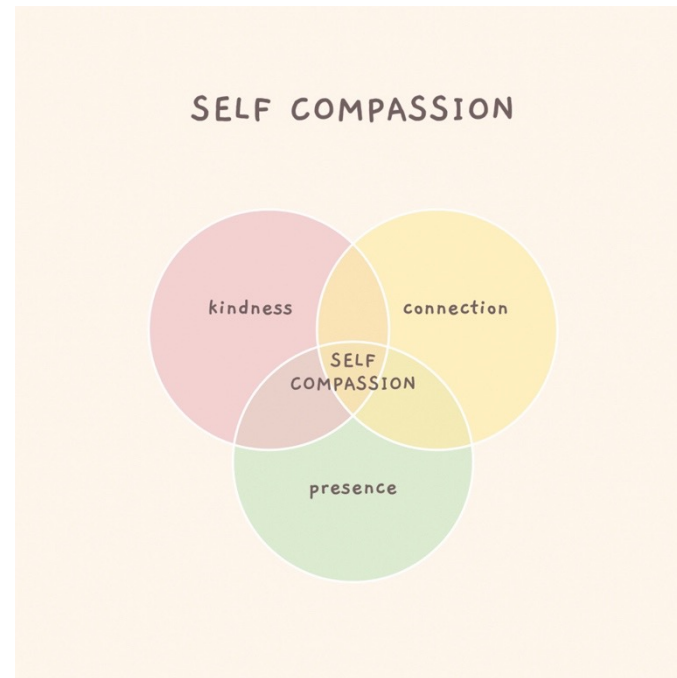


Practices for being kind to yourself



Knowledge, attitudes, skills and habits for making self-compassion easier



It's natural to feel compassion towards others when they are struggling, much harder though to feel compassion towards yourself when you are.

Learning to be more compassionate towards yourself means recognising your personal struggling, accepting it, and supporting yourself through the ups and downs you face in your daily life.

I have experienced how empowering self-compassion practices can be, and how pivotal they are to individual wellbeing and personal effectiveness. Often though, people don't understand what to do or how to start to become more compassionate towards themselves.

These thirty practices, applied routinely over the months, and embedded over the years, will enable your gradual change and personal development. Training courses are very necessary to equip people with skills and strategies for dealing with today's workplace challenges, these practices are different from, and complementary to, professional training approaches. They work from the inside out, they change your attitude, they empower you to create a strong foundation of self-compassion, and to keep yourself anchored there.

Over time, you will really notice the difference these practices make. And others around you will experience the benefit of that too.

Maureen Bowes
Author & Executive Coach

How to use Practices for being kind to yourself

There are three main challenges arising from personal development and attitudinal change of this kind:

- **The gradual nature of change**
Lasting change is most often gradual so if you don't keep this going, you won't appreciate the change.
- **Invisibility**
No one sees how much or how little personal development you are doing. It's often private, reflective and not discussed.
- **Accountability**
If you don't hold yourself accountable in some way, it's likely your practice will slip.

Team approach

All these challenges can be overcome through a collaborative approach within a team.

- Take one practice each week, remain aware of the practice and apply it whenever you can throughout the week.
- Note down any insights you have from your personal practice.
- Share your insights at team meetings.
- Follow up with more in-depth discussion when possible.

Accountability increases when you dedicate even a short amount of time on the agenda to share these insights. Team members will know they are supposed to contribute to the process and are likely to become increasingly willing over the weeks. Patient persistence works well.

Individual approach

- Take one practice each week, remain aware of the practice and apply it whenever you can.
- Note down any insights you have from your personal use.

Suggestions

There are thirty practices. You can choose how frequently to use them. For example:

1 each week for 30 weeks over an academic year.

1 each day during your working week. Roughly enough for a half-term.

Repeat for the next half-term or academic year. See how you change with each round.

Include one practice, carefully selected, for each Inset Day.

You choose what order

Follow the sequence from 1 – 30.

Select the practices randomly.

Choose the one that is relevant for the day / week.

The practices appear simple, but they are a great catalyst for more in-depth discussion about values, difference, vulnerability, stress, interoception, self-worth, connecting, regulating, and much more.

This isn't a fixed training programme, think of this as personal development through the seasons or school terms. It's gradual, surprisingly nuanced, and lasting. When being kinder to yourself becomes a routine, your quality of life changes.

Practices for being kind to yourself



- Remember those around you who you trust.
- Reach out to them when your life is tough.
- We often feel better for talking.



Practices for being kind to yourself



- Simply notice what's happening.
- Notice like an observer.
- Keep finishing the sentence 'I'm noticing....'



don't judge what
you notice

Practices for being kind to yourself



- Prioritise your wellbeing. (It's not selfish.)
- When you feel well, you function well.
- Consider how everyone benefits from your wellness.



Practices for being kind to yourself



- Choose some kind thoughts.
- What do you need to hear to soothe away your concerns?
- Reassure yourself with truthful, kind words.



Practices for being kind to yourself



- Label your feelings.
- Get familiar with their light and shadow.
- It's a start to understanding and accepting them.

