

Developing self-compassion: How to show yourself some love

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(HealthDay)—A lot of importance is placed on developing self-esteem

to create emotional well-being and to quiet the inner critic that causes people to doubt themselves. But even more essential to emotional wellness might be self-compassion—extending to yourself the same feelings of empathy and concern that you show others.

Self-compassion leads to contentment and offers a kind of immunity against negative influences like fear, according to researcher Kristin Neff, associate professor of educational psychology at the University of Texas at Austin.

More than [self-esteem](#), [self-compassion](#) can soothe you when you're upset, help you gain perspective, and allow you to accept your faults. With that mindset, you can flourish.

Neff has identified three important elements of self-compassion:

- Self-kindness: This simply means being understanding with yourself, rather than judgmental.
- Feeling connected with others in life: This is what Neff calls "common humanity."
- Mindfulness: This is often described as viewing a situation in [real time](#) without coloring it with "what ifs?"

Self-compassion doesn't depend on your reaching ideal and possibly unrealistic goals, but from caring for yourself as you are, with your own balance of weak and strong points.

People with self-compassion experience less anxiety and are more comfortable in their own skin.

What's more, if you're a mom or dad, having self-compassion can help you feel more at ease with your parenting skills, which will benefit your kids. Other research shows that children of parents who are less

judgmental about their parenting abilities report fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety.

More information: Read more from Kristin Neff about the importance of [self-compassion](#).

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