

PRACTICING SELF- COMPASSION

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WHAT IS SELF-COMPASSION?

“if your compassion does not include yourself, it is incomplete”

- Jack Kornfield

- Kristin Neff leading researcher - first to measure and operationally **define** self-compassion. Neff and Germer (2017) described self-compassion as:
- directed inward. The literal meaning of the word compassion is to “*suffer with*” (Lewis & Short, 1879).
- consider how we treat a friend whom is suffering or struggling, and apply the same care and support towards yourself.
- self-compassion is being gentle, kind, and understanding towards myself.

- Kimberly Wulfert (2018) on self compassion: “Self-compassion as a **tool** is a process you can use to **awaken** a nurturing place inside you that can be **comforting** and **validating** when you are doubting or criticizing yourself.....[it] is a **natural** part of human beings, but when a child doesn't receive it, or can't receive it, and don't see it role-modeled or addressed, it isn't awakened in them”.

"Unlike self-criticism, which asks
if you're good enough,
self-compassion asks
what's good for you?"

- Kristin Neff

becomingwhoyouare.net

Why Practice Self-Compassion?

- Warren, Smeets, & Neff (2016) identified self-criticism is a risk factor for poor sense of wellbeing, destructive to interpersonal relationships, and mental health issues:
- Self-criticism is the practice of “constant and harsh self-scrutiny, and evaluation” (p. 19).
- **Shame:** I am a bad person or fundamentally inadequate.

SOMEONE ELSE MAKES A MISTAKE

@beth evans

hey it's okay you did your
best and we all mess up
sometimes!



WHEN I MAKE A MISTAKE

THIS CAN NEVER BE FORGIVEN
AND I AM NEVER INTERACTING
WITH ANOTHER PERSON EVER
AGAIN BECAUSE I AM



ONLY ONE
THING NOW -
SHAME

- Warren et al. (2016) identified self-compassion as a **resilience** factor:
- promotes well-being
- supports healthy relationships improves outcomes for treatment
- reduces self-criticism

{ Self-Compassion } vs. { Self-Criticism }



source:

<https://www.njlifehacks.com/self-compassion-versus-self-criticism/>

- Neff (2017) discussed the research findings on **benefits** of SC:
- increased overall life satisfaction, happiness, motivation, sense of self-worth, feelings of competence
- less stress, rumination, anxiety, depression not as fearful of failure
- more accepting of our body

How Does it Work?

- Neff (2003) identified **3 components** to self-compassion practice:
 1. Self-kindness
 2. Humanity
 3. Mindfulness



1. Self-Kindness

- Neff (2017) described self-kindness as, “the tendency to be supportive and sympathetic toward ourselves when noticing personal shortcomings as opposed to harshly judging ourselves. It entails relating to our mistakes and failings with tolerance and understanding, and recognizing that perfection is unattainable” (p. 2).

- self-kindness is expressed through warmth and unconditional acceptance (Warren et al., 2016).
- “lovingkindness turned inward is self-kindness” (Neff & Germer, 2017, sess. 3, p. 1).
- Neff and Germer (2017) suggested exercises for:
 - lovingkindness phrases
 - gestures of self-kindness: soothing touch

- Examples of **lovingkindness phrases**:
- **I wish to** feel accepted.
- **May I be** safe from inner and outer dangers. **I wish to** be loved as I love.
- **May I be** well in body and mind.
- **May I be** at ease and happy.

- Chris Germer (2017) explained **3** universal **reminders** of self-compassion:
- soothing touch
- gentle vocalizations
- physical warmth



Hugs Are Good!

- Hugging increases levels of the “love hormone” oxytocin, which positively affect your health.
- A 20-second hug reduces the harmful physical effects of stress, including its impact on your blood pressure and heart rate.
- A 10-second hug a day may fight infections, boost your immune system, ease depression, and lessen fatigue.
- Wrapping your arms around **yourself** sends a strong message to your body and your brain: **I’ve got you, I love you, and you are okay.**
- **Hugging yourself** provides the **same benefits** as if you were hugging someone else **AND** it is a quick and free act of self-care. (<https://www.starfishfamilyservices.org/blog/page/2/>)



“We give ourselves kindness not to feel better,
but *because* we feel bad ” - Kristin Neff



source:

<https://exploringyourmind.com/anosognosia-inability-realize-ones-inabilities/>

“My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can **only** be human **together.**” - Desmond Tutu



source:

<https://www.dianefrenchart.com/>

2. Humanity

- struggle and suffering is part of what makes us human
- we are born into and exist within a context
- assumptions about others' suffering and experiences lend to our isolation



- **self-pity** - “excessive, self-absorbed unhappiness over one’s own troubles” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2018):
- *isolates* us
- **self-compassion** is recognizing all people are imperfect:
- *connects* us
- *through connection we reduce feelings of isolation*

3. Mindfulness



“Mindfulness is a way of befriending ourselves and our experiences.”

