

Self-Compassion Quickie

What is self-compassion?

If you're not familiar with the concept of compassion, it may seem pretty touchy-feely.

You might even think it's out of place in the context of fitness and nutrition.

Think again.

Neuroscience and psychology research shows that people who practice self-compassion get more done and are able to sustain their work, health, and relationships better than those who don't.

Compassion researchers identify three parts to self-compassion:

- **Self-kindness** is—obviously—the act of being kind to yourself. You're like a loving parent or wise counsellor to yourself—honest and clear-eyed about your faults and mistakes, but tolerant and charitable about them while seeking to do better.
- **Common humanity** means that you realize it's not “just you”—that everyone has challenges, makes mistakes, and feels down or inadequate in some way, sometimes.
- **Mindfulness** is a state of non-judgemental, conscious awareness and self-observation.

Why does self-compassion matter?

Compared to self-criticizers, research shows that people who are more self-compassionate:

- perform better and rarely “choke” under pressure;

- are more resilient and able to bounce back faster from setbacks;
- feel less depressed and/or anxious;
- have better relationships, feel more secure in their interpersonal life, and get along with people more effectively;
- are more emotionally intelligent and less egocentric;
- are more satisfied with life;
- learn, grow, and develop more effectively;
- and are psychologically healthier overall.

Well, darn. That sounds pretty awesome.

Put it into practice

The next time you find yourself being self-critical, practice self-compassion, following these 3 steps.

- 1. TAKE A MOMENT TO NOTICE YOUR EXPERIENCE.**
Maybe you're feeling anxiety, fear, frustration, sadness, or regret. Or maybe it's physical pain or discomfort. Resist making a judgement about it, or creating a story around it. Just notice and name.

What you are feeling right now?

- 2. TAKE A MOMENT TO REMIND YOURSELF THAT EVERYONE EXPERIENCES MOMENTS OF SUFFERING.**

Remembering that everyone experiences hardship and pain reduces the

discomfort of feeling those things yourself, and reminds you that you're not alone.

Think of how your experience actually connects you to others, rather than separates you from them. How are you better able to relate to others now that you've experienced this suffering?

3. PRACTICE SHOWING LOVE AND KINDNESS TO YOURSELF.

Place your hand on your heart, your cheek, or wherever you can feel the warmth and support of your own touch. Alternatively, you can just make yourself extra comfy in your chair, or drape a blanket over your shoulders.

Now, think about what you need from yourself: Forgiveness? Love? Strength? Acceptance?

Write down what you need from yourself:

Feel free to write any additional thoughts or feelings that come up during this exercise:

You can practice this simple 3-step exercise (which may only take a few minutes) anytime you feel you need some extra support. The more you practice it, the more natural self-compassion will become.