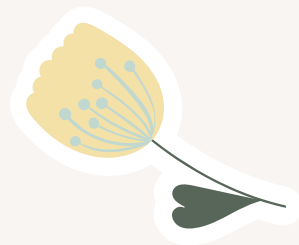


SELF-COMPASSION TOOLKIT

CULTIVATE KINDNESS WITHIN



The Elements of Self-Compassion

Kristin Neff, a leading researcher on self-compassion, proposes three core elements that make up the concept of self-compassion: self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness. These elements work together to create a foundation for a compassionate and understanding relationship with oneself.

Treating yourself with warmth and understanding rather than harsh criticism or judgment, especially in the face of personal failures or difficult situations. Instead of being overly self-critical, self-kindness encourages you to respond to your own suffering with the same care and support you would offer to a friend.

Self-
Kindness

Recognition that suffering and imperfection are part of the shared human experience. Everyone goes through difficult times and faces challenges, highlighting our interconnectedness. By recognizing your common humanity, you can shift from feelings of isolation or inadequacy to a sense of belonging and understanding.

Common
Humanity

Being aware of your thoughts and feelings without becoming overly attached to them. It is the ability to observe thoughts and emotions with a non-judgmental and accepting attitude and means being present in the moment, acknowledging and accepting your feelings without getting entangled in self-critical thoughts.

Mindfulness



Compassionate Reflection Journal

Daily journaling helps you to promote self-compassion by allowing you to reflect on your experiences, challenges, and successes while cultivating a positive and understanding relationship with yourself. Choose a dedicated journal for this practice. It could be a physical notebook or a digital platform, depending on your preference.

- 1 Use self-compassionate language and be kind toward yourself, just as you would be to a close friend.
- 2 Pick a consistent time each day for journaling. Whether, in the morning or before bed, having a routine can enhance the practice.
- 3 Write about your daily experiences, both positive and challenging. Describe situations, emotions, and thoughts in detail.
- 4 When writing be reflective and observe the situation objectively. Write about your feelings and replace self-criticism with self-kindness.
- 5 Identify any challenges you faced during the day. Explore your reactions and emotions without judgment.
- 6 Acknowledge and celebrate your successes. This could include achievements, positive interactions, or personal growth.
- 7 At the end of each entry, craft a positive affirmation related to your experiences. This affirmation can be your reminder of self-compassion.
- 8 Reflect on personal growth and lessons learned. Consider how challenges contribute to your resilience and development.

Compassionate Letter Writing

Reflect on a recent challenge you've faced. Explore your emotions, thoughts, and any self-critical beliefs that may have arisen.

Begin by understanding your struggles. Use compassionate language to acknowledge the difficulty you experienced.

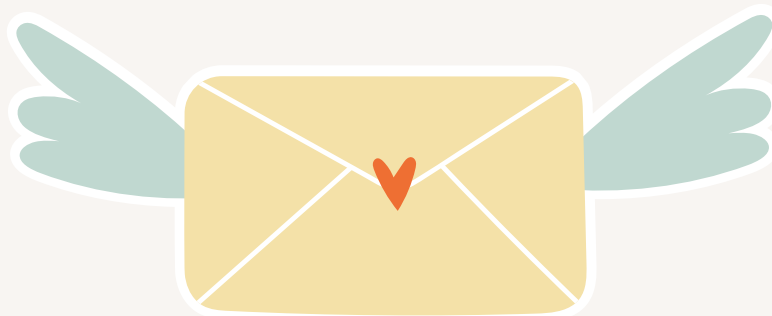
Explore why you may have reacted in a certain way and know that your feelings are valid.

Write words of encouragement. Highlight your strengths, resilience, and the positive steps you've taken, even if they seem small.

Use self-compassionate language in the letter. Use phrases such as "It's okay to feel this way," and "I am here for myself."

Envision your future self overcoming challenges and growing from experiences. Offer words of encouragement for the journey ahead.

Read the letter aloud to yourself. Or, you can revisit the letter during moments of difficulty as a source of comfort and reassurance.



Body Scan for Self-Compassion

This exercise will help you become aware of areas of tension or negative emotions in your body, and encourages you to send feelings of compassion to promote self-soothing.

Inhale slowly through the nose, allowing the breath to fill the lungs, and exhale gently through the mouth. Release any tension with each exhale.

Bring your awareness to different parts of the body, starting from the toes and moving up to the head. Notice any areas of tension.

