

CULTIVATING SELF COMPASION

COMPASSION AND KINDNESS

5. ARE YOU YOUR OWN BEST FRIEND?

WHAT

In its simplest form, compassion is the noticing of suffering and the intent to relieve that suffering. It's different from kindness, which does not require the presence of suffering. Both are super important for thriving. When we're kind to others we get a release of oxytocin and research shows a wide range of benefits for our physical and mental wellbeing. Most of us are pretty good at being kind to others. What we're often not so good at however is being kind to ourselves, especially in times of suffering. We're our own worst critics – we beat ourselves up, put ourselves down and drive ourselves into the ground. Self-compassion involves noticing when we're struggling, pausing to acknowledge and ask ourselves "this is really difficult right now, how can I comfort and care for myself?" Many of us seem to think that being kind to ourselves will make us weak or lose our edge, but this is simply not true. In fact, when we look after ourselves, we perform better and are better able to look after others.

HOW

Self compassion is something we can learn and practice. Here's a 3-step process you can use to be more compassionate to yourself.

- 1. Notice your suffering.** Slow down and tune into yourself so that you are mindful and present enough to notice that you are struggling. You might even take "self compassion breaks" throughout the day to help you check in with yourself.
- 2. Soothe your suffering** – offer yourself understanding and kindness rather than judgment and self-criticism. Speak to yourself kindly, just like you would speak to a good friend who was suffering. Gently place your hand over your heart, take a deep breath in and an even longer breath out. This will calm your nervous system.
- 3. Remind yourself we're ALL perfectly imperfect.** So often we see our suffering as separate, personal, and unique, failing to recognise that others struggle too. Social media may feed into this, often showing just the golden moments of life. Remind yourself that suffering and failure are part of living a rich and meaningful life. We're humans – not robots, suffering comes with being human. Embrace it.

WHY IT WORKS

Research has shown that self-compassion is strongly linked to our mental health and well-being. Studies have found that those who are more compassionate towards themselves tend to have less mental health problems, like depression, anxiety and stress. These people also tend to have a better quality of life, a greater sense of well-being, and less problems in relationships. See Kristen Neff's website www.selfcompassion.org to learn more.

For more info contact us at hello@needtoseesomeone.com