

# Everything you need to know about self-compassion

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## Introduction

The ability to turn understanding, acceptance, and love inward is known as [self-compassion](#). Many people can provide compassion to others but find it difficult to show compassion to themselves. They may mistake self-compassion for self-indulgence, but compassion for oneself is not like self-indulgence, selfishness, or self-pity.

Self-compassion can help with a variety of mental health issues, such as worry and uncertainty. People who have [self-compassion are less likely to be critical of themselves](#) and less likely to be nervous or sad, leading to increased life satisfaction.

## What is self-compassion?

Self-compassion is simply the ability to direct emotions within oneself and accept oneself in the face of failure. Compassion is the ability to show empathy, love, and concern to people in difficulty, and self-compassion is simply the ability to [direct these same emotions](#) within oneself and accept oneself.

People who are generally sympathetic have a more challenging time exhibiting compassion for themselves, often out of fear of self-indulgence or self-pity. Still, an inability to acknowledge areas of weakness can make emotional well-being difficult to achieve.

[According to studies](#), women have less sympathy for themselves than men. This could be partly attributed to the fact that women are frequently assigned the position of caregiver by society, with gender norms stressing nurturing and self-sacrifice. Self-compassion is a [favourable attitude](#) we might have toward ourselves that can also be measured experimentally. [Associate Professor Dr Kristin Neff](#) operationalized and presented self-compassion to the positive psychology literature, saying that it is made up of three different constructs:

1. Mindfulness vs Over-identification
2. Self-kindness vs Self-judgment
3. Common Humanity vs Isolation

## 1. Mindfulness vs Over-identification

Self-compassion necessitates a balanced approach to negative emotions, ensuring that sentiments are not suppressed or exaggerated. This balanced position results from relating personal experiences to those of others who are also suffering, allowing us to put our situation into context. It also comes from a

willingness to openly and observe our unpleasant thoughts and feelings so that they can be retained in attentive awareness.

Mindfulness is a non-judgmental, receptive state of mind in which one observes thoughts and feelings without trying to ignore or reject them. We cannot be compassionate and disregard our grief at the same time. At the same time, mindfulness necessitates that we do not become over-identified with our thoughts and feelings, allowing negative responses to sweep us away.

## 2. Self-kindness vs Self-judgment

Rather than disregarding our sorrow or flagellating ourselves with self-criticism, self-compassion means being warm and compassionate toward ourselves when we suffer, fail, or feel inadequate. Self-compassionate people understand that being flawed, failing, and having problems in life is unavoidable. Thus, they are gentle when presented with painful situations rather than upset when life falls short of expectations.

People are not always able to be or obtain precisely what they desire. When this truth is denied or battled against, stress, irritation, and self-criticism become more prevalent. More significant emotional serenity is gained when this truth is embraced with sympathy and love.

## 3. Common Humanity vs Isolation

Frustration at not getting what we want is frequently accompanied by an unreasonable but pervasive sense of Isolation as if I am the only one suffering or making mistakes. Humans, on the other hand, all suffer.

Being human implies that one is mortal, weak, and flawed by definition. As a result, self-compassion entails accepting that suffering and personal inadequacy are a part of the human experience that we all share, rather than being something that only affects me.

## How to practice self-compassion

When we have a professional setback, we either become defensive and blame others or berate ourselves. Neither of these actions is useful. Shielding responsibility by being defensive may take the sting out of failing, but it comes at the cost of learning. Self-flagellation, on the other hand, may seem justified at the time, but it can lead to an overly pessimistic estimate of one's potential, stifling personal growth.

According to research, we should instead respond with self-compassion. People who do this have three characteristics:

1. They are kind rather than judgmental about their failures and mistakes;
2. They recognize that failures are a common human experience;
3. When they stumble or fall short, they take a balanced approach to negative emotions - they allow themselves to feel bad, but they don't let negative emotions take over.

The best way to practice self-compassion is to maintain a happy medium from self-judgment to self-kindness, from Isolation to common humanity and from over-identification to mindfulness. However, [according to Dr Kirstin Neff](#), getting started might not be easy because of our habitual responses to hurt and negative emotions. However, we still need to try to adopt new approaches and create positive emotions.

Several techniques can be used to practice self-compassion, and some of these are:

- **Learn to treat yourself as you would treat a friend** – let yourself make mistakes and care for yourself as you treat others.
- **Become more self-aware** – do not just beat yourself up but rather use releasing statements or affirmations. For example, when you notice something negative, such as ‘I am such a bad person for becoming upset’, try flipping the thought around and releasing yourself from the emotion. Instead, say, ‘It is fine that I was upset.’
- **Regaining perspective** – appreciating that we are a part of a bigger picture and letting go of the need for outside validation.

