# Self-Compassion 101

Let’s talk about self-compassion for a moment. What is it, really? And how can self-compassion improve our lives? Self-compassion benefits our relationships with ourselves and with those around us. It also helps improve workplace well-being. Over the last year, self-care and self-compassion have been on top of my mind (like many others). I’ve been fortunate to have been able to take the time to do a “deep dive” and I’ve gathered some gold nuggets that I want to share with you!

Self-compassion is defined as “is extending compassion to one’s self in instances of perceived inadequacy, failure, or general suffering” (Wiki). Rather than ignoring our pain or being critical of ourselves, we can choose to step into the act of self-compassion. In therapy, I often ask my client’s what’s going on in their minds. Is there a voice that criticizes what you do? Do you often reflect on your day and analyze conversations? And specifically, your part? Not only does this “negative and critical voice” cause anxiety, but it also isn’t helpful. At all. Let me repeat that. Your critical voice does NOT help you (in most cases). Sometimes, it’s important to learn and do better, but I’ve found that most of the people I talk with realize it’s damaging. So, let’s get right into it!

Kristin Neff breaks down self-compassion into three main elements: self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness. The first two are pretty much self-explanatory (although we could get into them as well). Today, I’m going to focus on mindfulness. Cultivating mindfulness can be done throughout your day. Just a short moment, that you repeat many times. It takes practice. Focusing on the present moment and bringing a sense of calm and inner state of wellbeing. You might find fulfillment and peace, despite the distractions of everyday life. It’s a little like “acceptance” but goes a bit deeper.

Simply pause what you are doing and notice where your attention is. Like I mentioned, it’s usually in the past (or in the future). Bring your attention to what is happening right now. Take a deep breath, or two. And focus on your breath. Feel it move in and out of your nose or mouth. Now, check in with your five senses. What do you see? Smell? Feel? Hear? Taste? How do you feel? This literally, took me 2 minutes. These short moments can be sprinkled throughout your day, wherever you are, and in whatever situation you’re in. Create a habit.