

What is Self-compassion?

Self-compassion is the practice of repeatedly evoking good will toward ourselves especially when we're suffering.

Most of us feel compassion when a close friend is struggling. What would it be like to receive the same caring attention whenever you needed it most? All that's required is a shift in the direction of our attention—recognizing that as a human being, you, too, are a worthy recipient of compassion.

Self-compassion involves responding to these difficult thoughts and feelings with kindness, sympathy and understanding so that we soothe and comfort ourselves when we're hurting.

Research has shown that self-compassion greatly enhances emotional wellbeing. **It boosts happiness, and can reduce anxiety and depression.**

Three key components:

Self-kindness: Being kind, gentle and understanding with yourself when you're suffering.

Common humanity: Realizing that you're not alone in your struggles. When we're struggling, we tend to feel especially isolated. We think we're the only ones to experience loss, make mistakes, feel rejected or fail. But it's these very struggles that are part of our shared experience as humans.

Mindfulness: Observing life as it is, without being judgemental or suppressing your thoughts and feelings.

Ways to be self-compassionate:

- 1. Consider how you'd treat someone else.** Imagine what you'd do if someone you cared about was suffering. What would you say to that person? How would you treat them?
- 2. Watch your language.** You may be so used to criticizing yourself that you don't even realize that you're doing it. So it helps to pay particular attention to the words you use to speak to yourself. If you wouldn't say the same statements to someone you care about, then you're being self-critical.
- 3. Comfort yourself with a physical gesture.** Kind physical gestures have an immediate effect on our bodies. Physical gestures take you out of your head and drop you into your body. For instance, putting your hands over your heart, rubbing your arm or placing your hands gently on your cheeks. Any gesture will do.
- 4. Memorise a set of compassionate phrases.** Whenever you find yourself saying thing like, "I'm useless" it helps to have a few phrases at the ready. For example, "May I be kind to myself in this moment" or "I am worthy of receiving compassion". Pick statements that really resonate with you. Combining that with a physical gesture — like hands over your heart — is especially powerful.
- 5. Create a compassionate mantra for yourself, such as the one below.**

This is a moment of suffering.

Suffering is part of life.

May I be kind to myself in this moment.

Or

May I be loved

May I be healthy

May I be safe

May I ease through life