- John Kabat-Zinn

- Germer & Neff (2017) on **mindfulness**:
- awareness of *present moment experience* with acceptance or without judgement
- it is the *foundation* of self-compassion practice
- first we must become aware of our *moment of suffering*
- mindfulness practice develops ability to *be present with acceptance*

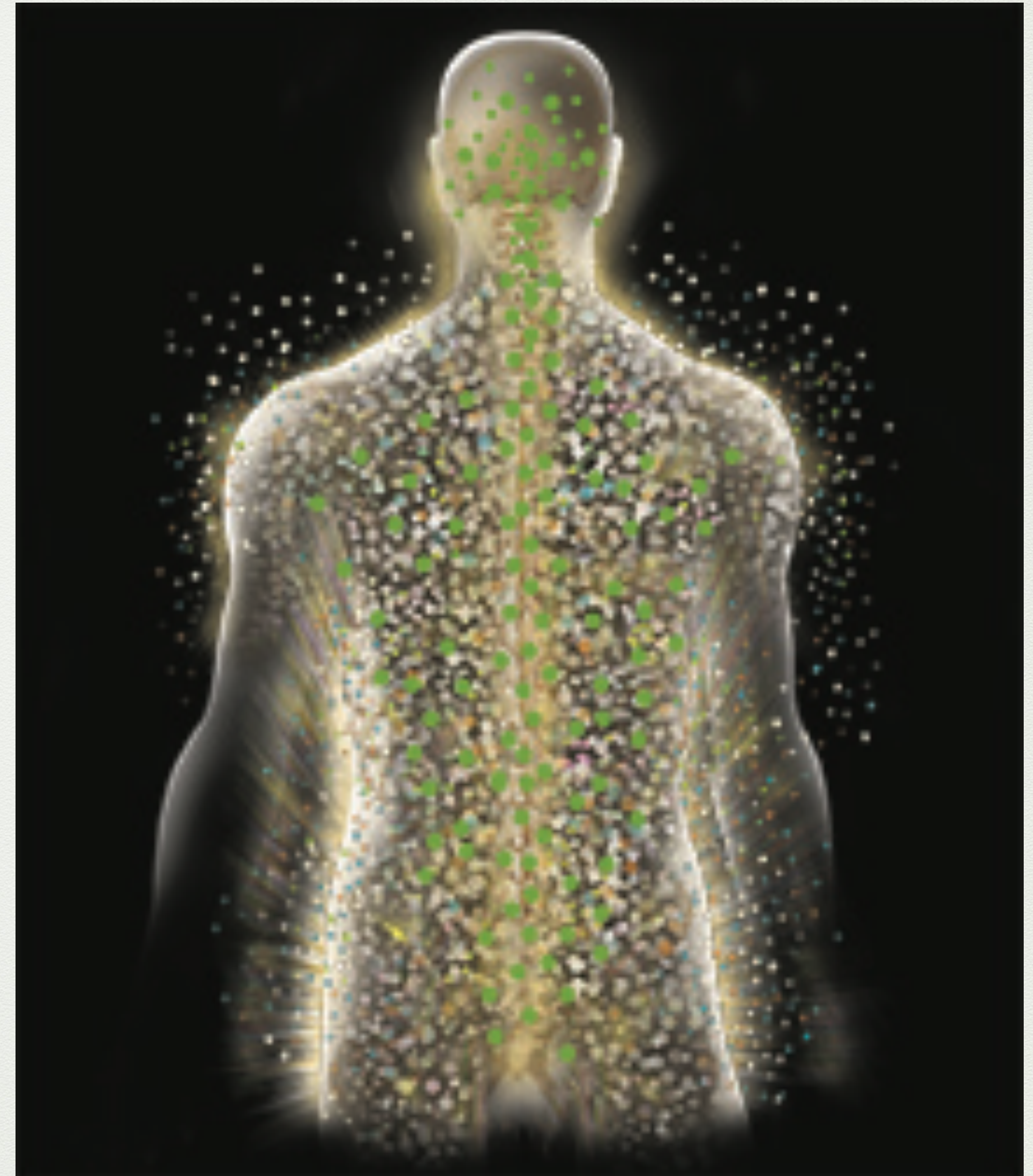
How Mindfulness Empowers Us: An Animation Narrated by Sharon
Salzberg

[https://youtu.be/
vzKryaN44ss](https://youtu.be/vzKryaN44ss)

- Suffering = Pain + Resistance
- What we Resist Persists



- What we Feel we can Heal



“Suffering leads us to beauty the way thirst leads us to water” -
Jane Hirshfield



*I fully and freely forgive
and accept myself with love.*



28 Day Autumn Spiritual Challenge

Photo from DiscoverYourWorld/Facebook

Open Hearted Musings

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