



# Practicing Self-Compassion

Be kinder to yourself.

While we may respond with compassion for the struggles of other people, many of us may find it difficult to offer ourselves the same. It can be difficult to be objective about your own struggles.

Instead of offering the compassion we would offer others, we may judge ourselves harshly for a mistake or shortcoming. Or we may be hard on ourselves when we are feeling down, upset or jealous about something.

Self-compassion doesn't mean that we let ourselves off the hook and don't take responsibility for our mistakes or failures. Self-compassion actually makes taking responsibility easier. You didn't mess up because you are a bad person but because you are human. It is easier to admit to a mistake or failure when we recognize that our mistakes and failures need not define who we are. The same goes for unpleasant emotions. Humans experience anger, sadness and jealousy. These emotions signal that we are human and that something may not be right;

it does not mean that we are bad people. A great deal of power lies in owning our humanity and our faults.

Once we do this, we can begin to explore our reactions: "I wonder what happened that led to make this mistake," "I'm curious about what has me procrastinating on this project," or "I wonder about my reaction to that situation."

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**Transforming that inner critic to an inner encourager may help you stay more present and have more control in such situations.**

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This type of compassionate curiosity can lead to having a more objective mindset where we are open to looking at different aspects of our situation and possibly experimenting to find something that works better. It might be helpful to look at many

factors, including sleep, nutrition, overall health, relationships, communication and anything else that might influence our state of mind or the outcome of what we are trying to accomplish.

You can begin a practice of self-compassion very simply. The next time you make a mistake or when you are trying out a new behavior, start with identifying how you feel. Recognize that those feelings are normal and understandable in your situation. Give yourself some words of kindness such as "I can be patient with myself as I make these changes," "I can accept myself as I am," or "I can be as gentle with myself as I am with others."

Like any new skill, self-compassion can take some time to master. If you would like more information or support in learning self-compassion, the EAP is a great resource. EAP coaching services can help you on your way toward being kinder to yourself.