



Compassionate Coach Meditation

Allow yourself to settle into a comfortable position that will support your attention and practice over the next few moments. I invite you to shift into a posture that embodies openness, with your shoulders widened, spine straight, chest open, and palms open facing outwards and resting gently on your lap or by your sides.

Turning inward, open up to any sensations being experienced in the body right now. Connecting to the breath. The breath can be the anchor throughout the practice if your attention diverts away from your meditation.

Bring to mind a time where you believed you had underperformed. What was challenging for you during that moment? What exactly was it about this event that was undesirable? Did you do something you regretted? Did you feel underprepared? Was there a goal you aimed to achieve but didn't? Notice the memories and thoughts that arise as you recall this moment of difficulty.

Can you recall what you told yourself during this event? What critical words did you use during this time that you had underperformed? We can often use harsh phrases such as "I'm a failure," "I'm not as good as everyone else," "I always do this, of course I did it again," or "I'm no good, why do I even bother trying?" What was the tone in which you spoke to yourself? Allow all of this emerge again.

Notice if there are any unpleasant emotions surfacing as you reflect on the self-criticism you used during this time. What's the emotion? Acknowledge the impact that this self-criticism has on your emotional state. Even when we are faced with self-judgment, we can adopt a kind attention, greeting them with openness, non-judgment and curiosity.

Can you identify an underlying intent hidden beneath the self-criticism? Perhaps it was striving to be admired or valued by others, to feel pride or joy, to be productive, or wishing for you to perform at your best. Recognize how the critical narratives, while hurtful, may have been trying to help you. While unhelpful, we often use this criticism and judgment to motivate change and improvement.

Set the intention to make space for the kind, nurturing part of your being. Turning the volume down on the inner critic, allowing it to fade away, while turning the volume up on the inner compassionate coach. Self-compassion is a skill that we all have an inherent capacity to cultivate. What words of understanding and support did you need at the time? What's a kind message that you can tell yourself that's in line with your underlying desires or intentions? Try speaking to yourself the way you would with a friend or loved one who has gone through the same experience. Whatever words those might be, try sharing those words with yourself.

You may wish to practice a self-compassion gesture by placing one or both hands on your heart, and repeating these statements silently to yourself:

May I be kind to myself.
May I be loved, supported and accepted.
May I know that I am valued.
May I thrive and reach my full potential.
May I experience endless joy and wellbeing.

Feel free to add any additional words you wish to share yourself.

Notice now how it feels in your body to speak to yourself from a place of kindness and care. Allowing yourself to be with any pleasant feelings that are emanated as you extend this unconditional kindness towards yourself.