



UNTANGLING SELF-COMPASSION

Why does it always seem to be easier to feel compassion towards others than ourselves? They are human and we are human, yet we may hold ourselves to higher (and more impossible) standards for being.

Well, if you've ever felt this way, you aren't alone. Researcher, Dr. Kristin Neff studies self-compassion, because it is such a complicated experience and practice. Let's untangle what she believes are the 3 components behind self-compassion, so we can help ourselves practice this skill.

1 SELF-KINDNESS VS. SELF-JUDGEMENT

Our society paints the picture of adults having their lives together, figured out, and in sync, when the reality is that many of us have no idea what we are doing, we are just learning as we go. That's part of being a human! So, instead of criticizing ourselves for not living up to impossibly set expectations, what if we acknowledge our struggle as part of the human condition and ask ourselves, what do I need to cope with what is in front of me?

2 COMMON HUMANITY VS. ISOLATION

While our experiences are as unique as we are, it's important to remember that they do not need to be faced alone. As humans, we look to belong but worry that if we do not "fit the mold" we will not be accepted. With these worries in mind, it might feel easier to isolate ourselves. Remember how powerful it is to hear someone say, "Oh! I've felt that way too!" or to hear about someone else's experience and realize that you are not the only one struggling. You are human, and to be human is to encounter struggles.

3 MINDFULNESS VS. OVER-IDENTIFICATION

Our thoughts/feelings/experiences are part of us, but do not define us. It may be tempting to try and avoid what is brewing within, but it's important to compassionately remind ourselves that at the end of a busy day, they will still be there. With that in mind, it can be helpful to engage in mindful practices to acknowledge and cope with these aspects of ourselves. Just make sure to take a deep breath and remember that these are here to help inform us of how we are feeling, what we may need to attend to, and to help remind us that we are in fact human. Treat them (and yourself) with care.