



Be kind to yourself

We live in a hectic and complicated world, that can be difficult to navigate. Nobody is perfect, yet you may feel like you must strive to measure up to impossible standards. Or, you may struggle to accept mistakes and failures in your life. But you can overcome this by practicing self-compassion.

Self-compassion means learning to be kind and understanding to yourself. It may take time, but with practice, you can learn to accept yourself for exactly who you are, even your imperfections.



THE PATH OF SELF-COMPASSION

Step 1: Focus on Self-kindness. If you tend to criticize yourself or be overcome with feelings of shame, learn how to become aware of these thoughts without pushing them away. Consider how these thoughts make you feel. Write down these feelings.

Step 2: Acknowledge Common Humanity. Although we may feel isolated and alone in our failures, the reality is that many human beings share similar experiences. Take comfort in knowing you are not alone and there are others who understand you and your circumstances. Allow others to show you compassion.

Step 3: Practice Mindful Awareness. Once you become comfortable with your negative thoughts, learn how to sit and observe them. To do this, you must be fully present in the moment, and allow any thoughts to pass through your mind without judging them. This can help those who often dwell on past events or worry about future events. Being present helps you focus on what is happening now.



HEALTH BENEFITS

Regularly practicing self-compassion can help you feel:

- Less depressed, stressed or anxious
- More satisfied with a greater sense of purpose
- Less worried and fearful



BREATH AWARENESS PRACTICE

Sit comfortably with your feet planted firmly on the floor. Lengthen your spine, allowing it to stretch out like a string of pearls. For the next two minutes, turn all of your awareness to your breathing. Do not change how you breathe. Just pay attention to how it feels to breathe in and breathe out and to the pauses between your breaths. If your attention moves away from your breathing, be gentle with yourself and just return your attention to your breath.

