Compassionate love for close others and humanity

Susan Sprecher
Illinois State University

Beverley Fehr
University of Winnipeg

──────────── ABSTRACT ────────────

A compassionate love scale was developed that can be used, in alternative forms, to assess compassionate or altruistic love for different targets (e.g., close others and all of humankind). Using three samples (total $N = 529$), the Compassionate Love scale was developed and piloted. Three studies (total $N = 700$) were then conducted to provide validation of the scale and to examine correlates of compassionate love. In support of our predictions, compassionate love was found to be associated positively with prosocial behavior, as directed both to close others and to all of humanity. Those who were more religious or spiritual experienced more compassionate love than those who were less religious or spiritual. Evidence was found that compassionate love is distinct from empathy. In the final study, we introduced a relationship-specific version of the Compassionate Love scale, and found that compassionate love for a specific close other was associated with the provision of social support for that person.

KEY WORDS: altruism • compassionate love • love • social support • spirituality

Considerable research has been conducted on love in the past two decades. This research has focused primarily on defining and operationalizing love and the examination of its predictors, correlates, and outcomes within romantic relationships (for a review, see S. S. Hendrick & Hendrick, 2000). Love for close others such as family and friends, for peripheral ties, and for all of humanity has generally not been a topic of investigation. In this research, we focus on compassionate (or altruistic)

love, a type of love that can be experienced for a variety of others, including all of humankind. Our purpose was to develop a scale that measures compassionate love and that can be used, in different versions, to measure compassionate love for a variety of targets, including close others and humankind or strangers. As part of scale validation, we examined: (i) the degree to which compassionate love is associated with empathy and related other-orientations, (ii) how compassionate love is associated with the provision of help and social support to others, and (iii) how religiosity or spirituality is associated with the degree to which compassionate love is experienced for others.

What is compassionate love and why study it? We offer the following working definition of *compassionate love:*

> *Compassionate love* is an attitude toward other(s), either close others or strangers or all of humanity; containing feelings, cognitions, and behaviors that are focused on caring, concern, tenderness, and an orientation toward supporting, helping, and understanding the other(s), particularly when the other(s) is (are) perceived to be suffering or in need.

Our definition is consistent with Lazarus (1991), who in his work on emotion, defined *compassion* as 'being moved by another's suffering and wanting to help' (p. 289). Compassionate love is likely to be an enduring attitude or dispositional variable as well as a fluctuating state that is affected by situational and relational contexts and temporary mood states. We argue that compassionate love is distinct from empathy (Batson & Oleson, 1991), a cousin concept, because compassionate love is both more encompassing and more enduring. A similar distinction was raised years ago by Lazarus (1991), in a discussion of the distinctions among compassion, empathy, sympathy, and related constructs. He noted that while empathy is focused on sharing another's emotional state, compassion is an other-directed emotion in its own right. Based in part on Lazarus's (1991) distinction, we suggest that compassionate love is the more encompassing construct because it includes tenderness, caring, and other aspects of empathy, but also behavioral predispositions such as self-sacrifice. Compassionate love may be more enduring because it is likely to be experienced independent of a specific target eliciting the experience, whereas empathy may occur specifically in response to the suffering of someone.

Although our construct and scale could be named a number of things, including compassion and altruistic love, we have chosen *compassionate love* due to the influence of recent scholarship on this topic (Underwood, 2002). As noted by Underwood, *compassion* alone leaves out 'some of the emotional and transcendent components which the word *love* brings in' (p. 78). Empathy, a concept that is undoubtedly related to compassionate love, has long been viewed as a major factor in promoting prosocial behavior toward others (Davis, 1996; Dovidio & Penner, 2001), particularly helping directed to strangers in short-term interactions, which has been the

type of helping most frequently studied in the social psychology literature on prosocial behavior. Compassionate love, as a more enduring and encompassing state, however, may contribute to sustained prosocial behavior, including volunteerism directed toward strangers and social support directed toward loved ones. Although social support has been a major area of investigation in the close relationships field (Cunningham & Barbee, 2000), the focus has been on the support recipient rather than the support provider. As a consequence, we lack knowledge of what may motivate people to provide support for others. We speculate that compassionate love experienced for others may be a strong motive for offering help to others, both strangers and close others. The development of an instrument that measures compassionate love in multiple relational contexts allows us to examine the degree to which compassionate love is associated with different types of prosocial behavior.

Compassionate love for close others. The importance of compassionate love to intimate relationships has been demonstrated in several theoretical approaches to love. Using prototype theory, Fehr (1988, 1993; Fehr & Russell, 1991) has examined the features and types of love that laypeople associate with love. Prototype research has shown that 'compassionate love,' 'unconditional love,' 'giving love,' and 'altruistic love' are generated as part of laypersons' typologies of love, and that trust, caring, helping, and sharing are among the characteristics associated with most types of love.

Research on love styles (C. Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986; Lasswell & Lasswell, 1976; Lee, 1973) also highlights the importance of altruistic love. One of the six love styles is Agape, defined as altruistic love directed toward others. Agape is measured by such items as, 'I would rather suffer myself than let my lover suffer,' 'I am usually willing to sacrifice my own wishes to let my lover achieve his/hers,' and 'I would endure all things for the sake of my lover.' Participants from diverse samples generally score high on the Agape scale for their intimate partner. Only the love styles, Eros (passionate love) and Storge (friendship love), have been consistently endorsed to a greater degree than Agape (C. Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986; S. S. Hendrick & Hendrick, 1993; Sprecher et al., 1994). Agape is experienced to a greater degree among those who are religious and in long-term relationships (S. S. Hendrick & Hendrick, 1992).

In addition, a dimension referring to altruism or other-orientation is included in most scales that focus on romantic love for the partner. For example, the Rubin (1970) Love scale includes the item, 'I would do almost anything for my partner,' the Hatfield and Sprecher (1986) Passionate Love scale contains the item, 'I feel happy when I am doing something to make ____ happy,' and the Intimacy subscale of the Sternberg's (1988) Triangular Love scale has the item, 'I give considerable emotional support to ___.' Respondents score high on these items, indicating that intimate partners support, help, and feel responsible for each other.

In sum, the theory and measurement of love in romantic relationships underscores the importance of compassionate (altruistic) love in romantic

relationships and in people's conceptions of love. However, this type of love has not been a central focus of research. Furthermore, no research, to our knowledge, has focused on compassionate love experienced for close others (family and friends) more generally.

Compassionate love for strangers and humanity. Love experienced for strangers, peripheral ties, or all of humanity has also been overlooked by researchers. In their prototype research on love, however, Fehr and Russell (1991) found that the type of love, 'love for humanity,' is recognized by laypersons as a relatively good example of love. And, compassionate love toward strangers and all of humanity is important to examine because it likely leads to prosocial behavior directed toward others, an issue that is investigated in this study. Furthermore, the experience of compassionate love for others, including less fortunate others, may ultimately increase individuals' well-being. Recently, Fingerman (2004; see also Fingerman & Hay, 2002) discussed the importance of 'relationships' with peripheral ties, including strangers seen often in one's environment, as contributing to human development and happiness.

