

Self-compassion isn't a luxury

BY KARYN DAVIES



With self-acceptance, we have the ability to choose compassion and forgiveness over anger and self-hatred. — Michelle Cruz-Rosado

What naturally comes to mind when you think of *compassion*? You may think of times when you've helped someone who is vulnerable or struggling; or perhaps an image of caring for animals surfaces for you.

Family caregivers extend compassion to others in multiple ways- but what about compassion for self?

For some, the notion of self-compassion is a new idea. You may not have had opportunity to learn that being kind, considerate and gentle with yourself is an important part of life. Self-compassion is a way of thinking and living that can be learned and cultivated. You are never too old to begin practicing compassion for yourself, even in small ways.

“First and foremost, if we maintain healthy emotional boundaries and direct love and kindness inwards, we are taking care of ourselves and secondly we are giving a subliminal message to others about how we wish to be treated“. — Christopher Dines

Some ideas for strengthening your self-compassion practice:

- Read Christopher Germer`s work. I like his book *The Mindful Path to self-compassion*, which offers practical tips as well as thorough information on the concept of compassion. <http://www.mindfulselfcompassion.org/>
- Be gentle with your suffering. Remember that you are deserving of kindness, just as your family and friends are. When you feel upset, try saying something kind to yourself, such as “I am hurting right now, and my feelings are okay`. Try and stay connected to your breathing as you say it.
- Listen to a guided meditation from Kristin Neff, who offers hearty nourishment for the spirits. <http://self-compassion.org/category/exercises/>