

Compassion in Coaching and Performance Worksheet

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NAME

DATE

We often assume that criticism and pointing out flaws and mistakes is the best path to improvement. Yet research shows that the secret to learning, growth, and development is *compassion*, not criticism.

The more compassion we can offer ourselves and others, the better our performance and problem-solving will be.

The following two worksheets can help you and your clients explore compassion.

- 1. Worksheet 1 tests self-compassion.** You can use this worksheet for either yourself as a coach, or for clients that you coach.
- 2. Worksheet 2 tests your compassion for others** as a coach.

Compassion involves a few elements:

- **Kindness rather than harsh judgement.** We can feel warm, caring, and understanding when things go wrong.
- **Looking for common humanity,** or the ways in which everyone suffers. All humans make mistakes and feel badly.
- **Honesty.** We see ourselves and others clearly and realistically.
- **Looking at problems as “just problems”.** They aren't who we are, or who someone else is.
- **Mindful awareness.** We neither suppress nor exaggerate our feelings — we simply notice how things are, and how we are.

Worksheet 1: Self-compassion

This questionnaire explores how compassionate you feel towards yourself.

If you are an athlete or high performer, think in particular about how this could apply to setbacks in athletic competition or training (such as losing at event, or having a poor practice).

HOW TO FILL OUT THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

Please read each statement carefully before answering.

Then indicate how often you feel or behave that way.

Please be honest and answer what is true for you, rather than how you think you should be.

	ALMOST NEVER	INFREQUENTLY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
1. When I fail at something important to me, I become consumed by feelings of inadequacy.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. When something painful happens, I try to take a balanced view of the situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4. When I'm feeling down, I tend to feel like most other people are probably happier than I am.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
5. I try to see my failings as part of the human condition.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
6. When I'm going through a very hard time, I give myself the caring support I need.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
7. When something upsets me, I try to keep my emotions in balance.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
8. When I fail at something that's important to me, I tend to feel alone in my failure.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
9. When I'm feeling down, I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that's wrong.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
10. When I feel inadequate in some way, I try to remind myself that feelings of inadequacy are shared by most people.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

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| 11. I'm disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. I'm intolerant and impatient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Total self-compassion score -

What your score means

Self-compassion is our ability to be kind to ourselves during difficult times, and to recognize that suffering is part of being human.

The higher your score, the more likely you are to have compassion for yourself when you are facing a challenge or going through something painful.

48 AND ABOVE:

You are a beacon of loving kindness in a harsh world.

You offer yourself grace, honesty, and care in the journey of life, and you're able to see how your personal struggles are part of the human condition. Although you feel pain like everyone else, you probably bounce back from setbacks and losses fairly quickly.

36-47:

You have a moderate amount of self-compassion.

You might go back and forth between some good pep talks to yourself, and self-criticism. There's a good chance you'd benefit from working on your self-compassion, at least a little bit.

At times you may feel emotions like guilt, shame, and anger towards yourself, which may cause problems with your learning, growth, and performance and make you feel "stuck".

35 OR LESS:

Your self-compassion likely needs improvement.

Your default setting is probably to feel alone in the world, judge yourself harshly, and criticize yourself for perceived "mistakes" and "flaws". Unfortunately, this compounds whatever painful emotions you're already feeling.

If you want to work on your self-compassion, go to [Self-Compassion.org](https://www.self-compassion.org) and try some of the exercises they suggest.

Further reading and ideas:

Desmond T. The Self-Compassion Skills Workbook: A 14-Day Plan to Transform Your Relationship with Yourself. W. W. Norton & Company; 2017.

Source for questionnaire:

Neff KD. The development and validation of a scale to measure self-compassion. *Self Identity*. 2003 Sep;2(3):223–50.

Raes F, Pommier E, Neff KD, Van Gucht D. Construction and factorial validation of a short form of the Self-Compassion Scale. *Clin Psychol Psychother*. 2011 May;18(3):250–5.