Although there is a dearth of empirical research on compassionate love, recent scholarship from multiple disciplines, including theology and philosophy, has begun to focus on this type of love (see, e.g., Post, Underwood, Schloss, & Hurlbut, 2002). As part of a larger study on spiritual experiences, Underwood (2002) measured the degree to which individuals endorsed the statements, 'I feel a selfless caring for others.' and 'I accept others even when they do things I think are wrong.' In two separate studies, she found considerable variation in the degree to which respondents agreed with these statements referred to, respectively, as compassion and mercy. These items have also been included in the recent General Social Survey (GSS), and considerable variation has been found in the responses. For example, Smith (2003) reported that 43% of the representative national GSS sample reported feeling selfless caring for others on most days, 24% reported feeling this on only some days, and 33% reported that this occurs once in a while or less often. Scores on the compassion and mercy items also are correlated positively with scales measuring emotional empathy, perspective taking, and forgiveness of others (Underwood, 2002; Underwood & Teresi, 2002).

Pilot studies: Development of the Compassionate Love scale
The major purpose of our research was to develop a valid and reliable scale to measure compassionate love, which could then be used in different versions to assess compassionate love for both close others and for strangers and all of humanity. To begin our scale development, we adapted the compassion and mercy items referred to above from Underwood's (2002; Underwood & Teresi, 2002) research on spiritual experiences and an item adapted from the C. Hendrick and Hendrick (1986) Agape scale. We then wrote several additional items to capture the dimensions of compassionate love from our definition and from the literature on love and

altruism (C. Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986; Post et al., 2002). Nineteen of the items were subjected to psychometric analyses in three pilot studies conducted with undergraduate students. In *Pilot Study 1*, 126 participants completed a form of the scale in which the directions indicated that the participants should think of significant others while completing the items (the target of the items was 'others'; e.g., 'When I see others feeling sad, I feel a need to reach out to them.'). In *Pilot Study 2*, 182 participants completed the same scale, again with close others as the target. In *Pilot Study 3*, 221 participants completed two versions of the scale, one that referred to close others (e.g., 'I spend a lot of time concerned about the well-being of those people close to me.') and one that referred to strangers or humanity ('I spend a lot of time concerned about the well-being of humankind.'). Pilot Study 3 also included related other-oriented measures, such as the Penner Prosocial Personality Battery (Penner, Fritzsche, Craiger, & Freifeld, 1995).

In the pilot studies, most of the items were highly correlated with the total scale score and highly intercorrelated. The set of items also demonstrated high internal consistency (alpha coefficients ranged from .89 to .91). Pilot Study 3 also indicated that the mean compassionate love score was significantly higher for the close others version than for the stranger–humanity version. In addition, evidence was found in Pilot Study 3 that compassionate love was correlated moderately with empathy and helpfulness, as measured by the Penner et al. (1995) battery. (Detailed results from the pilot studies are not presented here because they are replicated below with studies based on the final version of the Compassionate Love scale. A table of psychometric information of the preliminary scale based on the pilot studies is available from the first author.)

The Compassionate Love scale was further modified upon completion of the pilot studies. Three items were eliminated due to their slightly lower psychometric properties (e.g., item-to-total correlations); two of these were reverse-scored items. In addition, five new items were written to assess features that were identified as central to compassionate love in a program of research on laypeople's conceptions (Fehr & Sprecher, 2005). Thus, the items included in the final version of the scale are based on prior literature on love and altruism and a prototype analysis conducted on the concept of compassionate love. (See the Appendix for the final set of items.)

Study 1: Psychometric properties of the Compassionate Love scale and associations with prosocial characteristics

The primary aim of Study 1 was to examine the psychometric properties of the final version of the Compassionate Love scale. An additional purpose was to examine how compassionate love is related to empathy and other pro-social characteristics (e.g., helpfulness).

Method

Participants and procedure

Undergraduate students (N = 354) participated in this study at a midwestern U.S. university; 123 (34.7%) were men and 231 (65.3%) were women. Their ages ranged from 18 to 33 years (M = 19.8, SD = 1.96). They completed a questionnaire under anonymous and voluntary conditions in classroom settings.

Measurement

The Compassionate Love scale. Two forms of the 21-item Compassionate Love scale were administered. In one form, the items referred to close others, and the directions requested that the participants think about their significant others, including family members and friends, as they completed the items. In the other version, the targets were strangers or humanity and the directions asked the participants to think of all of humanity or humankind and specific strangers as they completed the items. (See the Appendix for items in each version.) The order of the two scales was counterbalanced.

Related other-oriented measures. The questionnaire also included the 30-item version of the Penner Prosocial Personality Battery (Penner et al., 1995), which is composed of three subscales (*Social Responsibility*, *Moral Reasoning*, and *Self-Reported Altruism*). The Social Responsibility and Moral Reasoning items are rated on a 5-point response scale (with higher numbers indicating greater agreement), whereas the Self-reported Altruism scale is rated on a 5-point *never* to *very often* response scale. Factor analyses of the scale items have consistently yielded two factors, identified as: *Other-Oriented Empathy* (e.g., 'When I see someone being taking advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards them.') and *Helpfulness* (e.g., I have offered to help a handicapped or elderly stranger across a street.') (Penner et al., 1995). Penner ('Scoring key for prosocial personality battery', unpublished) recommends using scores based on these two factors rather than on the individual scales and reports an alpha of .86 for Other-Oriented Empathy and .77 for Helpfulness. In this study, the alpha values were .79 and .63.

We also measured *empathy* with an 8-item empathy scale used in research by Schieman and his colleagues with a community sample of adults in Ontario (Schieman & Turner, 2001; Schieman & Van Gundy, 2000). (The 8 items are a subset of those developed by Davis, 1996 and Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972.) Sample items are: 'Sometimes I don't feel very sorry for other people when they are having problems,' and 'I am usually aware of the feelings of other people.' Participants responded to each item on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *not at all like me* to 5 = *very much like me*. Cronbach's alpha in this study was .75. Finally, we gathered demographic information, including a question about the frequency of church attendance, in order to assess religiosity.

Results

Descriptive information on the scale

Psychometric properties of the Compassionate Love scale, both for the close others version and for the humanity–strangers version, are presented in the Appendix (Tables A1 and A2). The item-to-total correlations were high, ranging from .46 to .81. Cronbach's alpha was .95 for each version of the scale. The mean total score was 5.96 (SD = .70) for the close others version and 4.32 (SD = 1.07) for the humanity version. This difference was significant (*paired* t(351) = 34.34, p < .001). In addition, scores on the two forms of the Compassionate Love scale were correlated positively, r = .56, p < .001. A gender comparison indicated that women scored significantly higher than men on the Compassionate Love scale, both for close others (M = 6.10, SD = .62 versus 5.68, SD = .75; t = 5.58, p < .001) and for strangers (M = 4.56, SD = .98 versus 3.88, SD = 1.08; t = 5.99, p < .001).