Scan each body part individually, pausing to notice any sensations or emotions associated with that area. Bring your attention to your toes. How do they feel? Are there any sensations or tightness?

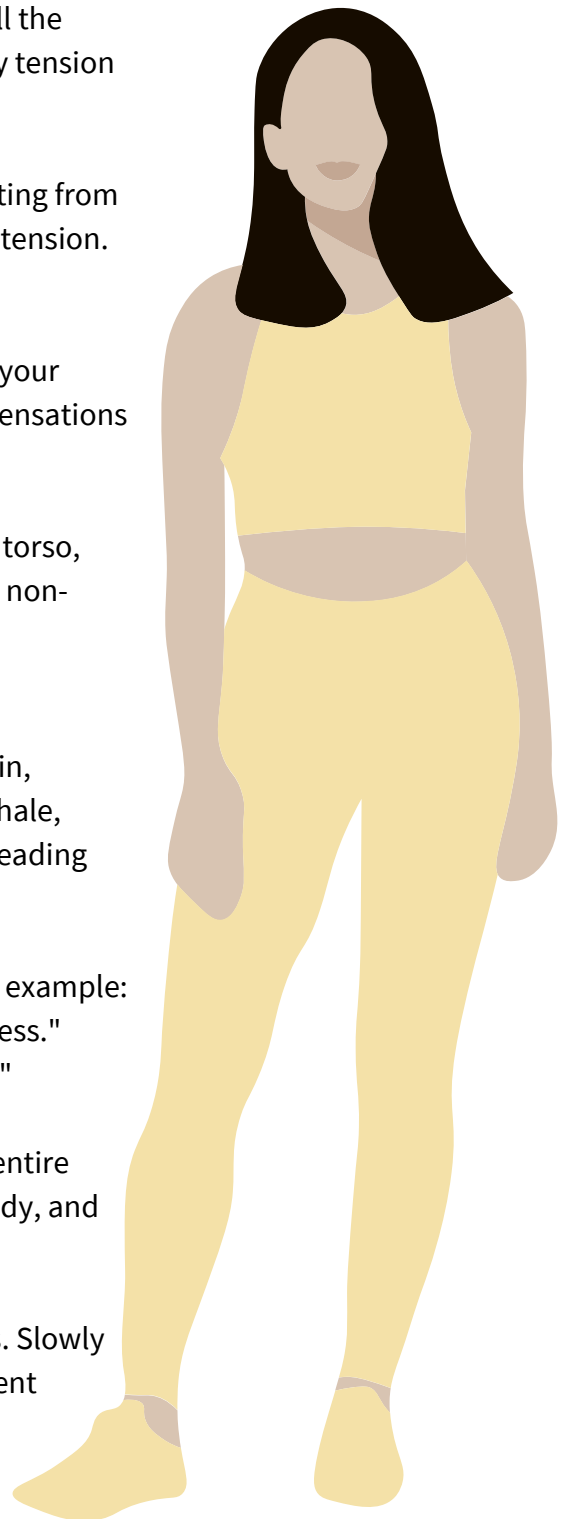
Continue this process, moving up through the feet, legs, torso, arms, and head. Be aware of any emotions that arise. Be non-judgmental as you observe both physical and emotional sensations.

Focus on areas of tension or discomfort. As you breathe in, imagine inhaling warmth and compassion. With each exhale, release tension and visualise a gentle, soothing light spreading through that area.

Use self-soothing affirmations during the body scan. For example:
"I acknowledge and embrace any discomfort with kindness."
"I send warmth and compassion to this part of my body."

Complete the body scan by bringing awareness to your entire body. Feel the connection between your breath, your body, and the compassionate energy you've cultivated.

Gradually come back to awareness of your surroundings. Slowly open your eyes or gently shift your attention to the present moment.



Mindful Walking for Self-Compassion

Grow Your Self-Compassion

This exercise promotes self-compassion by bringing your attention to each step and the present moment, creating a mindful connection to your surroundings. Add this mindful walking exercise into your routine - it can be a simple yet powerful way to cultivate self-compassion and presence in the midst of daily activities.

Breathe deeply, bringing attention to the present moment.

Be mindful of your posture. Stand tall, shoulders relaxed.

Shift your attention to each step. Feel the sensations in your feet as they lift, move, and touch the ground.

Engage your senses. Notice the feeling of the ground beneath your feet, the sounds around you, and any scents in the air.

If your mind starts to wander gently bring your focus back to the act of walking and the sensations in your body.