Worksheet 2: Compassionate coaching

This questionnaire explores your compassion for others, particularly in terms of how you feel about coaching.

HOW TO FILL OUT THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

Please read each statement carefully before answering.

Then indicate how often you feel or behave that way.

Please be honest and answer what is true for you, rather than how you think you should be.

	ALMOST NEVER	INFREQUENTLY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
1. I like being able to help and/or coach people, especially when they're struggling.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. Other people's problems don't really bother me.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. I realize everyone feels down sometimes; it's part of being human.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4. I notice when people are upset, even if they don't say anything.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
5. I get annoyed and/or frustrated when other people have problems but don't try to solve them.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
6. I like to be there for others in times of difficulty.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
7. I try to remember that all people have weaknesses and no one's perfect.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
8. I listen patiently when people tell me their problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
9. My heart goes out to people who are unhappy.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
10. I try to avoid people who are experiencing a lot of pain.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

11. I really like my work as a coach / helper.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
12. When others feel sad, I try to comfort them.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
13. I can't really connect with other people when they're suffering.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
14. I generally feel warm and positive towards the people I help and/or coach.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Total compassion for others score -

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What your score means

Compassion is our ability to relate to others' suffering and struggles, and to want to offer warmth, care, and kindness in those difficult moments.

The higher your score, the more likely you are to have compassion for others when they are facing a challenge or going through something painful.

56 AND ABOVE:

You are a beacon of loving kindness in a harsh world.

You care deeply about others and are easily able to empathize with them. Plus, you want to help and ease their suffering. You enjoy being of service and helping people navigate tough times.

However, at times, you may take on too much of others' struggles and problems. You'll need to develop strong and effective boundaries and methods of supporting yourself. Otherwise you risk compassion fatigue. (See below.)

42-55:

You balance compassion with pragmatism.

In general, you're able to understand and connect with others, and recognize what they're feeling.

Sometimes you may not feel that much sympathy, or you may focus more on solving the problem than relating to the person. And, sometimes you may get frustrated or anxious when a person seems "illogical" or stuck in their situation without trying to change.

41 OR LESS:

You struggle to connect with other people's suffering.

You may be a deeply practical person, or a strong problem-solver yourself. This could make it hard for you to feel empathy towards others who may seem helpless, unfocused, or ineffective. You may feel critical or impatient when others make mistakes or seem "soft", and consider yourself to have "high standards" for performance.

Although your pursuit of excellence and will to win may make you a fearsome competitor, you may have trouble building strong coaching relationships or supporting clients through long-term growth and performance. You may also spend a lot of time feeling frustrated.

Compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue

A few items also score your **compassion satisfaction**, or whether you feel fulfilled and happy about being a compassionate helper and/or coach. Conversely, **compassion fatigue** occurs when our “compassion tank” runs low, and we find it difficult to truly care or connect.

If you notice yourself scoring low on questions like “I really like my work” or “I listen patiently”, consider whether you may need some support or extra recovery in your coaching role.

COMPASSION IS LIKE AN “INDICATOR LIGHT” OF OUR OWN WELLBEING.

If we consistently struggle to feel warm and caring towards the people we help and serve, it may indicate that we may need to address elements such as our workload or recovery.

If your scores on compassion are lower than you'd like, and you'd like to practice being more compassionate towards yourself or others:

- Try the “Practices” listed on [Dr. Kristin Neff's site](#), Self-Compassion.org.
- Check out the [Professional Quality of Life](#) website for resources such as the “helper pocket card”.

Further reading and ideas:

Gilbert P. The Compassionate Mind: A New Approach to Life's Challenges. New Harbinger Publications; 2010. 513 p.

Questionnaire adapted from:

Hudnall Stamm B. Professional Quality of Life: Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue Version 5 (ProQOL). 2009.

Pommier, E., Neff, K. D. & Tóth-Király I. (2019). The development and validation of the Compassion Scale. *Assessment*, 21-39.