Factor structure of the Compassionate Love scale

We conducted an exploratory analysis of the factor structure of each version of the Compassionate Love scale, using principle components analysis with varimax rotation. A scree test in each analysis indicated one primary factor that explained 45.79 and 51.45% of the variance and that had eigenvalues of 9.59 and 10.81, respectively. Two other factors with eigenvalues slightly above 1.0 and explaining 5–8% of the variance also were extracted in each analysis. If we were to adapt a three-factor model, the factors, based on the items loading (> .45) on each, would be defined as: *tenderness and caring*, *acceptance and understanding*, and *helping and sacrifice*. However, for two reasons, we present the scale as measuring a single, underlying factor. First, and as already noted, the scree test demonstrated a distinct break between the first factor and all others. Second, the items loading on the second and third factors correlate with other variables considered in this study (e.g., empathy, helpfulness) similarly to items in the first factor. As noted by Briggs and Cheek (1986), separate components or factors of a scale are less conceptually meaningful when they correlate in similar ways to other variables.

Associations between compassionate love and related other-oriented variables

Next, we focused on the relation between compassionate love and a set of other-oriented variables. The total score of each version of the compassionate love scale was positively and significantly correlated with the two empathy scales (r = .50 to .68). The more compassionate love respondents experienced, both for strangers and for close others, the greater empathy they experienced for others. However, these correlations are not so high as to suggest that compassionate love and empathy are identical constructs. In addition, scores on both versions of the Compassionate Love scale were associated positively with scores on Penner et al.'s (1995) Helpfulness scale (r = .23 for the close others version and r = .32 for the humanity–strangers version; p < .001). Finally, our measure of religiosity (i.e., frequency of church attendance), was correlated positively with compassionate love for close others (r = .22, p < .001) and strangers (r = .26, p < .001).

Discussion

The results of Study 1 indicate that the Compassionate Love scale is internally reliable, further confirming the findings from the pilot samples based on a preliminary version of the scale. Compassionate love was moderately, but not highly, correlated with empathy, thereby providing convergent validity of the Compassionate Love scale, and indicating that empathy and compassionate love are distinct concepts. Furthermore, compassionate love was associated positively with self-reports of helping behavior directed toward others (neighbors, the handicapped, the elderly), also providing validation of the scale and consistent with our predictions that compassionate love may serve as an important motive of prosocial behavior. Finally, those who attended religious services frequently experienced more compassionate love for others than those who attended religious services less frequently.

Study 2: Compassionate love and its correlates: Further examination

In Study 2, we further examined the association between compassionate love and prosocial behavior. More specifically, we examined how compassionate love is associated with both *volunteerism*, a commitment to help strangers and humanity, and *social support* directed to close others. Although both compassionate love for close others and compassionate love for humanity and strangers are likely to be associated positively with each type of prosocial behavior, we expected that compassionate love directed toward strangers and humanity would be the type of love more highly associated with volunteerism, whereas compassionate love directed to close others would be the type of love more highly associated with social support. Volunteerism is generally directed to social causes and people less well-known, whereas social support is usually directed to close others.

   We also further explored the association between compassionate love and religiosity. The measure of religiosity in Study 1 was limited to attendance at religious services. In this study, we also included global measures of religiosity and spirituality and a detailed measure of spirituality which focuses on spiritual feelings and thoughts that can be experienced on a daily basis (Underwood & Teresi, 2002). We expected to find that the various measures of religiosity and spirituality would be associated positively with compassionate love, but particularly compassionate love for strangers. Embedded in religious and spiritual doctrines is a love for all of humanity. Furthermore, the practices associated with being a religious or spiritual person (prayer, meditation, etc.) may generate compassionate love for others. As noted earlier, previous research (see S. S. Hendrick & Hendrick, 1992) has demonstrated that religiosity is associated with the Agapic love style.

   Finally, in this study, we provided additional tests of the validation of the

Compassionate Love scale. First, we examined the degree to which the Compassionate Love scale is free of social desirability biases. Second, we examined whether compassionate love, as the more enduring and encompassing construct, is more highly associated with prosocial behavior than is empathy. Such findings can provide further evidence of the distinction between compassionate love and empathy.

Method

Participants and procedure

The participants were 172 undergraduate students (67.4% women) from a midwestern U.S. university, who completed a questionnaire under anonymous and voluntary conditions in a classroom setting. The mean age of the respondents was 20.52 years ($SD = 2.99$).

Measurement

The Compassionate Love scale. Both forms of the Compassionate Love scale (close others version; humanity–strangers version) were included. The close others version was always presented first in this study. Cronbach's alpha was .94 for the close others version and .95 for the humanity–strangers version.

Prosocial behavior. Several items were included to measure prosocial behavior, directed either toward close others or to strangers. First, the five items from the Penner et al.'s (1995) Helpfulness factor were included (e.g., 'I have helped carry a stranger's belongings (e.g., books, parcels, etc.)'). Cronbach's alpha for this 5-item Helpfulness factor scale in this study was .49. Second, six items were included that measured volunteering behavior across several domains (for the homeless, charity, social causes, special groups, community services, the less fortunate). Some of the items were adapted from a volunteerism scale developed by Mikulincer, Shaver, Gillath, and Nitzberg (2005). The participants responded to these items on the same response scale used for the Penner et al.'s Helpfulness items, which ranged from 1 = *Never* to 5 = *Very often*. Cronbach's alpha for this 6-item volunteerism scale was .83. We also included another item on volunteerism from Mikulincer et al., which was: 'Compared to other people your age and in your community, how involved have you been in volunteer activities?' Options ranged from 1 = *Much more than most of my peers* to 5 = *Much less than most of my peers;* responses were recoded so that the higher number indicated more volunteering relative to peers. Finally, participants were asked to estimate how many hours they have volunteered in the past 3 months, and were given several options ranging from '*none*' to '*more than 10 hours*.'

The questionnaire also included a measure of social support directed to close others. Because previous literature has not focused on social support from the provider's perspective, we developed a self-report measure of social support offered to others. Our measure assessed multiple dimensions of support (Argyle, 1992; Wills & Shinar, 2000) by asking participants the degree to which they believed they have offered 'others' each of the following types of social support: emotional support, instrumental support, information support,

companionship support, and validation support (specific examples of each type of social support were provided). Participants responded to each item on a 1 (*rarely*) to 9 (*very often*) response scale. Cronbach's alpha for this set of items was .74.

