



# Engaging in Self-Compassion

Why is it so challenging to show self-compassion! We have no problem boosting our loved ones when they are down or struggling, but to come up with the same words of advice for ourselves can be hard to do. We have practiced that negative self-talk for so long, that it plays like a broken record – over and over again.

Self-compassion is simply showing kindness and compassion to ourselves just like we would show it to someone else we care about. When we engage in intentional and consistent self-compassion, we strengthen your own resilience and increase our capacity for helping others.

## GRAB A JOURNAL

In a notebook reflect upon these questions and write down a response.

1. What words come to mind when you think of self-compassion? Are they mostly negative or positive?
2. We have learned that we have so much more to give when we are at our best. In what ways do you currently practice self-compassion. For example, how do you give yourself grace when you make a mistake?
3. Think of a time a friend came to you who was struggling. What was your response to their struggle? What did you say to him/her? What was your tone like?

4. Now compare this to a time that you were struggling with something. What was your inner dialogue with yourself? Write it down. Would you say the way you speak to yourself is the same way you would speak to a close friend or is it more critical? Get curious about what you notice, rather than furious at yourself.
5. What is one kind statement you feel comfortable saying to yourself when you need support?

## A SELF-COMPASSION LETTER

### Taking Action

First, identify something about yourself that makes you feel ashamed, insecure, or not good enough. It could be something related to your personality, behavior, abilities, relationships, or any other part of your life.

Once you identify something, write it down and describe how it makes you feel. Sad? Embarrassed? Angry? Try to be as honest as possible, keeping in mind that no one but you will see what you write.

The next step is to write a letter to yourself expressing compassion, understanding, and acceptance for the part of yourself that you dislike.

As you write, follow these guidelines:

- Imagine that there is someone who loves and accepts you unconditionally for who you are. What would that person say to you about this part of yourself?
- Remind yourself that everyone has things about themselves that they don't like, and that no one is without flaws. Think about how many other people in the world are struggling with the same thing that you're struggling with.

- Consider the ways in which events that have happened in your life, the family environment you grew up in, or even your genes may have contributed to this negative aspect of yourself.
- In a compassionate way, ask yourself whether there are things that you could do to improve or better cope with this negative aspect. Focus on how constructive changes could make you feel happier, healthier, or more fulfilled, and avoid judging yourself.

After writing the letter, put it down for a little while. Then come back to it later and read it again. It may be especially helpful to read it whenever you're feeling bad about this aspect of yourself, as a reminder to be more self-compassionate.

This activity can be found at: <https://ggia.berkeley.edu/>

