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In this article we look at self-compassion. We look at what it is, and why it's important - and detail 3 ways you can be more compassionate towards yourself.

And don't forget, last time we discussed 5 helpful ways to keep anxiety at bay. Click [here](#) to find out more.

Self-Compassion : 3 Rituals To Be More Compassionate To Yourself

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What is self-compassion, I hear you ask. Self-compassion is about acting with kindness (the same way you would towards someone you care about) when you are having a difficult time, or notice something you don't like about yourself. So often we tell ourselves to "get over it" or "get on with it"; or that we're too this or too that; and sometimes we even berate ourselves with inner talk such as "you're such an idiot". Instead of ignoring your pain, self-compassion teaches us to provide ourselves with care and comfort.

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Why is self-compassion so important?

Great second question, thanks for asking. Research demonstrates that self-compassion is important because it enables us to feel less stressed, less down and flat, and to suffer less while allowing us to do what's important to us and thrive. Specifically, self-compassion is linked to less anxiety and depression. Self-compassion also lowers levels of the stress hormone 'cortisol'. We gain more perspective on problems and we're less likely to feel isolated by our problems when we can be self-compassionate. We acknowledge and can deal more effectively with unwanted thoughts and emotions, and we have a higher 'emotional' intelligence with higher self-compassion. We rate our life satisfaction as being higher, we feel more optimistic, we're more curious and creative, and we feel more socially connected when we can be more compassionate to ourselves. Great benefits, aren't they?

How do I treat myself more compassionately?

Great final question. Below are three rituals to be more compassionate towards yourself.

1. Think about how you would treat someone you care about

When you become aware that you're treating yourself harshly, maybe you're calling yourself "stupid" or telling yourself that you "can't" do something, then consider what wise words you would say to someone you care about in the same situation. See if you can say that words to yourself, such as "It's okay, you're going through a tough time at the moment" or "It's okay to make mistakes, everyone makes mistakes".

2. Keep a 'Self-Compassion' journal

Keep a daily journal. Write down the challenging events that you've had during the day, and see if you can 're-frame' them through a process of self-compassion. After you've written your challenging events, take a deep breath, remind yourself that this is about being

compassionate towards yourself, and see if you can write a statement (or a few statements) about the events from a self-compassionate perspective.

3. Be aware, and change your critical self-talk

We all have an inner dialogue. This inner dialogue can be really helpful – it can remind us to look both ways before crossing the road, it can remind us that the handle of the saucepan is hot and we shouldn't touch it, it can also remind us to not say something that might be perceived as hurtful to someone else. However, our inner dialogue can also be critical. Notice when your inner dialogue is being critical, see if you can take a deep breath, and then 're-frame' the negative inner dialogue. For example, if your inner dialogue is telling you "Don't speak up, no-one is interested in what you've got to say", take a deep breath (or several), and then say to yourself "It's okay to have a voice" or "It's okay to be heard".

See if you can make the above rituals part of your everyday. Research shows that people who focus on self-compassion experience up to 80% less negativity in just two weeks of practice. Sounds worth trying, doesn't it?

However, if you're finding it difficult to be more compassionate towards yourself, then seeking professional assistance could be useful.

If you would like help in managing your thoughts, feelings or behaviours, please feel free to contact us on 0488 954 195, amanda@awakenpsychology.com.au or [click here](#)

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