Religiosity/spirituality. We included the frequency of religious service attendance item from Study 1 and also included two global questions assessing self-perceptions of religiosity and spirituality. These were the items: 'How religious do you consider yourself to be?' (responses ranged from 1 = *not at all religious* to 5 = *extremely religious*); and 'How spiritual do you consider yourself to be?' (1 = *not at all spiritual*; 5 = *extremely spiritual*). In addition, we included the 16-item *Daily Spiritual Experience scale* (see Underwood & Teresi, 2002). However, we removed the two items that referred to love and mercy, because they had been adapted for inclusion in our Compassionate Love scale, as noted earlier. The other items in the Spirituality scale measure such qualities of spiritual experience as: connection with the transcendent, strength and comfort in spirituality, gratefulness, spiritual longing, and closeness to God. Evidence is reported in Underwood and Teresi (2002) for the reliability and validity of the scale. In this study, Cronbach's alpha was .94 for the 14-item version of the scale (minus the love and mercy items). Consistent with Underwood and Teresi (2002), the sum of the items is used to represent the scale score.

Inventory of desirable responding. The Paulhus (1991) 40-item Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding was included in order to examine whether the Compassionate Love scale is uncontaminated by socially desirable responding. The scale includes two subscales: *Self-deceptive Positivity*, which refers to the tendency to engage in self-deception (e.g., 'I never regret my decisions.') and *Impression Management*, which refers to the tendency to over-report desirable behaviors and underreport undesirable behaviors (e.g., 'I have never dropped litter on the street.'). In this study, Cronbach's alpha was .60 for Self-deceptive Positivity and .76 for Impression Management.

Empathy. The 8-item empathy scale adapted from Schieman and Van Gundy (2000) was included in the long form of the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha was .77.

Results

Descriptive results
The mean total score was 5.95 (SD = .69) for the close others version and 3.93 (SD = 1.27) for the humanity–stranger version (paired $t(169)$ = 23.28, $p < .001$). Scores on the two scales were positively correlated (r = .47, $p < .001$). Women had higher scores than did men on both the close others version (M = 6.11, SD = .51 versus 5.54, SD = .87; $t(169)$ = 4.56, $p < .001$) and on the humanity–strangers version (M = 4.11, SD = 1.18 versus 3.55, SD = 1.37; $t(166)$ = 2.75, $p < .01$). A principle components analysis with varimax rotation and follow-up scree test yielded one primary factor.

Compassionate love and prosocial behavior

Support was found for our hypothesis that compassionate love for humanity and strangers was associated with volunteer behavior. Scores on the humanity–strangers version of the Compassionate Love scale were associated positively with the 5-item Penner et al.'s Helpfulness dimension, with the 6-item scale of Volunteering Across Diverse Situations, and with the self-rating of volunteer behavior compared to peers (see the second column of Table 1). However, scores on the humanity–strangers version of the Compassionate Love scale were not correlated with the number of hours the participants reported volunteering in the past 3 months. Scores on the close others version of the Compassionate Love scale were also correlated positively with the same measures of volunteerism (i.e., Penner's Helpfulness dimension, Volunteering Across Diverse Situations, and self-rating of volunteer behavior compared with peers), as indicated in column 1 of Table 1. These correlations were lower than those found for the humanity–strangers version; but the difference between the correlations was significant only for Volunteering Across Diverse Situations ($t = 2.27, p < .05$).

In addition, multiple regressions were conducted with each of the three measures of volunteerism that were significant in the correlational analyses as dependent variables, and the two compassionate love scores as independent variables. For each of these measures of volunteerism, compassionate love for humanity was a significant predictor, whereas compassionate love for close others was not: Penner's Helpfulness ($\beta = .24, p < .01$ for the humanity–strangers version versus $\beta = .14, ns,$ for the close others version), volunteering across diverse situations ($\beta = .36, p < .001$ for the humanity–stranger version; versus $\beta = -.01, ns$ for the close others version), self-rating of volunteer behavior compared with peers ($\beta = .28, p = .001$ for the humanity–stranger version versus $\beta = .05, ns$ for the close others version).

We had also hypothesized that compassionate love for close others would be more highly associated with the provision of social support than would compassionate love for strangers. Although both versions of the scale were correlated with the social support score, the correlation was stronger for the close others

TABLE 1
Associations between compassionate love (for close others and strangers and humanity) and prosocial behaviors; Study 2

	Compassionate love for close others	Compassionate love for strangers–humanity
Volunteerism		
Penner's Helpfulness factor	.25**	.30***
Volunteer behavior across diverse situations	.18*	.35***
Number of hours volunteered	.03	.01
Volunteer behavior compared with others	.19*	.30***
Social support		
Total score	.51***	.27***

$* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001.$

version of the scale ($r = .51$) than for the humanity–strangers version ($r = .27$); this difference in correlations was significant ($t = 3.79$, $p < .01$). In addition, multiple regression analyses, with social support as the dependent variable, indicated that the close others version of the scale was a significant predictor ($\beta = .47$, $p < .001$), whereas the humanity–strangers version of the scale was not ($\beta = .07$, *ns*).

Compassionate love and religiosity/spirituality

As hypothesized, religiosity and spirituality were associated with compassionate love for others. All four measures of religiosity or spirituality were positively associated with scores on both forms of the Compassionate Love scale (Table 2). That is, people who experienced more compassionate love for close others and for humanity were those who attended religious services more frequently, identified themselves as religious and/or spiritual, and scored higher on the daily spiritual scale. The correlations were higher for the humanity–strangers version of the scale than for the close others version, although the difference in the correlations were significant only for self-rating of spirituality ($t = 2.44$, $p < .05$).

Additional validation data

We examined the correlation of the scores on the two forms of the Compassionate Love scale with the two dimensions of the Paulhus (1991) Inventory of Desirable Responding. Neither type of socially desirable responding was correlated with the close others version of the Compassionate Love scale ($r = -.02$ for Self-Deceptive Positivity and $r = .11$ for Impression Management). Although scores on the humanity–strangers version of the Compassionate Love scale were uncorrelated with Self-Deceptive Positivity ($r = -.06$), a positive correlation was obtained with Impression Management ($r = .28$, $p < .001$). We therefore re-computed correlations between the humanity–strangers version of the Compassionate Love scale and the various measures of prosocial behavior and spirituality/religiosity (i.e., the correlations in column 2 of Tables 1 and 2), while controlling for Impression Management. The correlations remained similar in magnitude and did not change in significance level. We also further examined the association between empathy and compassionate love. The Schieman measure of empathy was correlated with the close others version of the Compassionate Love scale ($r = .64$) and with the

TABLE 2
Associations between compassionate love (for close others and strangers and humanity) and religiosity and spirituality; Study 2

	Compassionate love for close others	Compassionate love for strangers–humanity
Attendance at religious services	.22**	.29***
Self-rating of religiosity	.36***	.43***
Self-rating of spirituality	.30***	.47***
14-item Underwood Spirituality scale	.39***	.44***

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

humanity–strangers version ($r = .45$). Then, in a set of regressions, we compared empathy and compassionate love as predictors of prosocial behavior. First, we regressed the two indices of volunteerism on both compassionate love (as directed to strangers) and the empathy score. Controlling for empathy, the compassionate love score was found to be a significant predictor of both Penner et al.'s Helpfulness dimension ($\beta = .32, p < .001$) and the index of volunteering across diverse situations ($\beta = .34, p < .001$). However, the empathy score was not a significant predictor for either type of volunteerism controlling for compassionate love ($\beta = -.04$, *ns*, for Penner's Helpfulness and $\beta = .02$, *ns* for volunteering across diverse situations). Second, we regressed the social support measure on the score for the Compassionate Love scale directed to close others and the empathy scale. In this case, both compassionate love ($\beta = .28, p = .001$) and empathy ($\beta = .37, p < .001$) were significant predictors.

