

Week of 2/14/2021

As a follow up to last week's live virtual sessions, I wanted to highlight another "doorway" into mindfulness practice that has a strong evidence base and resonates with many people (though certainly not all!). **Self-compassion** highlights: 1) mindful awareness, 2) common humanity, and 3) self-kindness. Over the next week, see if you might 1) identify moments of challenge, 2) reflect on the fact that similar moments of suffering are experienced by many others, and 3) practice expressing self-kindness in whatever way feels right to you (eg, "May I learn to accept myself as I am" or a gesture such as holding a hand over the heart)

Daily Practice:

Formal: Self-Compassion Break

(Written: <https://self-compassion.org/exercise-2-self-compassion-break/>)

(Audio Recording:

https://self-compassion.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/self-compassion.break__01-cleanedbydan.mp3)

Integrated: In a moment of challenge, consider simply holding a hand over your heart, taking three breaths, or being kind to yourself in one small way, whatever feels right to you.

Note: practices such as the Self-Compassion Break are not intended to make the challenge or suffering disappear, but rather to allow space to hold in kindness the inevitable suffering that shows up in the practice of Medicine

Week of 2/21/2021

"We shouldn't lose sight of the main point, that it is not a matter of creating compassion but a process of just allowing it to occur. Just like water is wet, or a flame is hot, our basic nature is inherently compassionate. Developing our compassion is a matter of allowing it to grow forth, to cultivate something already present within us." from Medicine and Compassion, by Chogyi Nyima Rinpoche & David Shlim, MD.

We started our time together introducing mindfulness, and then transitioned to the practices of receiving compassion/care ourselves through these practices. May this quote serve as an inspiration for the start of the final few months of our work together: relational mindfulness and extending compassion.

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Week of 2/28/2021

How do we practice mindful listening? This means listening to another's words as fully as possible. Often the mind wanders when listening or perhaps starts planning what it wants to say in reply. Over this next week, I would invite each of you to begin our exploration of relational mindfulness by practicing mindful listening, perhaps once per day. Maybe with a family member or friend. Maybe with a patient or colleague. Just like our breath awareness meditations, consider the other person's words as an anchor for this practice - returning over and over again with a gentle sense of kindness for yourself along the way.

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