

# Self-Compassion

*"A radically new way of relating to ourselves"*

Dr. Kristin Neff  
self-compassion.org

Instead of mercilessly judging and criticizing yourself for various inadequacies or shortcomings, self-compassion means you are kind and understanding when confronted with personal failings – after all, who ever said you were supposed to be perfect?.

## Three Core Elements:

### Self-kindness vs. self-judgment

Be warm and understanding toward ourselves when we suffer, fail, or feel inadequate, rather than ignoring our pain or punishing ourselves with self-criticism.

### Common humanity vs. Isolation

Recognize that suffering and personal inadequacy is part of the shared human experience.

### Mindfulness vs. over-identification

Take a balanced approach to our negative emotions so that feelings are neither suppressed nor exaggerated. Mindfulness is a non-judgmental, receptive mind state in which one observes thoughts and feelings as they are.

## Try 2 simple exercises:

How would you treat a friend?

1. Think about times when a close friend feels really bad about themselves or is really struggling in some way. How do you respond to your friend in this situation? Think about what you do, what you say, and your tone of voice.
2. Now think about times when you feel badly about yourself or are struggling. How do you typically respond to yourself in this situation? Note what you do, what you say, and the tone you use with yourself.
3. Is there a difference? Why? If so, what factors or fears may come into play causing this difference?
4. How would things change if you responded to yourself in the same way you typically respond to a close friend when you're suffering?

## Self-Compassion Break

Thinking of a difficult situation in your life that is causing you stress, 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

# Mindfulness Apps with Free Content

**Insight Timer** – free access to over 10,000 guided practices

**Headspace** – free section, Weathering the Storm, for everybody during the pandemic

**Smiling Mind** – free; hundreds of meditations in easy-to-navigate categories

**Calm** – 25 free meditations; one of the cheaper subscription services

**Stop, Breathe, Think** – 20 free meditations; meditations based on how you feel.

**10% Happier** – 10-day free pass; “meditation for fidgety skeptics”