Discussion

Study 2 yielded evidence that compassionate love is associated with various types of prosocial behavior. More specifically, and as predicted, scores on the humanity–strangers version of the Compassionate Love scale were associated with self-report measures of volunteer behavior; furthermore, scores on the close others version of the Compassionate Love scale were associated with the provision of social support to others. No association was found between compassionate love and number of hours volunteered in the past 3 months – even philanthropic college students may not have time to volunteer during a busy academic year.

This study also yielded strong evidence that religiosity and spirituality are associated with the experience of compassionate love for others, particularly toward strangers and humanity. Even once we controlled for the tendency to engage in impression management (Paulhus, 1991), the association between spirituality/religiosity and compassionate love continued to exist. We also found further evidence that compassionate love is distinct from empathy and is the more encompassing concept, in that: (i) compassionate love and empathy were correlated, but not too highly; (ii) compassionate love was a stronger predictor of prosocial behavior directed toward strangers than was empathy; and (iii) both compassionate love and empathy explained unique variance in social support.

Study 3: Compassionate love for a specific close other

Studies 1 and 2 focused on measuring compassionate love for close others and humanity (strangers). The purpose of Study 3 was to introduce a third version of the scale, which focuses on compassionate love for a specific person and to provide psychometric data for the items in this version. We also wished to further test the prediction that compassionate love is associated with prosocial behavior (i.e., social support) by examining the association within the context of a specific close relationship. We expected

to find that scores on the Compassionate Love scale for a specific close other would be associated with the degree of social support, reported to be given to that person. As evidence of the discriminant validity of the relationship-specific version of the Compassionate Love scale, however, we expected that scores on this version of the scale would not be associated with volunteer behavior directed towards humanity and strangers. In other words, compassionate love and its correlates are context specific.

Method

Participants and procedure
College students (N = 174; 35.6% men and 63.8% women) from the same midwestern U.S. university as in Studies 1 and 2 completed an anonymous and voluntary questionnaire in a classroom setting. The mean age of the respondents was 20.53 years (SD = 2.25).

Measurement

The Compassionate Love scale. A form of the scale in which the target was a specific close other was included in the questionnaire. Example items are, 'I spend a lot of time concerned about the well-being of ____,' and 'I tend to feel compassion for ____.' Participants were asked to think of 'a special person to whom you are currently close' and were told it could be a romantic (dating or marital) partner or a very close friend. Cronbach's alpha for this version of the scale was .94. Table A3 includes psychometric data for the items of this version of the scale.

Prosocial behavior. Participants were asked to indicate the degree to which they provided social support for the particular close other (romantic partner or friend) on the same dimensions measured in Study 2 (i.e., emotional support, information, validation, assistance, guidance). Cronbach's alpha was .77. In addition, the participants were asked to compare themselves to others in their age group and community in (i) degree of volunteer activities, and (ii) degree of social support offered to friends and family members.

Religiosity/spirituality items. Participants were asked about frequency of church attendance, self-reported religiosity, and self-reported spirituality (see Study 2).

Results

The overall mean of the Compassionate Love scale that targeted a specific close other was 5.92 (SD = .82), which was very similar to the means found in the previous studies with the close others version of the scale. Furthermore, those (n = 113) who completed the scale for a marital or dating partner scored higher on the scale than did those (n = 41) who completed it for a close friend (M = 6.11, SD = .70 versus 5.45, SD = .76), $t(152)$ = 5.07, $p < .001$). Once again, women had a significantly higher score on the Compassionate Love scale than

did men ($M = 6.03$, $SD = .75$ versus $M = 5.72$, $SD = .89$, $t(170) = 2.37$, $p < .05$). And, the factor analysis results were similar to those in Studies 1 and 2 (a primary factor explaining a large percentage of the variance).

Scores on the specific close other version of the Compassionate Love scale were associated positively with degree of social support directed toward this individual (Table 3). In addition, compassionate love directed to the close other was associated with perceiving oneself as better than members of one's social/family network in offering social support to friends and family. However, as evidence of discriminant validity, the score on the Compassionate Love scale for a specific close other was not associated with the degree to which one volunteers relative to peers (or with the amount of time volunteered in past 3 months). Finally, as shown in Table 3, scores on the Compassionate Love scale as directed to the close other were not associated with frequency of religious attendance or with the self-report measures of religiosity and spirituality.

Discussion

As shown in Study 3, our Compassionate Love scale can be adapted as a measure of compassionate love for a specific other. The degree to which compassionate love is experienced for a specific close other is very similar to the degree to which compassionate love is experienced for close others in general (Studies 1 and 2). It should be noted, however, that the highest compassionate love scores across studies were obtained for the relationship-specific version of the scale completed for a romantic partner. Consistent with the findings for the other versions of the scale, women experienced more compassionate love for a specific other than did men. Compassionate love for a close other was associated with social support directed toward that person. Scores on the relationship-specific version of the Compassionate Love scale, however, were not associated with religiosity or spirituality.

TABLE 3
Correlates of compassionate love (for a specific close other); Study 3

Prosocial behavior

Social support	.56***
Social support compared with others	.27***
Volunteer behavior compared with others	−.04
Number of hours volunteered	.11
Religiosity/Spirituality	
Attendance at religious services	.05
Self-report of religiosity	.06
Self-report of spirituality	.08

General discussion

The major purpose of this research was to develop a valid and reliable compassionate love scale in order to stimulate further research on this type of love in diverse relational contexts. Three studies, along with three pilot studies, were conducted to develop *the Compassionate Love scale* and to test its reliability and validity. The final 21-item scale showed good psychometric properties, as indicated by Cronbach's alpha, inter-item correlations, and item-to-total correlations. Moreover, as discussed later, attempts to validate the scale were met with success. The validation studies confirmed that this measure can be effectively used to assess compassionate love toward various targets.