## Transformative effects of self-compassion

Over the last decade, there has been an explosion of studies exploring the benefits of self-compassion for well-being. [Self-compassionate](#) people experience higher levels of enjoyment, life satisfaction, and motivation, better relationships and physical health, and less anxiety and depression. They also have the mental toughness to deal with traumatic life situations, including divorce, health crises, academic failure, and even combat trauma.

Things begin to change when we are aware of our challenges and respond to ourselves with compassion, kindness, and support during challenging moments. Despite inner and outer flaws, we may learn to accept ourselves and our lives and give ourselves the strength we need to succeed. [Self-compassion motivates like a good coach](#), with compassion, support, and understanding rather than harsh criticism.

Self-compassion may appear to be a gentle trait that is only linked with consoling and soothing at first glance. Each person can experiment with a range of mindful self-compassion activities and exercises to see which ones work best for them. Although most techniques have elements of both, some fall more into the [yin group and some into the yang category](#). Consider which skills you will need to use the most right now.

The yin of self-compassion encompasses the [qualities of compassionately](#) being with ourselves - comforting, calming, and affirming. We might comfort a close friend going through a difficult time, mainly by providing emotional support.

Soothing is another approach to make someone feel better, and it specifically refers to making someone feel physically relaxed. Validating a person makes her feel better by fully comprehending what she is going through and expressing it in a kind and sympathetic manner.

[Self-compassion](#) is about acting in the world - protecting, providing for, and inspiring ourselves. Feeling secure from harm is the first step toward self-compassion. Saying no to individuals who injure us or to the suffering we inflict on ourselves, often unconsciously, is what protecting entails.

When faced with adversity, self-compassion is a dependable source of inner strength that confers courage and increases resilience. Self-compassionate people, according to research, are better able to cope with difficult events such as divorce, trauma, or chronic pain.

Self-compassion steers us toward long-term health and happiness rather than short-term gratification (much as a caring mother does not let her child eat all the ice cream she wants but instead tells her to eat your vegetables). [Self-compassionate people](#), according to research, engage in healthier behaviours such as exercising, eating well, drinking less, and visiting the doctor more frequently.

Self-compassion offers the necessary safety to admit mistakes rather than blaming others for them. According to research, self-compassionate people are more likely to take personal responsibility for their behaviour and apologize if they upset someone.

Our self-criticism erodes our self-esteem and causes us to be afraid of failure. We will still be motivated to achieve our goals if we are self-compassionate - not because we are inadequate, but because we care about ourselves and want [to fulfil our full potential](#). Self-compassionate people have high personal standards, yet they don't punish themselves when they fall short.

## Pros and Cons of self-compassion

Self-compassion is one of the [most effective coping and resiliency tools](#) we have. Reduced Isolation, enhanced attention, and reduced over-identification are just a few of the advantages of self-compassion. Self-compassion provides a variety of benefits, including fewer depressive and more optimistic thoughts, overall increased pleasure and life satisfaction, improved social and emotional skills, and improved physical health, [according to research](#). The following are some of the favourable benefits that studies have found:

- It boosts your motivation.
- It makes you happier.
- It boosts your self-esteem.
- It encourages resilience.
- Anxiety, despair, and stress are among the mental health issues that it helps to alleviate.
- Improvements in interpersonal relationships
- More empathy towards others.
- Adopting healthier habits (more towards moves)
- Strongly related to happiness

However, there is also a downside to too much self-compassion and these includes:

- Without critical thinking, self-compassionate people can feel overwhelmed and too sensitive to

issues, which can harm their mental health.

- Different people have different perspectives on what you should or should not be self-compassionate about.
- Self-compassion can be exploited to acquire profit or benefit from those who show compassion for others.
- For people to invest, some advertising or propaganda can be manipulated to trigger guilt through self-compassion.
- Self-compassion can be used to manipulate or deceive persons who lack critical thinking skills.

## Conclusion

[Self-compassion improves performance](#) by inducing a growth attitude or conviction that hard work and devotion make improvement possible. It also allows us to connect with our true selves. Now, take a moment to reflect on yourself and start developing new habits that create positive emotions.

<https://thehumancapitalhub.com/articles/everything-you-need-to-know-about-self-compassion>