

M2 Practices to Cultivate Self-Compassion

“With self-compassion, we give ourselves the same kindness and care we'd give to a good friend,” explains leading self-compassion researcher, Kristin Neff, Ph.D. What you practice grows stronger, and mindful self-compassion is a tool to:

- Promote connectedness
- Nurture emotion
- Make forgiveness and understanding available
- Mitigate shame

GIVE YOURSELF A HUG

Oxytocin is released regardless of how you get hugged. It is the feel-good relational hormone. If you can't be there for yourself who else can be?

WRITE YOURSELF A LETTER

Think of a situation in which you are criticizing yourself. Write a note to yourself, a few sentences in length. In the letter provide yourself with kind and loving support about the situation. Take the perspective of a compassionate friend, “What might they say to me?” Or be the compassionate friend. What would you say to a friend in pain? Write the letter as if you are writing it to your best friend.

- Remind yourself that you are not alone, this is a universal human experience.
- Remind yourself of your past successes.
- Remind yourself of all of your gifts and talents.
- Remind yourself of all of the people who support and love you.

Read the letter out loud to yourself in front of a mirror. Return to the letter and read to yourself when you feel discouraged, lost in pain.

LIST YOUR INNER CRITIC PHRASES AND REPHRASE THEM

Become a sleuth, listening for the critical voice in your head. Write down what you hear and then rephrase the intention into the words of a supportive coach.

CREATE A SELF-COMPASSION MANTRA

When things are hard and we are losing it for whatever reason, having a handy phrase at the ready can be a life preserver. Write something that has personal meaning. Examples are:

- “This is a moment of suffering.”
- “Suffering is a part of being human.”
- “I am not alone in this suffering.”
- “May I be kind to myself in this moment.”
- “May I offer myself the compassion I need now.”
- “I am here, I have your back.”

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