Compassionate love for various targets

In the first two studies, the Compassionate Love scale was presented in two versions: compassionate love for close others such as friends and family versus compassionate love for strangers and all of humanity. Not surprisingly, people scored significantly higher on the former than the latter. That is, overall, people reported experiencing more compassionate love for close others (family and friends) than for strangers or all of humanity. In Study 3, participants completed the scale with respect to a specific close other; most often a dating or marital partner. The scores on this version of the scale were comparable with those obtained for close others in the previous studies; the highest compassionate love scores were obtained when people completed the scale for a romantic partner. The findings across studies point to a clear conclusion: people report experiencing more compassionate love for those with whom they are close than they do for strangers or all of humanity. This difference may occur in part because people are less likely to associate love with humanity or strangers than with close others. This explanation is supported by research on the prototypicality of different types of love. Fehr and Russell (1991; Study 2) found that 'love for humanity' was rated as less good an example (or less prototypical) of love than types of love associated with family and friends, including 'maternal love,' 'friendship,' and 'familial love.'

Several theories of human behavior also can explain the finding that people experience more compassionate love for close others than for strangers and humanity. According to an evolutionary explanation (Burnstein, Crandall, & Kitayama, 1994), a type of kin selection may operate in which people feel high levels of compassionate love for family members (biological relatives) in order to increase the chances that their genes survive. Evolutionary theorists (Sober & Wilson, 1998) also argue that there is an innate tendency to be cooperative and helpful toward members of one's social group (i.e., friends) because it increases the reproductive success of all members of the group. Attachment theory (Shaver, Hazan, & Bradshaw, 1988) maintains that adult love consists of an integration of three behavioral systems: attachment, caregiving, and sexuality. According to the theory, caregiving, and by extension, compassionate feelings, would be most

likely to be activated when others display attachment behaviors (Shaver et al., 1988). People may be more likely to be recipients of attachment behaviors from their romantic partners, family, and friends than from strangers, consequently experiencing more compassionate love for them.

Although, overall, people experience more compassionate love for close others than for strangers, there was considerable variation in the degree of difference in the scores between the versions of the scales. For some participants, compassionate love was experienced primarily for close others and only moderately for strangers or humanity. For others, there was almost no difference in the degree of compassionate love based on the target. We encourage more research on the group of people who experience high degrees of compassionate love for *both* close others and humanity and strangers. People who experience high levels of compassionate love, but are not very discriminating (experiencing it for multiple targets, including humanity), may be those who are most likely to pursue vocations dedicated to the service to others.

Compassionate love and related other-oriented variables

In each of our studies, we also measured several related other-oriented variables. In support of the validation of the Compassionate Love scale, both the close other and stranger versions were associated positively with empathy, helpfulness, volunteerism, and the provision of social support. Social scientists have long tried to identify an 'altruistic personality', the constellation of personality characteristics found in people who are likely to help in many situations. Empathic concern, moral reasoning, agreeableness, and the ability to take the perspective of others have been identified as personality traits associated with altruistic helping in at least some situations (Dovidio & Penner, 2001). Our research suggests that the propensity to experience compassionate love for others should be added to this list. In fact, in multivariate analyses, compassionate love (for humanity and strangers) was a stronger predictor of helping than was empathy, which was reduced to nonsignificance after controlling for compassionate love.

The findings for volunteerism and social support also provided evidence of discriminant validity for our scale. We found, consistent with our predictions, that compassionate love toward humanity and strangers was more strongly associated with volunteerism than was compassionate love toward close others. Conversely, compassionate love toward close others was more strongly related to the provision of social support than was compassionate love toward strangers and humanity. This finding was replicated in our last study in which we found that compassionate love toward a specific close other was correlated with the provision of social support to that person, but was unrelated to volunteerism. It can be concluded that compassionate love is associated with a variety of other-oriented, prosocial behaviors. However, our findings also allow for a more finely nuanced conclusion: the specific prosocial behaviors that are engendered are context dependent – compassionate love for close others is likely to inspire different prosocial behaviors than is compassionate love for strangers or all of humanity.

Distinguishing between compassionate love and related constructs
Conceptually, the similarities between compassionate love and empathy raise the question of whether these are, in fact, distinct constructs. Our findings indicate that although measures of these constructs are correlated, the correlations are not so substantial as to suggest that they are redundant. In fact, many of the central concepts in the close relationships literature that are treated as distinct (e.g., love, satisfaction, commitment) have shown even stronger correlations (Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986) than those found between compassionate love and empathy. It might also be argued that our compassionate love scale is simply another measure of social support. The correlations between our compassionate love and social support measures suggest otherwise. Compassionate love may motivate socially supportive behaviors, especially when the target is a close other. However, as found in Study 2, compassionate love toward strangers is not strongly associated with social support.

Thus, based on these preliminary studies, it would appear that compassionate love is related to, but distinct from, concepts such as empathy and social support. The precise location of compassionate love in the nomological net of related constructs remains an important avenue for future research.

Spirituality and religiosity and other individual difference variables associated with compassionate love
As hypothesized, religiosity and spirituality were associated positively with compassionate love both for close others (friends, family) and for humanity (strangers). However, religiosity and spirituality were uncorrelated with compassionate love for a specific close other (Study 3). Thus, although we can conclude that those who are more religious and spiritual report experiencing greater compassionate love, our data point to a more finely grained conclusion. To the extent that spirituality motivates compassionate love (and we recognize that the causal direction may be otherwise), it is strangers and humanity who are likely to be the recipients. Perhaps it is assumed that compassionate love for those in an inner circle is a given, and that the true gift is to extend this kind of love to those who seem unlikely recipients. Spiritual people may be more motivated to make the effort to do this. As mentioned earlier, the exhortation to extend love to one's fellow human beings – particularly those in need – is central to many religious and spiritual teachings (Post et al., 2002).

We also explored gender differences in compassionate love across the three studies. Women were found to experience more compassionate love than men regardless of the target of compassionate love (family and friends, a specific close other, or strangers and humanity). This is consistent with research showing that women express more empathy and emotional support for others, constructs that we found are related to compassionate love, than do men (Eagly & Crowley, 1980; Penner et al., 1995; Taylor, 2002).

Clearly, more research needs to be conducted examining individual differences in the experience of compassionate love using diverse samples. For example, it would be beneficial to examine whether our findings would

replicate in community samples, particularly samples with a greater age range and more equal gender balance than found in typical convenience-based, university samples. Given our findings for religiosity and spirituality, it would be interesting to examine whether those who have pursued careers involving religion-based service to others (e.g., nuns) would score higher on our measure than those who have not. Even within university samples, it would be interesting to examine whether those who are drawn to social service careers (e.g., social work majors) score higher on our scale than those who are attracted to profit-motivated careers (e.g., business majors). In sum, the development of a reliable and valid self-report instrument paves the way to empirically explore the many fascinating research questions surrounding this under-studied, but important, kind of love.

