



***"Through self-compassion we become an inner ally  
instead of an inner enemy."***

Kristin Neff, PhD

## **RELATING TO YOURSELF WITH COMPASSION**

**WE NEED TO LEARN HOW TO BE 'WITH' OUR PAIN LONG ENOUGH TO RESPOND WITH CARE AND KINDNESS**

Mindful Self-compassion provides scientifically proven methods to help breakthrough anxiety, depression, and more. This worksheet provides a tangible method to be kind to yourself, especially during hard times - in ways you'd treat a friend who is going through difficulties, a major failure or is feeling inadequate.

### **HOW DO I TREAT A FRIEND?**

What are you currently struggling with? Or what big concern are you dealing with that you want to focus on?

Visualize times in life, when you've had a friend or family member who was struggling in a similar way (if not specifically, perhaps in general terms felt inadequate, suffering, heartbroken, rejected, or suffered a loss). Describe.

How did you respond to your friends/family in these situations? What did you say? How did you say it?

If you didn't get a chance to say what you wanted to them, what do you wish you said? Or ways you wanted to help?

How have you been treating yourself with what you are currently struggling with (as identified in first question)? What have you been saying to yourself? Have you been overly-permissive or harsh? Understanding, curious, kind, or critical?

Take a few moments to close your eyes and feel into the memories of offering kindness to friends and family. Describe what you are most proud of in the way you treat others and how you are able to offer compassion, kindness, and love.

Now, think about various times in life when you were struggling. How do you typically respond to yourself in these situations? What do you say to yourself? What tone do you use? What actions do you take? What choices do you make?

Free-write what you notice in the differences between how you treat others when they are struggling and how you treat yourself. Do you notice any patterns?

### **HOW MAY I RELATE TO MYSELF WITH MORE PRESENCE AND KINDNESS FOR EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING?**

**PRESENCE (MINDFULNESS)** Continuing with your current struggle as identified above, describe ways you may be lost in the story line of the situation and running away with it. Are you looping, replaying details, is it all you can think about?

See if you can acknowledge the pain involved at this point in time. Describe the painful and difficult emotions you feel. Take the time now to locate these feelings in your body. Label the emotions and describe any areas of tension and pain.

Validate the difficulty of this situation, the way you would for a friend. *For example, "I can understand why you'd be feeling really disappointed and frightened right now - you are going through too much all at once."* What validates this for yourself?

**CONNECTED (COMMON HUMANITY)** Describe ways you may be feeling isolated and alone by this situation you are in. What beliefs do you have associated with being alone? *For example, are you assuming that if you had been perfect this wouldn't have happened? Are you telling yourself you are burdened with failures, pain, rejection or unlucky more than others.*

Remind yourself of the common humanity of the situation. The reality is, failures, disappointments, screw-ups, and even bad luck are part of being human - whether we like it or not. How would you say this to a friend so they understand they are not alone? *For example, "It makes sense to feel rejected right now and that stinks. I've felt rejected before too," or "I wish rejection never happened, especially to good people."*

How may you offer wisdom to yourself? How can you learn from this experience for self-improvement?

Now, write down ways you may be judging or beating yourself up for what happened. Are you being harsh and taking on too much responsibility for someone else's actions?

Finally, offer yourself words of kindness in a gentle, supportive, mentoring, wise, nurturing way. *For example, "I realize how disappointing this is and I'm here to support you through this the best way I can."*