



WISE PATHS TO THE HEART

2. To Care For Yourself to Care For Others

BUDDHIST MIND SCIENCE
ACTIVATING YOUR POTENTIAL

An FPMT Introductory Course



To Care for Yourself

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A Kind Attitude Towards Oneself

Self-Kindness

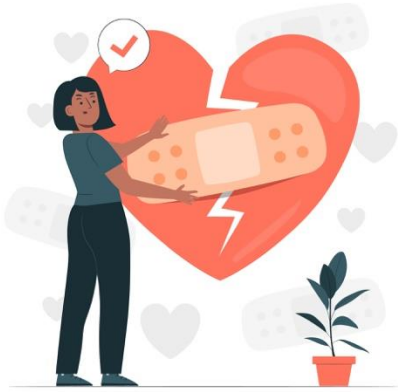
Sense of Common Humanity

Mindfulness

A warm and comprehensive attitude towards oneself

Recognition of limitations and difficulties as part of being human

Awareness that is open to distressing thoughts and feelings with acceptance



Harsh Self-Criticism

A harsh and self-judgmental attitude towards oneself

Sense of Isolation

A feeling of separation in one's limitations and difficult experiences

Over-Identification

Being caught up in distressing thoughts and feelings, even identifying with them

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What Self-Compassion is Not



Self-esteem

Based upon comparisons with others; linked to an evaluation and a sense of superiority, success, or standing out



Self-pity

Becoming absorbed in and reifying one's problems, distancing from acknowledging that others have difficulties too



Self-indulgence

Engaging in unwholesome pleasant conducts as a misunderstood way to take care of oneself



Some of Its Benefits



Self-compassion **diminishes**:

- Risk of depression and anxiety
- Rumination
- Dysfunctional perfectionism



Some of Its Benefits



Self-compassion **increases**:

- The capacity to deal with negative emotions
- The sense of happiness, life satisfaction, and optimism
- Acceptance of personal defects
- The sense of self-worth
- The tendency to accept mistakes and apologize
- The ability to cope with difficulties and traumas
- Compassion, altruism, and ability to forgive others
- And it has a positive impact on relationships





Practice Time

To Care for Oneself



COMMON STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP SELF-COMPASSION

- Thinking of the adverse tendencies that self-compassion counteracts, identify that stronger in you:
 - **Harsh Self-Criticism**: A harsh and self-judgmental attitude towards oneself
 - **Sense of Isolation**: A feeling of separation in one's limitations and difficult experiences
 - **Over-Identification**: Being caught up in distressing thoughts and feelings, even identifying with them



To Care for Oneself



COMMON STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP SELF-COMPASSION

- For that particular tendency, **explore some of the following common strategies** to deal with those adverse conditions and cultivate the components of self-compassion. **Think of a particular situation** in which you have being harsh, felt isolated, or caught up in distressing thoughts and feelings



Harsh Self-Criticism

Self-Kindness

- How would you treat or what would you say to comfort a friend in similar circumstances?
- Notice your positive qualities and your ability to learn and change
- Does putting yourself down helps you to amend things or improve?
- If you have a healthy regret, is self-punishment helpful?

Sense of Isolation

Sense of Common Humanity

- Reflect on whether or not others have limitations and difficulties too
- Notice that also others have feelings of inadequacy, failures, defects, and so forth
- Rejoice in your virtues and those of others

Over-Identification

Mindfulness

- Notice the distressing thoughts and feelings that arise with a caring and accepting attitude, noticing that they point out to something that needs to be taken care of
- Think of possible ways to take care of this, focusing especially on the inner causes and conditions





To Care For Others to Care For Yourself

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A Compassionate Attitude Towards All

- In Buddhism **compassion** is cultivated towards **all sentient beings**, which includes oneself
- Practices aimed at recognizing one's own suffering, its causes, and to remove these from one's mind, can be understood as **self-kindness** and **self-compassion**
- Oneself is seen as a carrier of the **potential of becoming a Buddha**, which infuses a sense of self-worth that goes beyond its conventional sense



A Compassionate Attitude Towards All

- All beings are seen as carriers of the same potential and also as victims of the confusion that feeds afflictions and actions that obscure such potential
- Overall, this gives a sense of commonness that goes deeper and further than the conventional sense of common humanity



Compassion is Not Necessarily Pleasing Others

Compassion:

- Does not entail pleasing others, fulfilling all their wishes and needs; it may be even unpleasant for those who are their recipients
- Goes hand-by-hand with wisdom, which leads compassion to the best outcome possible, thinking in the long-run
- Neither entails that one should not take care of oneself or conclude that this is selfish, nor to let others take advantage of our willingness to act altruistically, sometimes even trying to make us feel guilty if we do not let them get away with it



Compassion in Buddhism

In Buddhism, compassion:

- Is grounded in the perception of the **fundamental equality** with others and directed towards all beings
- Is sustained upon the knowledge of the Four Truths of the Aryas and, therefore, **directed to all expressions of dukkha and its causes**, not just blatant suffering that triggers an emotional resonance on the subject who sees it (emotional empathy)
- Is **not just a feeling or an emotion**, is also the result of meditation and includes a cognitive component (wisdom)





Practice Time

Paving the Way for Warmheartedness



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FREEING YOURSELF FROM RESENTMENT

- Recall experiences in which others have caused you some harm—start with small grievances. Try to look at them with an open attitude and acceptance.
- Explore what was beneath these experiences; were there afflictions involved? Was the person in complete control of them?
- Can you identify unmet deep needs, fears or worries in this person?



Paving the Way for Warmheartedness



FREEING YOURSELF FROM RESENTMENT

- Does it make more sense to become resentful with this person, or to act towards the real cause, the afflictions?
- You may explore interdependence, all the circumstances that gathered together in that moment; was the action an unskillful way to fulfill their wish for happiness and not to suffer?



Paving the Way for Warmheartedness



FREEING YOURSELF FROM RESENTMENT

- If you lived the other person's life, could you be sure you would have acted in a different way?
- What helps you most you when others react to your wrongdoings? Caring attitudes and wisdom or resentment? You may try to apply the same towards this person. No one is born perfect. Sometimes, we expect too much of ourselves and others



Paving the Way for Warmheartedness



FREEING YOURSELF FROM RESENTMENT

- Bringing in the same kind and wise attitude that you may have with others in similar circumstances, try to release tension, relax, and be open to let go of harshness

