

Self-Compassion

Given that February is the month marked by Valentine’s Day where we have the opportunity to pause and express our affection for others. I take this opportunity to also consider engaging in **self – compassion**. Many of us can expend a great deal of emotional fuel being hard on ourselves about our performance in school, at work, or in relationships. When we practice self-compassion, we are not ignoring that mistakes might have been made or goals not met. We are instead facing the disappointments with an acceptance and understanding for ourselves that can help us move forward with strength, confidence and hope. This self-compassion can help decrease the time that can be wasted in self-denigration that is rarely useful, works against our well-being, and in fact slows down our ability to work toward our goals.

I came across this article about the relationship between self-compassion and procrastination by Linda Graham. The topic resonated for me as many of you have asked for support around why you delay and avoid facing important tasks and studying. After reading the article, I felt convinced that indeed self-compassion can overcome procrastination. Most of us recognize that we avoid a task, perhaps those important practice questions, because we fear we will do poorly and then have to face all negative self-evaluations. The outcome can become a validation of a fear that we are not good enough. Graham discussed that several studies suggest that self-compassion can counteract the negative spiral associated with procrastination and fear of failure. You accept yourself as you are, your common humanity, so you can be more self-forgiving and better tolerate a score you did not hope for or a low percentage on a practice test. With self-compassion, can come less avoidance as you are equipped to face whatever outcome arrives. You do not use it against yourself and you can find a healthy path forward.

https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/can_self_compassion_overcome_procrastination

By Dr. Margaret Rea

Dr. Kristen Neff, a psychologist, has written a great deal about self-compassion describes how you can cultivate self-compassion. She encourages you to face your pain with the compassion that you would offer others. Dr. Neff emphasizes that self-compassion is not self-pity. Self-compassion reminds you that pain and disappointment are part of the human condition which in turn prevents feelings of isolation and disconnectedness. People can make the mistake that they need to beat up on themselves in order to grow.

Dr. Neff outlines the steps toward self-compassion:

**Dr. Kristen Neff:
3 Elements of Self-Compassion**



Self-kindness vs. Self-judgment.

Self-compassionate people recognize that being imperfect, failing, and experiencing life difficulties is inevitable, so they tend to be gentle with themselves when confronted with painful experiences rather than getting angry when life falls short of set ideals

Common humanity vs. Isolation.

Self-compassion involves recognizing that suffering and personal inadequacy is part of the shared human experience – something that we all go through rather than being something that happens to “me” alone.

Mindfulness vs. Over-identification.

We cannot ignore our pain and feel compassion for it at the same time. At the same time, mindfulness requires that we not be “over-identified” with thoughts and feelings, so that we are caught up and swept away by negative reactivity.

<https://self-compassion.org/>

Wellness Events

Work Life and Wellness Events

<https://hr.ucdavis.edu/departments/worklife-wellness>

UC Living Fit Forever

http://intranet.ucdavis.edu/clinops/resources/living_fit_forever.shtml

The Schwartz Center Rounds

Multidisciplinary forum where clinical caregivers discuss social and emotional issues that arise in caring for patients. Occurs the 4th Tuesday of every month at the Cancer Center Auditorium: <https://intranet.ucdavis.edu/palliativecare/schwartz.shtml>

Therapy Dogs

February 11 at NoonVanderhoef Commons (Grassy Field)
If cold and rainy Moore Hall Lobby

Calendar For Friendship



<https://www.actionforhappiness.org/>

Wellness Tip: Self-Compassion

Kristen Neff offers this meditation in support of your self-compassion: "This exercise should be done over several weeks and will eventually form the blueprint for changing how you relate to yourself long-term. Some people find it useful to work on their inner critic by writing in a journal. Others are more comfortable doing it via internal dialogues. If you are someone who likes to write things down and revisit them later, journaling can be an excellent tool for transformation. If you are someone (like me) who never manages to be consistent with a journal, then do whatever works for you. You can speak aloud to yourself, or think silently.

The first step towards changing the way to treat yourself is to notice when you are being self-critical. It may be that – like many of us – your self-critical voice is so common for you that you don't even notice when it is present. Whenever you're feeling bad about something, think about what you've just said to yourself. Try to be as accurate as possible, noting your inner speech verbatim. What words do you actually use when you're self-critical? Are there key phrases that come up over and over again? What is the tone of your voice – harsh, cold, angry? Does the voice remind you of any one in your past who was critical of you? You want to be able to get to know the inner self-critic very well, and to become aware of when your inner judge is active. For instance, if you've just eaten half a box of Oreo's, does your inner voice say something like "you're so disgusting," "you make me sick," and so on? Really try to get a clear sense of how you talk to yourself.

Make an active effort to soften the self-critical voice, but do so with compassion rather than self-judgment (i.e., don't say "you're such a bitch" to your inner critic!). Say something like "I know you're worried about me and feel unsafe, but you are causing me unnecessary pain. Could you let my inner compassionate self say a few words now?"

Reframe the observations made by your inner critic in a friendly, positive way. If you're having trouble thinking of what words to use, you might want to imagine what a very compassionate friend would say to you in this situation. It might help to use a term of endearment that strengthens expressed feelings of warmth and care (but only if it feels natural rather than schmaltzy.) For instance, you can say something like "Darling, I know you ate that bag of cookies because you're feeling really sad right now and you thought it would cheer you up. But you feel even worse and are not feeling good in your body. I want you to be happy, so why don't you take a long walk so you feel better?" While engaging in this supportive self-talk, you might want to try gently stroking your arm, or holding your face tenderly in your hands (as long as no one's looking). Physical gestures of warmth can tap into the caregiving system even if you're having trouble calling up emotions of kindness at first, releasing oxytocin that will help change your bio-chemistry. The important thing is that you start acting kindly, and feelings of true warmth and caring will eventually follow."

<https://self-compassion.org/exercise-5-changing-critical-self-talk/>

Community Recipe

Hi everyone! I'm **Cassidy Kays** and I recently started as the Administrative Assistant for the Office of Student and Resident Diversity. I previously worked at Sacramento City College for four years in various positions within Student Services. I am very passionate about supporting students and advocating for equity within education and I am really grateful to be working in a space that promotes wonderful opportunities for student support, inclusion and diversity.

On another note, I would like to share one of my new favorite recipes with you all! With the cold weather recently, I have been trying out different soups and one of my favorites that I recently found was a coconut sweet potato lentil soup with rice. It is simple to make and delicious with some Naan on the side!



[Coconut Sweet Potato Lentil Soup with rice](#)

Wellness App: Insight Timer

Insight timer includes meditations to support Self- Compassion:

"Guided meditations and talks led by the world's top meditation and mindfulness experts, neuroscientists, psychologists and teachers from Stanford, Harvard, the University of Oxford and more. Music tracks from world-renowned artists. Join millions learning to meditate on Insight Timer to help calm the mind, reduce anxiety, manage stress, sleep deeply and improve happiness.

- * Select by time for short meditations when on the go, helping you to build a simple daily habit
- * Thousands of music tracks and ambient sounds to calm the mind, focus, sleep better and relax
- * Follow your favorite teachers
- * Thousands of discussion groups and community features
- * Stats and milestones for tracking your progress
- * Integration with Apple Health Mindful Minutes
- * Better Relationships
- * Loving-Kindness

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/insight-timer-meditation-app/id337472899>