
A self-compassion pause

A short pause for a hard moment. It has three parts and takes about a minute.

- 1 Notice that this is hard.** Say it simply, to yourself: "This is hard right now." "This hurts." "This is stress." You're naming it, not fixing it.
- 2 Remember you're not the only one.** "Other people feel this too." Struggling is part of being human. It doesn't mean something is wrong with you.
- 3 Offer yourself some kindness.** Rest a hand somewhere comforting: over your heart, on your cheek, or one hand holding the other. Ask, "What would I say to a good friend feeling this?", and say it to yourself. Or: "May I be kind to myself." "May I give myself what I need."

Finding your own words

The words need to feel honest. If kindness feels like too big a step, try "May I be a little gentler with myself", or simply "Of course this is hard." Phrases like these come from *mettā*, the Buddhist practice of loving-kindness.

If it feels uncomfortable

For some people, kindness towards themselves brings up sadness, or a sharp "I don't deserve this". That's common, and it usually eases with practice; Chris Germer calls it backdraft. It may be a part of you that doesn't trust kindness yet, and that part makes sense too. Go gently, and bring it to therapy if it's strong.

My words for a hard moment

Based on the self-compassion break described by Kristin Neff, whose work sets out three parts of self-compassion: mindfulness, common humanity and self-kindness.