

5 Keys to Cultivate Self-Compassion



**Compassion becomes a stable state nurtured by the practices of loving kindness, friendliness and consideration.
It is a quality that grows with time and attention.**

Awareness – Remember everything changes; nothing remains the same. Every moment becomes an opportunity to welcome something new. Practice: Ask yourself, “What am I focused upon?” “What am I feeling?” “Is my focus causing harm or helping?” “What would be a more generous outlook on this situation?” “What would I say to a dear friend in the same circumstance?”

Open Heartedness – The heart opens, like a flower, in the presence of warmth. Openness is accompanied by an attitude of allowing. Our heart opens when we give love and receive love. If you feel unable to extend loving kindness to yourself, then give it to another. Practice: Breathe openness and love into your heart. Feel appreciation and dwell upon this feeling until you experience a softening and warmth in your chest.

Choosing – No matter what, you always have the ability to choose your focus, attitude and how you interpret what's happening. Decide, over and over, to hold yourself, another, a situation or an experience with compassion. Practice: Set an intention at the start of your day to choose kindness – kindness in words, deeds, actions and perceptions. See through loving eyes the most benevolent interpretation you can imagine.

Self-Acceptance – Set aside judgment, resistance and demands that you be different than you are. Practice: follow each negative self-statement with the phrase: “and that's OK.”

Forgiveness – All healing requires self-forgiveness. Forgiveness is an act of humble acknowledgment that you missed your intended mark, that you are human and fallible. The effect of forgiveness is your emotional energy returns to neutral or positive. It needn't be earned, nor granted from others. You are responsible for granting it or denying it. Practice: Say, “May I be free. May I fully forgive myself. May all beings be forgiven. May peace hold me now.” Repeat for 5-10 minutes until you notice a shift.