

The Elements of Self-Compassion

Although compassion comes naturally to many animal advocates, extending that same compassion inward can be much more difficult. Kristin Neff, a leading researcher on self-compassion, identifies three core elements: self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness. Together, these elements provide a foundation for responding to ourselves with the same understanding, care, and compassion we so readily offer others.

Self-kindness means treating yourself with warmth, understanding, and care rather than harsh criticism or judgment, especially when you're struggling or make a mistake. It means responding to yourself with the same patience and support you would offer a friend, while still taking responsibility for what needs to change.



Self-Kindness

Common humanity means recognizing that suffering, mistakes, and imperfection are part of the shared human experience. Everyone faces difficult times and struggles, reminding us that we are not alone. Recognizing our common humanity can help shift feelings of isolation or inadequacy toward a greater sense of connection and belonging.



Common Humanity

Mindfulness means noticing your thoughts and feelings without judging or becoming caught up in them. It involves staying present and allowing your experiences to be there without getting entangled in self-critical thoughts.



Mindfulness

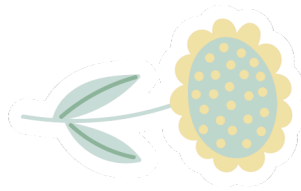
Self-Compassion Quiz

Add up the scores for all questions. A total score closer to 50 suggests a higher level of self-compassion, while a lower score may indicate areas for growth. Please remember, the goal is not perfection but to encourage self-awareness and a kinder relationship with yourself.

	Not true at all				Very true
	1	2	3	4	5
I speak to myself with the same kindness I do with animals and good friends.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
When facing challenges, I tend to take an understanding approach rather than criticize.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I acknowledge and accept my imperfections, recognizing that they make me unique.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In difficult times, I practice self-compassion by being understanding about my feelings.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I hardly ever compare myself unfavorably to others, feeling like I fall short.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I prioritize self-care and take intentional steps to nurture my well-being.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
When I make mistakes, I treat myself with kindness and understanding.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I find it easy to forgive myself for past mistakes and shortcomings.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I tend to be supportive to others and extend the same compassion to myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Overall, I feel a sense of warmth and understanding toward myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐



IMPROVED MENTAL
HEALTH



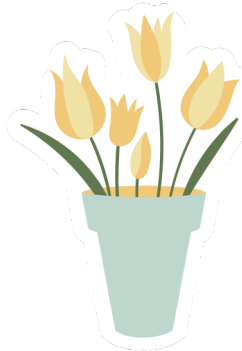
ENHANCED EMOTIONAL
RESILIENCE



INCREASED LIFE
SATISFACTION



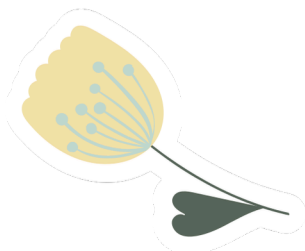
REDUCED SELF-
CRITICISM



BETTER
RELATIONSHIPS



LOWER LEVELS OF
PERFECTIONISM



BETTER PHYSICAL
HEALTH

THE BENEFITS OF SELF- COMPASSION



INCREASED
MOTIVATION



ENHANCED COPING
MECHANISMS



IMPROVED EMOTIONAL
REGULATION



GREATER EMPATHY
FOR OTHERS

Mindful Walking for Self-Compassion

Breathe deeply, bringing attention to the present moment.

Be mindful of your posture. Stand tall, shoulders relaxed.

Shift your attention to each step. Feel the sensations in your feet as they lift, move, and touch the ground.

Engage your senses. Notice the feeling of the ground beneath your feet, the sounds around you, and any scents in the air.

If your mind starts to wander gently bring your focus back to the act of walking and the sensations in your body.

Integrate awareness of breath with each step. Synchronize your breath with steps, inhaling for a certain number of steps and exhaling for the same count.

Step Toward Self-Compassion

Many animal advocates struggle with self-compassion. This exercise promotes self-compassion by bringing your attention to each step and the present moment, creating a mindful connection to your surroundings. Add this mindful walking exercise into your routine; it can be a simple yet powerful way to cultivate self-compassion and presence in the midst of daily stress, trauma, or grief.



Self-Compassion Bingo

Get to know your emotions and thoughts through self awareness.	Visualize a supportive figure in your life and offering words of encouragement.	Take mindful walks, paying attention to your surroundings and the present moment.	Acknowledge and celebrate your accomplishments, no matter how small.	View challenges as opportunities for growth and learning.
Engage in meditation practices specifically designed to cultivate self-compassion.	Embrace the idea that nobody is perfect, and it's okay to make mistakes .	Take short breaks during the day to comfort yourself during challenging moments.	Share your struggles with a friend or family member who can offer support and understanding.	Pay attention to what you eat, fostering a positive relationship with food.
Reflect on the things you are grateful for in your life, fostering a positive mindset.	Set healthy boundaries to protect your well-being and prevent burnout.		Be realistic about what you can achieve, and don't set yourself up for unnecessary stress.	Picture yourself succeeding and overcoming challenges.
Forgive yourself for past mistakes and let go of any lingering guilt or shame.	Regularly reflect on your experiences and feelings, to get insight into your emotions.	Focus on your breath for a few minutes each day, allowing yourself to be present in the moment.	Treat yourself with the same kindness you would offer to a friend in times of difficulty.	Write down your thoughts, exploring and acknowledging your emotions without judgment.
Give yourself a comforting hug, acknowledging your need for physical comfort.	Challenge negative thoughts with constructive self-talk, reframing them to be more positive.	Replace self-criticism with positive affirmations. Remind yourself of your strengths.	Engage in exercise that feels good for your body, focusing on the joy of movement.	Appreciate yourself for the efforts you put into your daily life and your positive qualities.