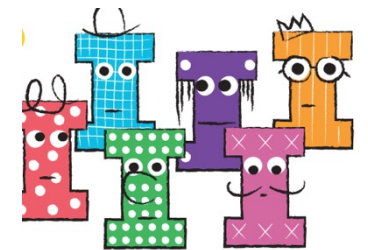


don't ignore them

Practices for being kind to yourself



- Express yourself – words, images, textures, sounds.
- Create something with your hands.
- Do this just for you.



don't judge or
compare

Practices for being kind to yourself

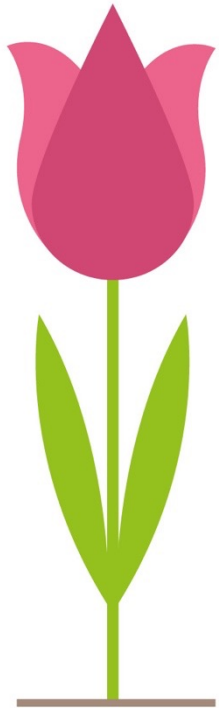


- Greet people.
- Smile.
- They'll feel recognised, acknowledged, valued.

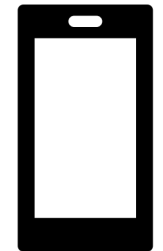


don't be too
preoccupied to
notice others

Practices for being kind to yourself

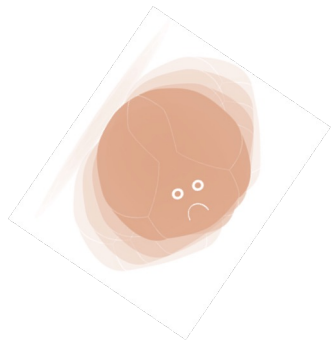
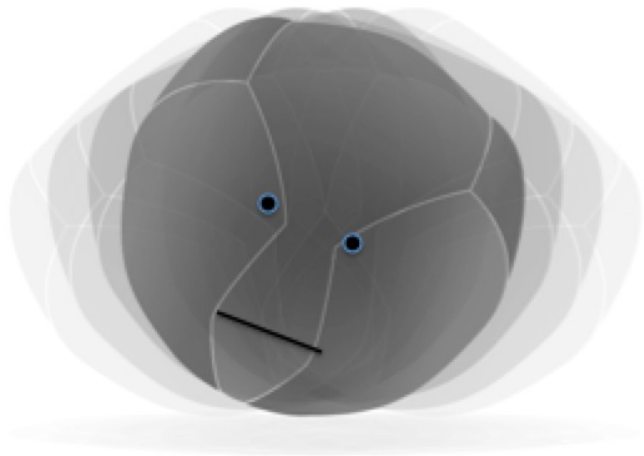


- Look at nature.
- What is nature revealing to you today?
- A source of inspiration.



take a break

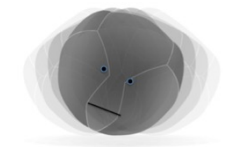
Practices for being kind to yourself



- Meet the voices in your head.
- Cruel-me (inner bully), vulnerable-me kind-me (inner coach).
- Which one are you listening to?

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don't believe the
bully

Practices for being kind to yourself



- Every night, lie in bed and think about what you appreciate from the day,
- whatever is good in your life.
- Fall asleep listing everything you're grateful for...

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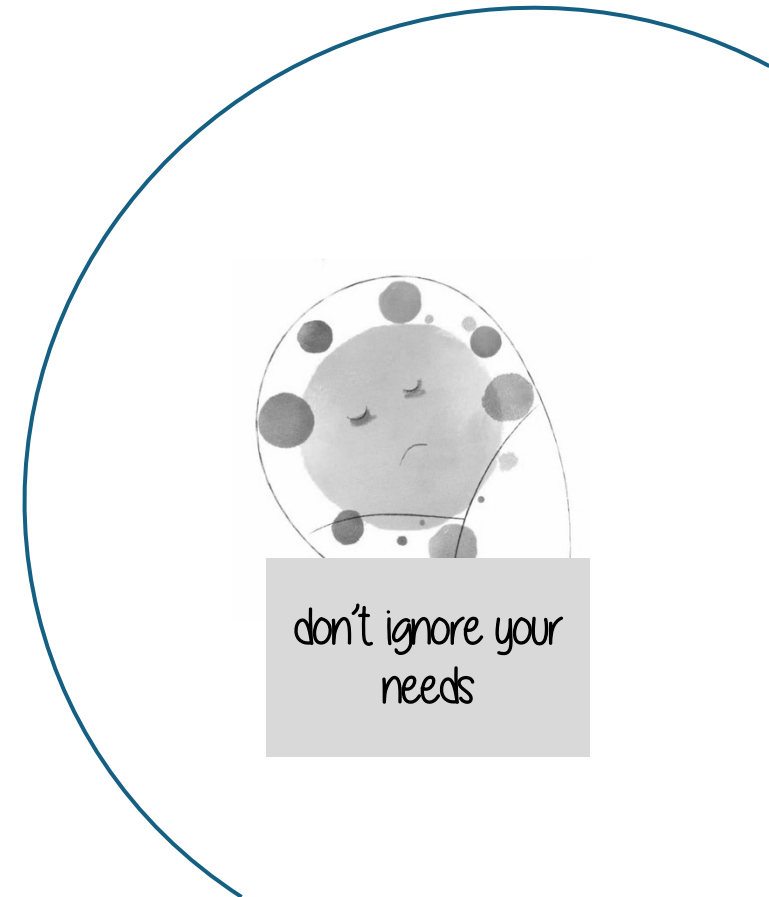


not your worries

Practices for being kind to yourself



- Notice what your body is trying to tell you.
- Listen to what your body needs.
- Respond to what your body needs.



