

Self Compassion workbook

Self compassion is a topic very near to my heart. Every day of my working life I am encouraging people to be kind to themselves, as I see how self criticism and beating ourselves up creates and perpetuates so many forms of suffering. In my own life, I am continually trying to improve my compassion towards myself as it does not come naturally but makes such a difference to my happiness, progress, wellbeing and ultimately my ability to be the best version of myself I can be.

Self compassion is something we can learn and something we can continually reinforce to ourselves through life challenges - this is what I want for you.

Learning to be compassionate towards yourself has two big benefits:

1. It is the best form of self help available to us
2. It allows us to improve our lives in countless ways as it frees us from the negative trap of self criticism.

Most of us are in a negative cycle much of the time.



When a challenging situation presents itself, we become self critical which creates stress and upset. This stress and upset then means we find ourselves feeling low, anxious or wondering what is wrong with us. This leads us to experiencing more difficulties and finding ourselves on a downwards spiral and sometimes even losing sight of what the original trigger was.



If we replace self criticism with self compassion the outcome for ourselves can be completely different, even when the trigger and the challenging situations we face in life are the same.

When we add self compassion, the flow of events goes like this:



So, we need to focus on building our ability to be compassionate towards ourselves.

'With self compassion, we give ourselves the same kindness and care we'd give to a good friend' - Kristin Neff

Self compassion is about accepting all the different parts of yourself, including the bits you don't like or wish you could change.

It means treating yourself as a human being with all the difficulties and flaws this brings.

'Having compassion starts and ends with having compassion for all those unwanted parts of ourselves, all those imperfections that we don't even want to look at'

- Pema Chodron



'Our sorrows and wounds are healed only when we touch them with compassion'
- Jack Kornfield

Think about a recent situation with a friend or family member when you have shown them kindness and compassion. Write about what you did for them, how you treated them, what you said etc.

Now write about how things might change for you if you were to treat yourself in this way.

'The one thing you can control is how you treat yourself. And that one thing can change everything'
- Leeana Tankersley



Use this space to write about a something that is bothering you at the moment or that is a recurring issue for you. Try to be honest about how you feel and the criticism you are putting onto yourself. Whatever you beat yourself up about, write it down.



Now write about the same situation as above, but this time think about what a kind and compassionate friend or parent would say to you. Try to write about your situation from that compassionate perspective.

‘A moment of self compassion can change your entire day. A string of such moments can change the course of your life’
- Christopher Germer



Self compassion requires us to learn to recognise what we need at times we are struggling. Try to think about a time you are upset, feel anxious or low in mood. What sorts of things would help you to feel a little better at times like this?

(These could be things like time to yourself, going for a walk, asking for a cuddle etc)

It is important to revisit this list when you are struggling and take action on these needs. Sometimes we need to take some time, take care of ourselves and go back to the problem later.

Identify what areas of your life you need to be more compassionate to yourself about. Jot down the main ones here.

(eg, parenting, your job role, your weight/looks, your struggles)

‘Perhaps we should love ourselves so fiercely, that when others see us they know exactly how it should be done’ - Rudy Francisco



'When we give ourselves compassion, we are opening our hearts in a way that can transform our lives' - Kristin Neff

Learning to be compassionate towards yourself requires you to recognise when you are being self critical or when you are struggling. Acknowledging this allows you to think about what you need and try to take action on looking after yourself.

Use the following statements to help you to focus on how to be kind to yourself and show yourself some compassion.

'I am a human being, worthy of love in this moment'

'I am a human being. I am not perfect and I do not need to be'

'Could I be kind to myself in this moment?'

Self compassion is something you need to focus on on a regular basis. Anytime you find yourself not feeling great, come back to these steps to make sure you are giving yourself the kindness you need.

'As the barriers come down around our own hearts, we are less afraid of other people. We are more able to hear what is being said, see what is in front of our eyes, and work in accord with what happens rather than struggle against it'

- Pema Chodron