

COULD YOU SHOW YOURSELF COMPASSION?

"Having compassion starts and ends with having compassion for all those unwanted parts of ourselves" Pema Chodren

Having compassion for oneself is really no different than having compassion for others. Here's what you do;

1. **Notice the suffering.** Being mindful and present enough to notice that you are in a time of struggle and taking some time to "sit in it" before moving through it. You may move through it more easily if you see it, feel it and soothe it than ignoring it, judging it or blaming yourself for it.
2. **Offering kindness to yourself and wanting to soothe your suffering.** Having compassion means you offer yourself understanding and kindness rather than judgment and self criticism that lead to shame and blame. You can do this with soothing touch such as hands on your heart, soothing words and tone to calm your nervous system just as you would to a distressed child or pet.
3. **Recognition that imperfection and failure are part of being human** - suffering, failure, and imperfection are part of the shared human experience yet so often we see our suffering as separate, personal and unique to us, failing to recognise that others have challenges too.

Self-compassion involves noticing when you're in struggle, pausing to tell yourself "this is really difficult right now," how can I comfort and care for myself in this moment? This is something we can learn and practice and helps us be more compassionate to others.

Here's some ways to can build your self compassion muscle:

1. Hand-on-Heart - When you notice you're under stress, take 2-3 deep, satisfying breaths. Gently place your hand over your heart, feeling the gentle pressure and warmth of your hand. If you wish, place both hands on your chest. Talk to yourself in loving, soothing tones. You might like to say "I've got this", "You're ok" "This will pass" "You're doing all you can"

2. Self Compassion Break - bring to mind a situation that is causing you suffering. Say to yourself

1. This is a moment of suffering
2. Suffering is a part of life
3. May I be kind to myself in this moment



3. Exploring self-compassion through writing - Everybody has something about themselves that they don't like; something that causes them to feel shame, to feel insecure, or not "good enough." It is the human condition to be imperfect, and feelings of failure and inadequacy are part of the experience of living a human life. Try writing about an issue you have that tends to make you feel inadequate or bad about yourself (physical appearance, work or relationship issues...) What emotions come up for you when you think about this aspect of yourself? Try to just feel your emotions exactly as they are – no more, no less – and then write about them. Write a letter to yourself from the perspective of an unconditionally loving imaginary friend and write what they would say to you.

After writing the letter, put it down for a little while. Then come back and read it again, really letting the words sink in. Feel the compassion as it pours into you, soothing and comforting you

See Kristen Neff's website www.selfcompassion.org for more ideas and detail on the above;

<https://self-compassion.org/category/exercises/#exercises>