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Can empathy be a bad thing? New thinking on the right says 'yes'

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Empathy , the act of understanding and sharing the feelings of others, has long been the underpinning of religious, humanitarian, and philosophical teachings.

Now, there's a new perspective increasingly heard in conservative circles: Empathy isn't always a good thing. Elon Musk, for example, recently said that we have to fight against "civilizational suicidal empathy , something he believes is weaponized by Democrats to 'import' as many immigrants without legal status as possible. It's also being preached from right-wing pulpits by pastors who say empathy's OK but that not everyone's deserving of it .

NPR's Sarah McCammon and Stanford professor Jamil Zaki , author of "The War for Kindness: Building Empathy in a Fractured World" explore the issue.

This article was originally published on WBUR.org.

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