



KIND TO YOURSELF

PRACTICE THE ART OF SELF-COMPASSION

Don't beat yourself up. That's what we tell our friends and loved ones when they've done something they're embarrassed or ashamed about- but do we tell ourselves the same thing? Rarely. It's important to generate a kind inner voice as studies reflect people who are self-compassionate show increased happiness, social connectedness and optimism, and have lower levels of anxiety, fear of failure and depression. So how can you develop this inner voice? Follow the bees and look to the blue for examples!



Understanding

Most people's internal dialogue is self-deprecating. Why not try being kind and supportive to yourself instead? Be understanding of yourself when you fail or when you feel inadequate rather than turning to self-criticism. When you learn to be self-compassionate, you will recognize that sometimes failing to overcome life's difficulties is inevitable.

I may have messed up that interview, but it's probably because it's my first one in five years. It might take me awhile to get back into the swing of it.



Aware of Shared Experiences

Try to frame your own personal experience within the light of shared human experiences. For example, when your car breaks down or someone you love gets bad medical news, don't ask "why me?", as this falls into a self-pitying way of thinking and can leave you feeling isolated. By being aware of how others are experiencing the situation *and* being compassionate about how it affects you, can help you feel more connected to others.

I'm really upset about grandma's diagnosis. We can all take part in a fundraiser to support her.



Human

Remember that all humans suffer at some point in their lives. The definition of "human" is that we are imperfect and vulnerable. Give yourself a break and recognize that our personal thoughts are impacted by outside factors such as family history, environmental conditions, and the expectations and behaviours of others.

I'm upset that we didn't click on the date but I like my quirky personality.



Mindful

Although you may think you should just block out self-doubt and criticism, it is actually good to be *mindful* of your suffering in order for you to be compassionate towards it. You also have to be mindful of self-criticism to curtail it. Work to achieve a balance between your negative & positive feelings, so that neither are exaggerated, or suppressed.

I know I'm too critical of my body so I'm going to name one thing I love about it every time I catch myself being negative about it.



Practice Self-Compassionate Behaviours

What would you say to your best friend if they just bombed a job interview? Why not say the same things to yourself? Try writing down everything that your most supportive friend would say to you after you feel like you've let yourself down, then read the letter later and try really taking it to heart.

You are strong, funny and smart. You will succeed because you can do it.



Strong When It Comes to Weaknesses

Many people confuse self-compassion with self-indulgence. However, indulging in bad habits like smoking, taking drugs, or overeating because you "feel like you deserve it" is not a form of self-compassion. Take steps towards healthy and lasting happiness by doing something that may cause displeasure (quitting smoking, exercising daily) in the short-term.

I'm going to go for a jog. I really don't feel like it, but I know I'll feel better after.

Remember

Change does not happen overnight.

It takes time, effort, and understanding
to be able to find and use your kind inner voice.

If you are having difficulties with self-esteem or self-compassion,
contact your EFAP counsellor.

Your logo here

For confidential assistance
Brown Crawshaw 1.800.668.2055
www.browncrawshaw.com