REFERENCES

Argyle, M. (1992). Benefits produced by supportive social relationships. In H. O. F Veiel & U. Baumann (Eds.), *The meaning and measurement of social support* (pp. 13–32). New York: Hemisphere.

Batson, C. D., & Oleson, K. C. (1991). Current status of the empathy–altruism hypothesis. In M. S. Clark (Ed.), *Review of personality and social psychology (Vol. 12). Prosocial behavior* (pp. 62–85). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Briggs, S. R., & Cheek, J. M. (1986). The role of factor analysis in the development and evaluation of personality scales. *Journal of Personality, 54,* 106–148.

Burnstein, E., Crandall, C. S., & Kitayama, S. (1994). Some neo-Darwinian decision rules for altruism: Weighing cues for inclusive fitness as a function of the biological importance of the decision. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 67,* 773–789.

Cunningham, M. R., & Barbee, A. P. (2000). Social support. In C. Hendrick & S. S. Hendrick (Eds.), *Close relationships: A sourcebook* (pp. 273–285). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Davis, M. H. (1996). *Empathy: A social psychological approach.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Dovidio, J. F., & Penner, L. A. (2001). Helping and altruism. In M. Brewer & M. Hewstone (Eds.), *Blackwell international handbook of social psychology: Interpersonal processes* (pp. 162–195). Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Eagly, A. H., & Crowley, M. (1986). Gender and helping behavior: A meta-analytic view of the social psychological literature. *Psychological Bulletin, 100,* 65–71.

Fehr, B. (1988). Prototype analysis of the concepts of love and commitment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 55*, 557–579.

Fehr, B. (1993). How do I love thee? Let me consult my prototype. In S. Duck (Ed.), *Understanding relationship processes: Vol. I. Individuals in relationships* (pp. 87–120). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Fehr, B., & Russell, J. A. (1991). The concept of love viewed from a prototype perspective. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 60*, 425–438.

Fehr, B., & Sprecher, S. (2005). Prototype analysis of the concept of compassionate love. Manuscript in preparation.

Fingerman, K. L. (2004). The consequential stranger: Peripheral relationships across the life span. In F. R. Lang & K. L. Fingerman (Eds.), *Growing together: Personal relationships across the lifespan* (pp. 183–209). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Fingerman, K. L., & Hay, E. L. (2002). Searching under the streetlight: Age biases in the personal and family relationships literature. *Personal Relationships, 9,* 415–433.

Hatfield, E., & Sprecher, S. (1986). Measuring passionate love in intimate relations. *Journal of Adolescence, 9,* 383–410.

Hendrick, C., & Hendrick, S. (1986). A theory and method of love. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 50,* 392–402.

Hendrick, S. S., & Hendrick, C. (1992). *Romantic love*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Hendrick, S. S., & Hendrick, C. (1993). Lovers as friends. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 10,* 459–466.

Hendrick, S. S., & Hendrick, C. (2000). Romantic love. In C. Hendrick & S. S. Hendrick (Eds.), *Close relationships: A sourcebook* (pp. 203–215). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lasswell, T. E., & Lasswell, M. E. (1976). I love you but I'm not in love with you. *Journal of Marriage and Family Counseling, 38,* 211–224.

Lazarus, R. S. (1991). *Emotion and adaptation.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Lee, J. A. (1973). *The colors of love: An exploration of the ways of loving.* Don Mills, ON: New Press.

Mehrabian, A., & Epstein, N. (1972). A measure of emotional empathy. *Journal of Personality, 40*, 525–543.

Mikulincer, M., Shaver, P. R., Gillath, O., & Nitzberg, R. E. (2005). Attachment, caregiving, and altruism: Augmentation of attachment security increases compassion and helping. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, submitted for publication.

Paulhus, D. L. (1991). Balanced inventory of desirable responding (BIDR). In J. P. Robinson, P. R. Shaver, & L. S. Wrightsman (Eds.), *Measures of social psychological attitudes (Vol. 1). Measures of personality and social psychological attitudes* (pp. 37–41). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Penner, L. A., Fritzsche, B. A., Craiger, J. P., & Freifeld, T. S. (1995). Measuring the prosocial personality. In J. N. Butcher & C. D. Spielberger (Eds.), *Advances in personality assessment* (Vol. 12, pp. 147–163). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Post, S. G., Underwood, L. G., Schloss, J. P., & Hurlbut, W. B. (Eds.). (2002). *Altruism and altruistic love.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rubin, Z. (1970). Measurement of romantic love. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 16,* 265–273.

Schieman, S., & Turner, H. A. (2001). 'When feeling other people's pain hurts': The influence of psychosocial resources on the association between self-reported empathy and depressive symptoms. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 64*, 376–389.

Schieman, S., & Van Gundy, K. (2000). The personal and social links between age and self-reported empathy. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 63*, 152–174.

Shaver, P. R., Hazan, C., & Bradshaw, D. (1988). Love as attachment: The integration of three behavioral systems. In R. J. Sternberg & M. Barnes (Eds.), *The psychology of love* (pp. 68–99). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Smith, T. W. (2003). *Altruism in contemporary America: A report from the National Altruism Study.* Available: http://www-news.uchicago.edu/releases/03/altruism.pdf

Sober, E., & Wilson, D. S. (1998). *Unto others: The evolution and psychology of unselfish behavior.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Sprecher, S., Aron, A., Hatfield, E., Cortese, A., Potapova, E., & Levitskaya, A. (1994). Love: American style, Russian style, and Japanese style. *Personal Relationships, 1,* 349–369.

Sternberg, R. J. (1988). Triangulating love. In R. J. Sternberg & M. L. Barnes (Eds.), *The psychology of love* (pp. 119–138). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Taylor, S. E. (2002). *The tending instinct: Women, men and the biology of our relationships.* New York: Owl Books.

Underwood, L. G. (2002). The human experience of compassionate love. In S. G. Post, L. G. Underwood, J. Schloss, & W. B. Hurlbut (Eds.), *Altruism and altruistic love* (pp. 72–88). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Underwood, L. G., & Teresi, J. (2002). The daily spiritual experience scale: Development, theoretical description, reliability, exploratory factor analysis, and preliminary construct validity using health-related data. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine, 24*, 22–33.

