

WHY IT FEELS HARD

When kindness to yourself feels foreign

You are not failing — there are real reasons.

Many of us learned, early on, that being hard on ourselves was the way to stay safe, stay good, or stay loved. Self-criticism can feel like protection. It is not.

Common reasons it feels difficult

- Our brains are wired to scan for threat — what's wrong is louder than what's well.
- Many of us grew up around criticism rather than warmth, and learned the same inside.
- We may fear that softness will make us lazy — when in truth it steadies us.
- We may quietly believe we don't deserve kindness, especially after being hurt.
- We're used to putting others first, and forget to turn that care inward.
- We need to remind ourselves that doing things differently is allowed — we can give ourselves the permission.

Affirmations to keep close

- I am doing the best I can with what I have today.*
- This is hard — and I am still here.*
- I am allowed to be human.*
- I matter, even on difficult days.*
- May I meet myself with the kindness I give to others.*

You do not have to be kind to yourself perfectly to begin. If self-compassion feels unfamiliar — or even uncomfortable — you are not doing it wrong.

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

Being kind to yourself — one small step at a time.

Self-compassion means treating yourself with the same kindness, care and understanding that you would offer to a good friend who was struggling.

It is *not* self-pity, weakness, or letting yourself off the hook. It is noticing when you are hurting, and choosing not to make it harder.

With practice, self-compassion can soften the inner critic, ease shame, and help you keep going through difficult times — without needing to be perfect first.

GET IN TOUCH

WEBSITE
www.calmcornerapp.com

FURTHER READING

Neff, K. (2011). *Self-compassion*. William Morrow.
Germer, C. (2009). *The mindful path to self-compassion*. Guilford Press.
Neff, K. & Germer, C. (2018). *The mindful self-compassion workbook*. Guilford.
Gilbert, P. (2009). *The compassionate mind*. Constable.
Chödrön, P. (2001). *The places that scare you*. Shambhala.



A GENTLE INTRODUCTION

Self-Compassion

Being kind to yourself — one small step at a time.

INSIDE THIS LEAFLET

- What self-compassion is (and isn't)
- The three parts of self-compassion
- Why it can feel so hard at first
- Gentle exercises you can try today
- Self-compassion in everyday moments



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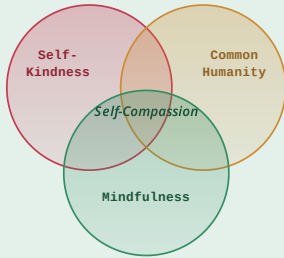
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THE MAP

Three Parts, One Practice

Self-compassion is three things woven together.

Adapted from Dr. Kristin Neff



♥ Self-Kindness

warmth over criticism

Speaking to yourself the way you'd speak to a dear friend — with patience, tenderness, and the understanding that you, too, deserve care.

IN PRACTICE: *"That was a hard day — let me make a cup of tea and rest, instead of replaying every mistake."*

👤 Common Humanity

you are not alone

Remembering that struggle, imperfection, and pain are threads of the shared human experience — not a sign that something is uniquely wrong with you.

IN PRACTICE: *"Many parents feel overwhelmed at bedtime. I'm not the only one finding this hard."*

🌱 Mindfulness

noticing, not avoiding

Turning gently toward what you feel — neither pushing it away nor being swept up by it — holding your experience in steady, open awareness.

IN PRACTICE: *Pausing mid-spiral to notice: "There's tightness in my chest. I'm anxious. That's what's here right now."*

Begin with whichever feels closest.

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THE THREE PARTS

Self-Compassion in Practice

What it looks like · and one practice to begin.

🌱 Mindfulness *noticing, not avoiding*

Looks like: pausing to say this is hard right now instead of pushing through · naming a feeling without judging it.

👤 Common Humanity *you are not alone*

Looks like: remembering others feel this too · letting go of what's wrong with me · seeing struggle as part of being human.

♥ Self-Kindness *warmth, not criticism*

Looks like: speaking to yourself the way you'd speak to a dear friend · resting when tired · choosing a softer inner tone.

🌱 TRY THIS · THE SELF-COMPASSION BREAK *1 min*

Place a hand on your heart. Take a slow breath. Say quietly to yourself:

1. This is a difficult moment. — mindfulness
2. Difficulty is part of life. I am not alone. — humanity
3. May I be kind to myself. — kindness

IN EVERYDAY MOMENTS

- **Stuck in traffic:** a slow breath — this is hard, may I be patient with myself.
- **After a mistake at work:** a hand on the heart — everyone slips, I'm still learning.
- **Lying awake at night:** this is a difficult moment, may I be gentle with what I feel.
- **Scrolling and comparing:** I am enough, just as I am right now.
- **Tired and overwhelmed:** pause, soften the shoulders — I'll do what I can, kindly.

TAKE WITH YOU

Common Myths

Misconceptions to gently release.

MYTH

It's just self-pity.

Truth · Perhaps it's reasonable to feel sorry for yourself and sad you had the experiences you did.

MYTH

It's weak or soft.

Truth · Turning towards pain takes courage, it makes sense to do this gently and with inner support.

MYTH

It's selfish.

Truth · When we tend to our own wellbeing, we have more to give to others, should we wish to.

MYTH

It lowers my standards.

Truth · Research shows it increases motivation — without the cost of shame.

MYTH

It's self-indulgent.

Truth · True self-compassion supports long-term wellbeing — a responsibility, not an indulgence.

MYTH

It's only for hard times.

Truth · A daily, gentle practice — not a last resort when everything breaks.

Self-Compassion & Trauma

Key connections — go gently.

Healing the shame-critique cycle

Trauma often brings intense self-blame, shame and guilt. Self-compassion lets you offer yourself the same kindness you would a friend — directly opposing the inner bully.

Easing PTSD symptoms

Higher self-compassion is linked to greater post-traumatic growth and lower levels of anxiety and depression.

Working with backdraft

Survivors may feel a surge of painful emotion when first showing themselves kindness — a reminder of past unsafety. Slow, safe approaches (soothing touch, gentle routines) are essential.

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