Integrate awareness of breath with each step. Synchronise your breath with steps, inhaling for a certain number of steps and exhaling for the same count.



Self-Compassion Art

You can represent your self-compassion journey with drawings, collages, or paintings. This artistic process allows you to explore your evolving relationship with yourself.

Set an intention for your art such as expressing self-compassion, visualising your journey, or externalising your inner dialogue.

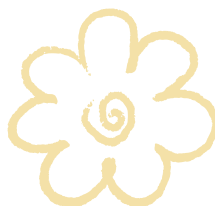
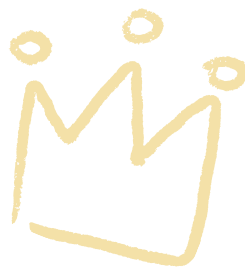
Express your emotions through choosing colours, shapes, or images that resonate with your feelings and experiences related to self-compassion.

Use symbols or metaphors. For example, a heart, a guiding light, or a bridge could symbolise your relationship with yourself.

Cut out images or words from magazines that resonate with self-compassion to create a collage.

Create a narrative in your art. This could involve depicting specific moments in your self-compassion journey.

Represent your growth. This might include portraying resilience, self-acceptance, and the development of a kinder internal dialogue.



Guided Mindful Self-Compassion Meditation



Find a quiet and comfortable space. Sit or lie down in a relaxed position. Close your eyes if you feel comfortable doing so, or maintain a soft gaze.

Take a few deep breaths. Inhale slowly through your nose, filling your lungs, and exhale gently through your mouth. With each breath, allow your body to relax, letting go of any tension.

Shift your attention to the sensations in your body. Notice the points of contact with the surface beneath you. Feel the weight of your body, the gentle rise and fall of your chest as you breathe.

Bring your awareness to any areas of tension or discomfort. As you breathe in, imagine inhaling a soothing, warm light that travels to these areas. With each exhale, visualise tension melting away, replaced by a sense of calm and ease.

Allow your emotions to surface without judgment. Acknowledge any feelings present, whether they are joy, sadness, or uncertainty. Embrace these emotions with an attitude of kindness, recognising that all emotions are valid.

Repeat silently or out loud: "May I be kind to myself in moments of struggle."

Visualise a compassionate figure, mentor, or a symbol of kindness in your mind's eye. This could be a person, an animal, or even a serene natural setting. Imagine this figure radiating warmth and unconditional acceptance towards you.

Focus on your breath. Inhale self-compassion and exhale any self-criticism or judgment. Picture each breath as a wave of kindness, enveloping you in a cocoon of understanding.

Gradually bring your awareness back to the present moment. Feel the sensations in your body, the rise and fall of your breath. When you're ready, gently open your eyes.

Self-Compassion Break

A Self-Compassion Break is a short, structured exercise designed to help you respond to moments of difficulty or stress with kindness and understanding. Developed by Kristin Neff this practice involves acknowledging your struggle, recognising common humanity, and offering yourself words of comfort.

Describe the challenging situation or emotion you're currently facing. Be specific about how it makes you feel, both emotionally and physically.

Recognise that struggles and difficult emotions are a normal part of the human experience. Write down a few words that remind you that others have faced similar challenges.

Write down words of kindness and understanding that you would say to a friend going through a similar situation. Imagine the warmth and care in your words as you write them.

Consider a gesture of self-comfort, like placing a hand on your heart or giving yourself a gentle hug. Write down this gesture and commit to trying it when you need comfort.

After completing the Self-Compassion Break, reflect on how it made you feel. Consider any shifts in your perspective or emotions.

Positive Self-Talk

Affirming Self-Worth:

"I am worthy of being treated with love and respect at all times."

"My value is not determined by my achievements; I am enough as I am."

"I deserve to treat myself with kindness and understanding."

Fostering Gratitude:

"I am grateful for the positive aspects of my life."

"I appreciate the lessons and opportunities that each day brings."

"I choose to focus on the good, even in challenging situations."

Encouraging Resilience:

"I have faced challenges before and come out stronger. I can handle this."

"Mistakes are part of learning and growing. I am resilient and can bounce back."

"I am not defined by setbacks; I am defined by my ability to rise again."

Embracing Self-Kindness:

"I am deserving of self-care and prioritise my well-being."

"I speak to myself with kindness and avoid harsh self-judgment."

"I am my own best advocate, supporting myself with love and understanding."

Cultivating Optimism:

"I choose to focus on what I can control and let go of what I cannot."