Wills, T. A., & Shinar, O. (2000). Measuring perceived and received social support. In S. Cohen, L. G. Underwood, & B. H. Gottlieb (Eds.), *Social support measurement and intervention: A guide for health and social scientists* (pp. 86–135). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Appendix

Psychometric information on different versions of the Compassionate Love scale

TABLE A1
Psychometric information (mean, standard deviation, and item-to-total correlation) of the scale items in the close others version of the Compassionate Love scale; Study 1

	M	SD	Item-to-total correlation
1. When I see family members or friends feeling sad, I feel a need to reach out to them.	6.10	1.20	.60
2. I spend a lot of time concerned about the well-being of those people close to me.	5.89	1.07	.67
3. When I hear about a friend or family member going through a difficult time, I feel a great deal of compassion for him or her.	6.16	.99	.73
4. It is easy for me to feel the pain (and joy) experienced by my loved ones.	5.89	1.47	.70
5. If a person close to me needs help, I would do almost anything I could to help him or her.	6.41	.81	.55
6. I feel considerable compassionate love for those people important in my life.	6.48	.73	.61
7. I would rather suffer myself than see someone close to me suffer.	5.80	1.23	.52
8. If given the opportunity, I am willing to sacrifice in order to let the people important to me achieve their goals in life.	5.39	1.29	.53
9. I tend to feel compassion for people who are close to me	6.28	.85	.74
10. One of the activities that provides me with the most meaning to my life is helping others with whom I have a close relationship.	5.82	1.07	.70
11. I would rather engage in actions that help my intimate others than engage in actions that would help me.	5.28	1.26	.59
12. I often have tender feelings toward friends and family members when they seem to be in need.	5.92	1.06	.76
13. I feel a selfless caring for my friends and family.	5.59	1.21	.62
14. I accept friends and family members even when they do things I think are wrong.	5.68	1.08	.46
15. If a family member or close friend is troubled, I usually feel extreme tenderness and caring.	5.84	1.05	.78
16. I try to understand rather than judge people who are close to me.	5.91	1.03	.61
17. I try to put myself in my friend's shoes when he or she is in trouble.	5.77	1.12	.59
18. I feel happy when I see that loved ones are happy.	6.38	.85	.64
19. Those whom I love can trust that I will be there for them if they need me.	6.54	.74	.57
20. I want to spend time with close others so that I can find ways to help enrich their lives.	5.57	1.19	.66
21. I very much wish to be kind and good to my friends and family members.	6.42	.82	.58
Total score	**5.96**	**.70**	alpha = **.95**

Note. The response scale for each of the items ranged from 1 (*not at all true of me*) to 7 (*very true of me*). The item-to-total correlation was corrected; that is, the item is first removed from the total. Items 13 and 14 are adapted from the compassionate and mercy items developed by Underwood (2002).

TABLE A2
**Psychometric information (mean, standard deviation, and item-to-total
correlation) of the scale items in the stranger–humanity version of the
Compassionate Love scale; Study 1**

	M	SD	Item-to-total correlation
1. When I see people I do not know feeling sad, I feel a need to reach out to them.	4.18	1.64	.67
2. I spend a lot of time concerned about the well-being of humankind.	3.93	1.52	.66
3. When I hear about someone (a stranger) going through a difficult time, I feel a great deal of compassion for him or her.	4.61	1.49	.74
4. It is easy for me to feel the pain (and joy) experienced by others, even though I do not know them.	4.33	1.56	.69
5. If I encounter a stranger who needs help, I would do almost anything I could to help him or her.	4.51	1.42	.59
6. I feel considerable compassionate love for people from everywhere.	4.04	1.52	.72
7. I would rather suffer myself than see someone else (a stranger) suffer.	3.70	1.61	.64
8. If given the opportunity, I am willing to sacrifice in order to let people from other places who are less fortunate achieve their goals.	3.92	1.52	.69
9. I tend to feel compassion for people, even though I do not know them.	4.53	1.53	.77
10. One of the activities that provides me with the most meaning to my life is helping others in the world when they need help.	4.19	1.59	.73
11. I would rather engage in actions that help others, even though they are strangers, than engage in actions that would help me.	3.78	1.54	.76
12. I often have tender feelings toward people (strangers) when they seem to be in need.	4.41	1.45	.81
13. I feel a selfless caring for most of humankind.	3.91	1.45	.78
14. I accept others whom I do not know even when they do things I think are wrong.	3.58	1.52	.52
15. If a person (a stranger) is troubled, I usually feel extreme tenderness and caring.	4.01	1.47	.81
16. I try to understand rather than judge people who are strangers to me.	4.80	1.47	.59
17. I try to put myself in a stranger's shoes when he or she is in trouble.	4.57	1.50	.67
18. I feel happy when I see that others (strangers) are happy.	5.01	1.40	.63
19. Those whom I encounter through my work and public life can assume that I will be there if they need me.	5.43	1.32	.59
20. I want to spend time with people I don't know well so that I can find ways to help enrich their lives.	3.82	1.55	.63
21. I very much wish to be kind and good to fellow human beings.	5.54	1.36	.59
Total Score	**4.32**	**1.07**	alpha = .95

Note. The response scale for each of the items ranged from 1 (*not at all true of me*) to 7 (*very true of me*). The item-to-total correlation was corrected; that is, the item is first removed from the total. Items 13 and 14 are adapted from the compassionate and mercy items developed by Underwood (2002).

TABLE A3
Psychometric information (mean, standard deviation, and item-to-total correlation) of the scale items in the specific close other version of the Compassionate Love scale; Study 3

	M	SD	Item-to-total correlation
1. When I see _____ feeling sad, I feel a need to reach out to him/her.	6.36	1.18	.40
2. I spend a lot of time concerned about the well-being of _____.	5.75	1.30	.55
3. When I hear about _____ going through a difficult time, I feel a great deal of compassion for him or her.	6.36	.86	.69
4. It is easy for me to feel the pain (and joy) experienced by _____.	5.99	1.18	.64
5. If _____ needs help, I would do almost anything I could to help him or her.	6.61	.78	.65
6. I feel considerable compassionate love for _____.	6.15	1.28	.65
7. I would rather suffer myself than see _____ suffer.	5.61	1.53	.69
8. If given the opportunity, I am willing to sacrifice in order to let _____ achieve his/her goals.	5.10	1.52	.66
9. I tend to feel compassion for _____.	6.20	1.12	.75
10. One of the activities that provides me with the most meaning to my life is helping _____.	5.25	1.44	.77
11. I would rather engage in actions that help _____ than engage in actions that would help me.	4.84	1.54	.66
12. I often have tender feelings toward _____ when he or she seems to be in need.	6.02	1.17	.70
13. I feel a selfless caring for _____.	5.47	1.58	.72
14. I accept _____ even when he or she does things I think are wrong.	5.34	1.48	.54
15. If _____ is troubled, I usually feel extreme tenderness and caring.	5.96	1.23	.80
16. I try to understand rather than judge _____.	5.97	1.14	.46
17. I try to put myself in _____'s shoes when he or she is in trouble.	5.69	1.08	.55
18. I feel happy when I see that _____ is happy.	6.47	.85	.67
19. _____ can assume that I will be there if he/she needs me.	6.60	.80	.56
20. I want to spend time with _____ so that I can find ways to help enrich his/her life.	5.88	1.25	.72
21. I very much wish to be kind and good to _____.	6.49	.83	.69
			alpha =
Total score	**5.92**	**.82**	**.94**