

Self-Compassion Exercises

Cheat Sheet



Five short practices for turning your inner critic into an inner ally - without lowering a single standard.

1 NOTICE, WITHOUT DROWNING

See the hurt clearly and name it. You can't comfort a feeling you refuse to look at - and you don't have to sink into it either.

2 EVERYONE STRUGGLES

Failing and feeling not-enough are standard human equipment. You're having a common experience, not exposing a unique defect.

3 SPEAK LIKE YOU LOVE THE LISTENER

Use the tone you'd use with someone you love. You are the one listening, every hour of every day.

1 The Friend Test

HARSH SELF-TALK • 5 MIN



- Imagine a good friend brings you your exact situation, detail for detail.
- Write down what you would honestly say to them. Don't polish it.
- Now put your own name at the top and read it again, slowly.

THE POINT The gap between the two voices is the whole exercise. You already know how to be kind - you've just been exempting one person.

2 The Self-Compassion Break

IN THE MOMENT • 1 MIN



NOTICE *"Right now, this hurts."*
HUMAN *"Hurting is part of being a person."*
KIND *"Let me be gentle with myself while it does."*

HOW Rest a hand on your chest or cheek while you say the three lines. Warm pressure reads as safety to your nervous system.

3 The Do-Over Voice

DAILY REP • 30 SEC



- Catch one self-attack per day. Just one. *"Idiot. You always do this."*
- Redo it in a great coach's voice: same standard, zero contempt. *"Not your best pass. What's the adjustment?"*
- Say the redo out loud or on paper. The rep counts even when it feels fake.

THE POINT You're not lowering the bar. You're replacing the commentator.

4 The Compassionate Letter

DEEPER RESET • 10 MIN



- Set a ten-minute timer. Write to yourself from your kindest, wisest future self - the one who knows how this chapter turns out.
- Let them speak to the thing you're most ashamed of. What do they understand about it that today-you can't see yet?
- Sign it and keep it. Reread it on the days you'd never write it.

THE POINT Distance makes kindness easier to write - and just as real to receive.

5 The Common Humanity Reframe

FEELING ALONE IN IT • 2 MIN

- Name the feeling precisely. Not "bad" - "ashamed of how the meeting went."
- Picture specific strangers in it with you: someone replaying their own meeting on a bus, someone awake over the same worry three time zones away.
- Say: *"Thousands of people feel exactly this, tonight. I'm in crowded company."*

THE POINT Shame insists you're the exception. Specific company is the antidote.

MYTH BUSTER • FACT BOX

"Won't I get lazy?"

The fear: drop the whip and everything slides. The research points the other way. **Self-criticism doesn't improve performance - it improves hiding:** fewer risks, more stalling, mistakes covered up instead of corrected.

People who meet their own failures with kindness retry sooner and stay with hard goals longer - because failing stops being a verdict and goes back to being information.

Think of the best coach you've ever seen: high demands, zero cruelty. That combination is the whole trick - and you can run it on yourself.