

The Power of Self Compassion



Why are we so hard on ourselves? It's common to beat ourselves up for our faults, big and small. But according to a number of research studies, self-criticism can come at a price: It can make us anxious, dissatisfied with our life, and even depressed. Practicing self-compassion has been shown to have benefits including more happiness, life satisfaction and motivation, better relationships and physical health, and less anxiety and depression overall. Applying self-compassion can help build the resilience needed to cope with stressful life events and even combat trauma.

We can think of self-compassion as extending understanding and encouragement to ourselves in instances of perceived inadequacy, failure, or general suffering. Practicing self-compassion requires these three elements:

- **Mindfulness.** Recognizing that you are stressed or suffering without overreacting or being judgmental. This encourages us to consider ourselves in a less critical way, so we can really change for the better.
- **Common humanity.** Recognizing that suffering and personal inadequacy is part of the shared human experience. It's comforting to remind ourselves that we are not alone in our suffering and that we should not feel isolated because of our imperfections.
- **Self-kindness.** It is important to show ourselves the same care that we show our friends. Instead of focusing on criticizing, we should treat ourselves like a cherished family member and move in the direction of a more self-compassionate lifestyle.

So the next time you feel like you might have messed up, there may be a silver lining - the opportunity to come to a full stop, become mindful of what is bothering you, acknowledge that everyone is suffering in some way, and offer yourself some loving kindness.