"Challenges are opportunities for growth, and I am capable of overcoming them."

"Even in difficult times, I trust that better days are ahead."

Building Confidence:

"I believe in my abilities and trust myself to handle whatever comes my way."

"I am confident in my capacity to learn and grow."

"I have the power to create positive change in my life."

Promoting Self-Compassion:

"I am human, and it's okay to have imperfections. They make me unique."

"I choose self-compassion over self-criticism in times of difficulty."

"I treat myself with the same kindness I would offer a good friend."

Affirming Goals and Intentions:

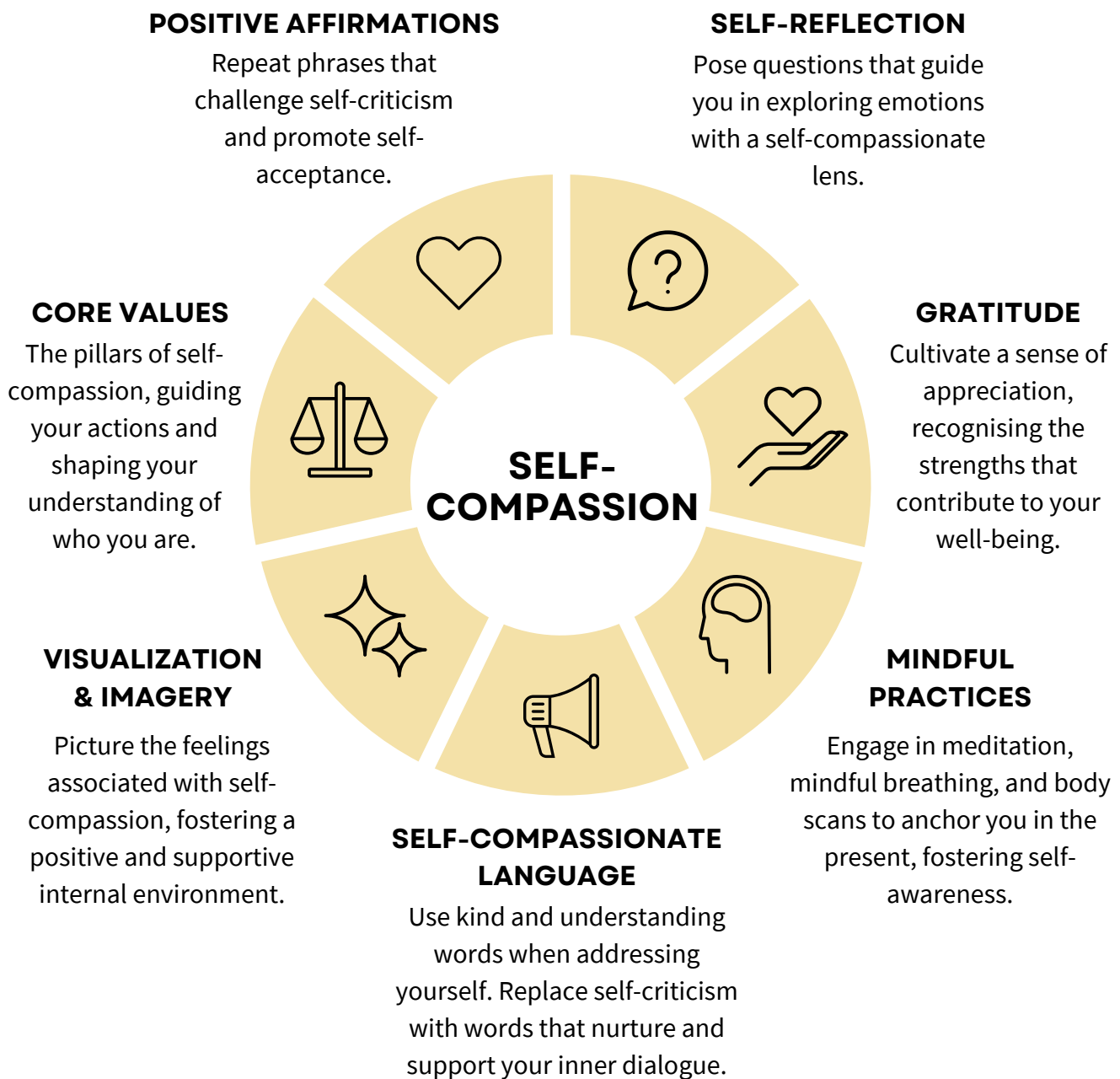
"I am capable of achieving my goals with determination and effort."

