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## **Self-Criticism Awareness & Self-Compassion Activity**

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### **Noticing Self-Criticism**

The first step towards changing the way to treat yourself is to notice when you are being self-critical. Try to be as accurate as possible, noting your inner speech verbatim. Try to soften the critical voice and reframe the observations made by your inner critic in a friendly, positive way. If you're having trouble thinking of what words to use, imagine what a compassionate friend might say to you in this situation.

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The purpose of this activity is to help you become more familiar with what happens when your critical voice gets engaged and reflect on how it affects you. If you can remember a time when your mind was being critical, take a moment to answer the following questions.

- What types of things do you typically criticize yourself for (appearance, intelligence, career, parenting, etc.)?
- What type of language do you use with yourself when you make a mistake?
- How do you say these things? What does your internal voice sound like? Does it remind you of someone?
- What are the negative consequences for you speaking to yourself in this manner?
- How could you reframe your language to be more kind, supportive, and understanding, to remember that you are human?
- As you go through your day, notice when you're using harsh or unkind language with yourself, and then try to reframe your language so that it is more compassionate.



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**Self-Compassion Activities:**

- List the ways you are compassionate and understanding towards a friend struggling. Next, write down how many of these acts you can apply to yourself.
- Write a love letter to yourself, filled with kindness, compassion, care and gratitude for who you are, and all the things you do.
- Self-Compassion Break (adopted from Kristen Neff and Chris Germer) This exercise is called the self-compassion break, and it's something you can do anytime during the day or at night when you need a little self-compassion. To practice this exercise, you need to call up a little suffering. Think about a situation in your life right now that is difficult for you or causing you stress.

Call the situation to mind and see if you can feel the stress and emotional discomfort in your body. Now, say to yourself:

- This is a moment of suffering. That's mindfulness. Other options include:
  - This hurts.
  - Ouch.
  - This is stress.

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- Suffering is a part of life . That's common humanity. Other options include:
  - Other people feel this way.
  - I'm not alone.
  - We all struggle in our lives.

Now, put your hands over your heart, feel the warmth of your hands and the gentle touch of your hands on your chest. Or adopt the soothing touch you discovered felt right for you.

- May I be kind to myself. You can also ask yourself, "What do I need to hear right now to express kindness to myself?" Is there a phrase that speaks to you in your particular situation, such as:
  - May give myself the compassion that need
  - May accept myself as am
  - May learn to accept myself as am
  - May forgive myself.
  - May be strong.
  - May be patient



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This practice can be used any time of day or night and will help you remember to evoke the three aspects of self-compassion when you need it most.