



Discovering Your Self-Compassion

Have a pen and paper ready for this mindful reflection.

Mindfulness Practice

Take a few moments to close your eyes and rest your attention on the flow of the breath. This mindful awareness fuels our mind and allows us to open our heart to deepen our compassionate intentions towards ourselves. Compassion involves the genuine concern for a person, paired with the desire to alleviate their pain and increase their wellbeing. To activate this compassion it can be helpful to first identify what you imagine a compassionate presence might appear like.

Reflection 1

Bring to mind someone who embodies the qualities of compassion, kindness, and nurturance. This can be a family member, friend, colleague, mentor, teacher, or therapist. Notice who arises in the mind - there's no right or wrong person. Imagine this person sitting across from you embodying a compassionate presence. What features or characteristics do you notice about their presence? Perhaps openness, acceptance or warmth. If you were to go to this person for support after making a mistake or failing at something, how would you expect their compassion to feel? What would they tell you and how would they sound? What words of support would they share?

Open your eyes and write down these words or phrases.

Reflection 2

Close your eyes again. This time bring to mind someone who generally turns to you for this kind, nurturing support. This might be a colleague, friend, child or other family member. Imagine this person in great detail, picturing them as if they were right in front of you. If this person were suffering, envision how they would be expressing this pain on their face, posture and presence. This time they're the ones who have made the mistake or experienced a failure - imagine how this would trouble them. Notice if you're drawn to a natural tendency to want to act with compassion for this person, allowing this to be the compass for the words you might choose to support this person with warmth and care. What words or phrases would you choose to help this person? Recognize the tone that's used to speak to them.

Open your eyes and write down these words or phrases.

Reflection 3

Close your eyes again. Now bring to mind someone whose approval or validation you've always sought but never received. What was it that you had wanted to be acknowledged for? Why and how did you want to experience their compassion, especially in times of difficulty? What did you want them to say so that you would feel soothed and nurtured? What were the absent words and phrases that you were longing to hear? Consider the words you really needed to hear at the time. We often strive for this external validation, forgetting to realize how capable we are of directing this validation inwards.

Open your eyes and write down these words or phrases.

Creating Your Phrases

Take a moment to glance over your responses. If you were to turn any statements to or from another person toward yourself, what would it feel like to hear these words directed by you, to you, every day and every moment you experienced difficulty? Which words or phrases seem to resonate most or feel the most authentic? Underline those that stand out.

Take a moment to write those in a phrase that begins with: "May I ____" (i.e. "May I know that my best is good enough"; "May I see my value"; "May I work towards my own greatest potential").

Compassion Practice

Close your eyes one last time. As this compassion practice comes to a close, allow your attention to settle on these phrases. Notice what it's like in the mind, heart, and body to speak to yourself from a place of unconditional kindness. If you don't notice anything, just know that the benefits of planting the seeds of compassion in the heart and mind will eventually grow.

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