



# CULTIVATING self-compassion

When we're going through a difficult time, we can find ourselves engaging in negative self-talk and juggling feelings of inadequacy. However, when a friend is experiencing a difficult time, we're more likely to support them, build them up, and treat them with compassion.

Self-compassion is treating yourself the same way you would a friend when faced with a stressful situation or event. You're often your toughest critic and deserve to treat yourself with the same kindness you extend to others. When you master the art of self-compassion, it can make all the difference in how you view life and your self.

According to **Dr. Kristin Neff**, there are three key elements to remember:

### BE KIND TO YOURSELF

Treat yourself with warmth, kindness, and understanding when you are stressed. Being aware of the discomfort

you are experiencing can help you grow. But be careful not to over-judge yourself: too much self-scrutiny can limit your ability to flourish.

### NOBODY'S PERFECT

Recognize that mistakes are part of the shared human experience and that you are not alone. In fact, these flaws and imperfections can unify us. The one thing we all have in common is that none of us are perfect!

### REMEMBER THE BIGGER PICTURE

Be aware of your discomfort or awkwardness in the moment. What are your emotions and reactions?

Remember to include all of them, even if they are uncomfortable. How are others responding to this situation? What is the bigger picture and how do you fit in? Don't get bogged down in a negative spiral but be mindful of how you fit into the bigger picture.

Acknowledging your feelings allows you to be realistic about where you can grow and make positive changes. You'll find when you practise self-compassion, you'll feel a boost to your mood, motivation, and self-esteem!



## NOURISHING GROWTH

Practising self-compassion is a skill that takes time to develop. Here are some ideas on how to start today.

### EMBRACE THE MOMENT

Allow the now to happen. Be consciously present in the moment, without judgement. Be aware of what is happening to your mind, body, and emotions, and truly embrace the moment. Then, when the moment has passed, reflect upon it, learn, and move on.

### BE GREAT-FULL

Be grateful for your greatness! When you focus on who you are and what you have, you will discover great things. It doesn't matter if it's something big or small, what matters is to recognize what's special about yourself and appreciate your strengths. You're full of greatness, so take the time to celebrate it.

### LET GO AND GROW

We all make mistakes—it's what makes us human. Reframe challenges as opportunities for growth. What did you learn and what will you do differently? Give yourself permission to make mistakes so you can learn from them and do better next time.



Speak to yourself with compassion on the inside and you will radiate peace on the outside.

– AMY LEIGH MERCREE



### Self-Care Tip

Try the 10-minute wellness activity **Letter to Yourself** to practise self-compassion.



### Community Connection Tip

The University of Alberta's Alumni Student Support and Engagement Team has a library of **Guided Mindfulness Sessions** on their YouTube channel for you to choose from, and you don't even have to be an alumnus to access them!