



## Kristin Neff: The Yin and Yang of Self-Compassion



Kristin Neff is an Associate Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Texas at Austin, and a pioneer in the field of self-compassion research. She is also co-founder and Board President of the Center for Mindful Compassion, and the author of several books. Explore the active and action-oriented side of self-compassion.

**TOP EMBODIMENT TIP:** Physical touch is one of the most powerful ways to give yourself self-compassion.

### What is Self-Compassion? **Treating yourself like you would treat a close friend who was struggling**

- Using the skills you've already developed (being warm, supportive, kind) and turning them inwards to yourself.
- It is normal to feel awkward at first, but eventually that becomes our habitual place.
- 3 components: **Kindness, Mindfulness, Common Humanity** (shared connection with others)
  1. **Mindfulness** (vs. over-identification): being in a balanced state, being present with feelings as they are, gives us space or a wider perspective.
  2. **Kindness** (vs. self-judgement): self-care, understanding, a desire to alleviate suffering (including the motivation to help ourselves).
    - o 75% of people are kinder to others than to themselves. "What do I need right now to take care of myself?"
  3. **Common Humanity**: sense of connectedness, recognizing it's part of the human experience (it's not just me). All suffering is worthy of compassion.

### Yin and Yang: Coming Into Balance; Both are Needed

- Yin: yielding, nurturing, tender caring, allows us to heal
  - Loving Connected Presence i.e. Loving (Kindness) Connected (Common Humanity) Presence (Mindfulness) where Kindness is comforting and soothing ourselves; Common Humanity is reassuring ourselves we're not alone; Mindfulness is being present with and validating our pain.
- Yang: goal-oriented, active; taking action to alleviate suffering, protecting, providing, motivating, fierce self-compassion
  - Brave Empowered Clarity as Brave (Kindness) Empowered (Common Humanity) Clarity (Mindfulness), where Kindness is drawing boundaries; Common Humanity is finding strength in numbers; Mindfulness is seeing clearly and speaking the truth.
- A caring force comes about when Yin (tender caring) and Yang (fierce self-compassion) are balanced.
- Self-compassion is linked to well-being, strength, resilience, healthier behaviors and greater motivation.
- Fierce Self-Compassion and Constructive Anger energizes us to take action, provides focus and sense of power, suppresses fear, and communicates something is wrong.

### Resources

- ❖ **Books:** *Fierce Self-Compassion*
- ❖ **Website:** <https://self-compassion.org/>
- ❖ **Social:** [Facebook: selfcompassion](#)



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