by the profits that a business brings to its shareholders. Rather, many business entities have recognized other significant measures that compel us to look closely at our responsibility toward both the human community and the global environment.

They have recognized that business can serve the human needs of
employees not just to survive but to thrive and play a part in doing good in the world—serving clients and customers, providing useful products and services, and also being mindful of the limitations of natural resources and the fragility of our environment.

**What Does Compassion Have to Do With It?**
Here in the early part of the 21st century, we have reaped the rewards of human endeavor and the entrepreneurial spirit. We have experienced the realities of global connection through what would have seemed the stuff of science fiction a century ago—the worldwide Internet, personal cell phones, satellite television, and the ability to communicate with ease across the globe.

We have landed on the moon and more recently on an asteroid. We have developed vaccines and antibiotics and all manner of products and processes that can prolong human life, and a host of machines and gadgets that have made life easier for many.

But somewhere in the midst of all these accomplishments and advancements, we seem to have lost our way. “Business” has come to be synonymous with “profit,” and we have come to accept that a disproportionate portion of that profit will line the pockets of a very few, and that those very few care little about either the current state of humanity or of the Earth. In short, business has lost the ability to care, to take responsibility, to be compassionate.

In addition to all of these accomplishments and advancements, it is time to think about still another concept that is as monumental as any listed above—**compassion as a commodity in the service of society**. Imagine, compassion as a currency! It’s not impossible. There is a multitude of research helping us see that when companies help employees actualize their higher level of needs as expressed in Maslow’s Hierarchy, then a sense of ownership is established, and productivity and employee retention are increased. Equally, when companies respect their employees and clients and demonstrate kindness, then loyalty becomes more pronounced.

**How does a Business become a Partner of the Charter for Compassion International?**
Here at the Charter for Compassion, we are now asking, “What if?” What if we now turned our collective attention and our human ingenuity—in business, education, healthcare, religion and all our human endeavors—to create a compassionate global community where people are motivated by compassion to take responsibility for and care for each other?

That is the vision of the Charter for Compassion International (CCI). Individuals, organizations, and institutions around the world are already working to bring compassion to life in their communities, taking responsibility for the well-being of people and the planet.

We invite you to join us—to weave your compassion with the same heartfelt impulse of both friends and strangers throughout the Earth.

**A Network of Networks**
The basis for the global compassion movement is contained in the Charter for Compassion, a document that was conceived in February 2008 when the TED prize was awarded to Karen Armstrong for her wish to create, launch, and propagate a global compassion movement based on the Golden Rule. The Charter is an expression of the change we are working to implement, beginning with individuals but encompassing organizations, institutions, and communities (villages, hamlets, towns, cities, and countries)—throughout the globe.

Our mission is to serve and support connection among people everywhere. When your organization signs the Charter, it will have the opportunity to communicate with like-minded people and organizations worldwide.

**Benefits of Becoming a Partner**
The Charter provides regular, open conference calls for each of its sectors (Business, Education, Environment, Healthcare, Peace, Religion/Spirituality, Scientific Research and The Arts), usually with a provocative speaker. All Partners also receive general newsletters and announcements of upcoming events, conferences, and other information that may be of interest.

Each Partner organization has a dedicated page within our website so that others can read about what an organization is doing and perhaps form alliances among organizations. An ongoing blog, relevant annotated bibliographies, and an ever-increasing library of resources is also available on our website. The Charter staff take seriously the need and the commitment to facilitate the connection of people who share the hope of making a difference.

Contact us at:
Charter for Compassion
PO Box 10787
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110
contact@charterforcompassion.org