"Each step I take brings me closer to my aspirations."

"I trust in my journey and celebrate my progress, no matter how small."

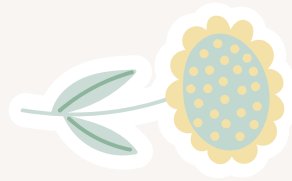
Self-Compassion Wheel

The self-compassion wheel is a guide to help you understand and practise being kind to yourself. It's made up of different sections, each with its special function. Imagine it as a compass showing you the way to feeling better about yourself. It's all about finding your inner strength, using positive words, and doing things that make you feel good.





IMPROVED MENTAL
HEALTH



ENHANCED EMOTIONAL
RESILIENCE



INCREASED LIFE
SATISFACTION



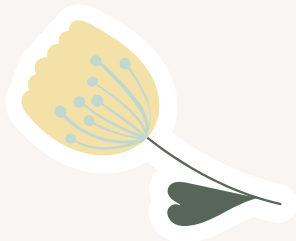
REDUCED SELF-
CRITICISM



BETTER
RELATIONSHIPS



LOWER LEVELS OF
PERFECTIONISM



BETTER PHYSICAL
HEALTH

THE BENEFITS OF SELF- COMPASSION



INCREASED
MOTIVATION



ENHANCED COPING
MECHANISMS



IMPROVED EMOTIONAL
REGULATION



GREATER EMPATHY
FOR OTHERS



Self-Compassion Affirmations

"I am deserving of love and compassion, especially from myself. I treat myself with kindness and understanding."

"In moments of difficulty, I acknowledge my pain with gentleness. I am resilient, and I trust in my ability to navigate challenges."

"My worth is inherent, and I embrace my imperfections as part of my unique and beautiful journey."

"Compassion begins with me. Today, I choose to be kind to myself, recognising my humanity and embracing self-love."

"Every step I take is a step towards my well-being. I trust the process, and I am compassionate with myself along the way."

Self-Compassion Bingo

Get to know your emotions and thoughts through self awareness.	Visualise a supportive figure in your life and offering words of encouragement.	Take mindful walks, paying attention to your surroundings and the present moment.	Acknowledge and celebrate your accomplishments, no matter how small.	View challenges as opportunities for growth and learning.
Engage in meditation practices specifically designed to cultivate self-compassion.	Embrace the idea that nobody is perfect, and it's okay to make mistakes .	Take short breaks during the day to comfort yourself during challenging moments.	Share your struggles with a friend or family member who can offer support and understanding.	Pay attention to what you eat, fostering a positive relationship with food.
Reflect on the things you are grateful for in your life, fostering a positive mindset.	Set healthy boundaries to protect your well-being and prevent burnout.		Be realistic about what you can achieve, and don't set yourself up for unnecessary stress.	Picture yourself succeeding and overcoming challenges.
Forgive yourself for past mistakes and let go of any lingering guilt or shame.	Regularly reflect on your experiences and feelings, to get insight into your emotions.	Focus on your breath for a few minutes each day, allowing yourself to be present in the moment.	Treat yourself with the same kindness you would offer to a friend in times of difficulty.	Write down your thoughts, exploring and acknowledging your emotions without judgment.
Give yourself a comforting hug, acknowledging your need for physical comfort.	Challenge negative thoughts with constructive self-talk, reframing them to be more positive.	Replace self-criticism with positive affirmations. Remind yourself of your strengths.	Engage in exercise that feels good for your body, focusing on the joy of movement.	Appreciate yourself for the efforts you put into your daily life and your positive qualities.

Self-Compassion Quiz

Add up the scores for all questions. A total score closer to 50 suggests a higher level of self-compassion, while a lower score may indicate areas for growth. Please remember, the goal is not perfection but to encourage self-awareness and a kinder relationship with yourself.

	Not true at all			Very true	
	1	2	3	4	5
I speak to myself with the same kindness I would offer a good friend.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When facing challenges, I tend to take an understanding approach rather than criticise.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I acknowledge and accept my imperfections, recognising that they make me unique.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In difficult times, I practise self-compassion by being understanding about my feelings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I hardly ever compare myself unfavourably to others, feeling like I fall short.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I prioritise self-care and take intentional steps to nurture my well-being.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I make mistakes, I treat myself with kindness and understanding.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find it easy to forgive myself for past mistakes and shortcomings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I tend to be supportive to others and extend the same compassion to myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, I feel a sense of warmth and understanding towards myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>