Practices for being kind to yourself

No matter what they tell you, most people have:

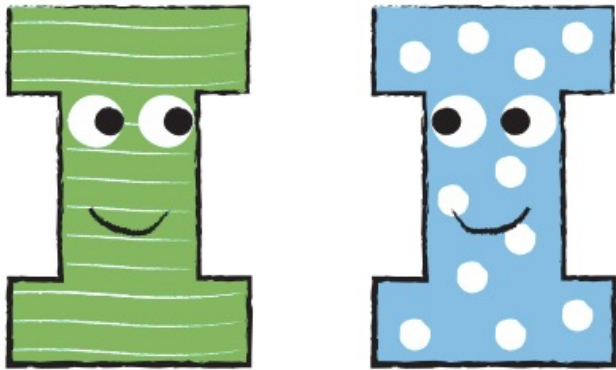
- Cried themselves to sleep
- Worried about what they look like
- Felt stupid
- Got things wrong
- Worried about their body
- Upset someone they like
- Been bothered what others think about them
- Been frightened by someone or something
- Felt left out
- Had scary thoughts
- Worried they are not normal

- Feeling imperfect is most people's default state.
- This is normal.
- Others feel imperfect too.



you're not alone

Practices for being kind to yourself



- We're all different.
- Extend kindness when you notice difference.
- Extend kindness to yourself, in your difference.

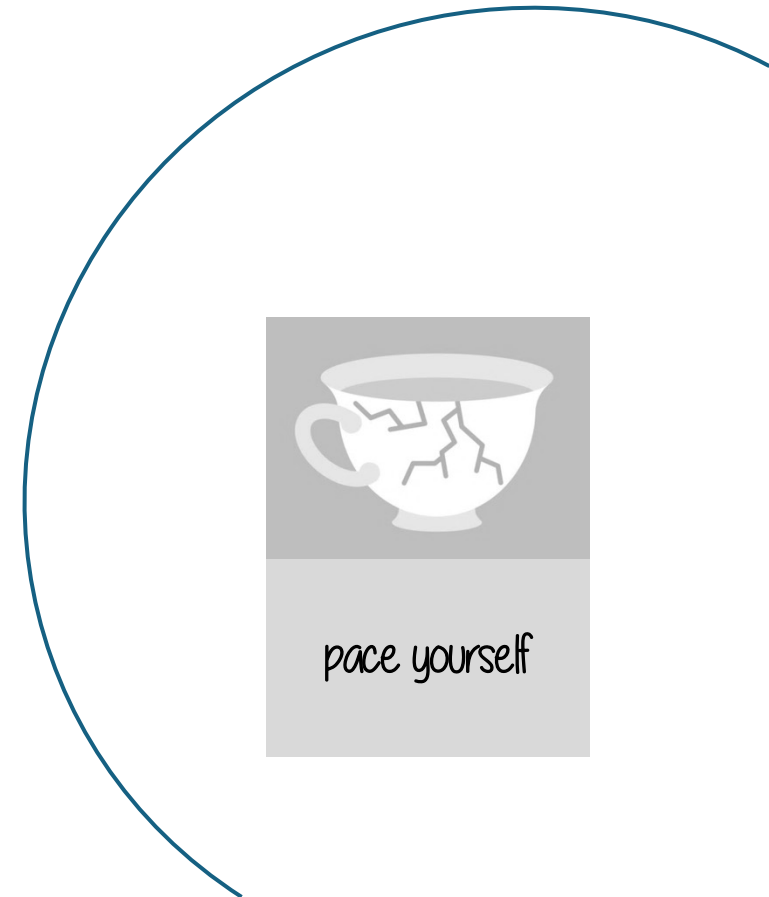


don't judge

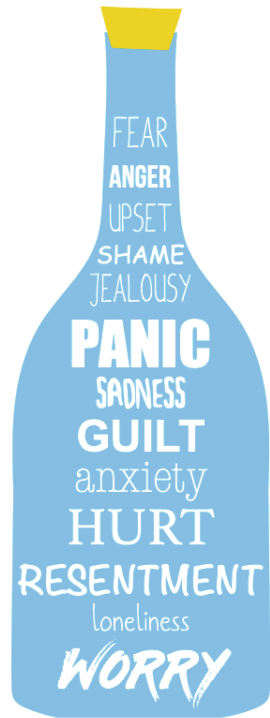
Practices for being kind to yourself



- Find some stillness.
- Allow yourself 5 minutes space.
- Refill your cup.



Practices for being kind to yourself



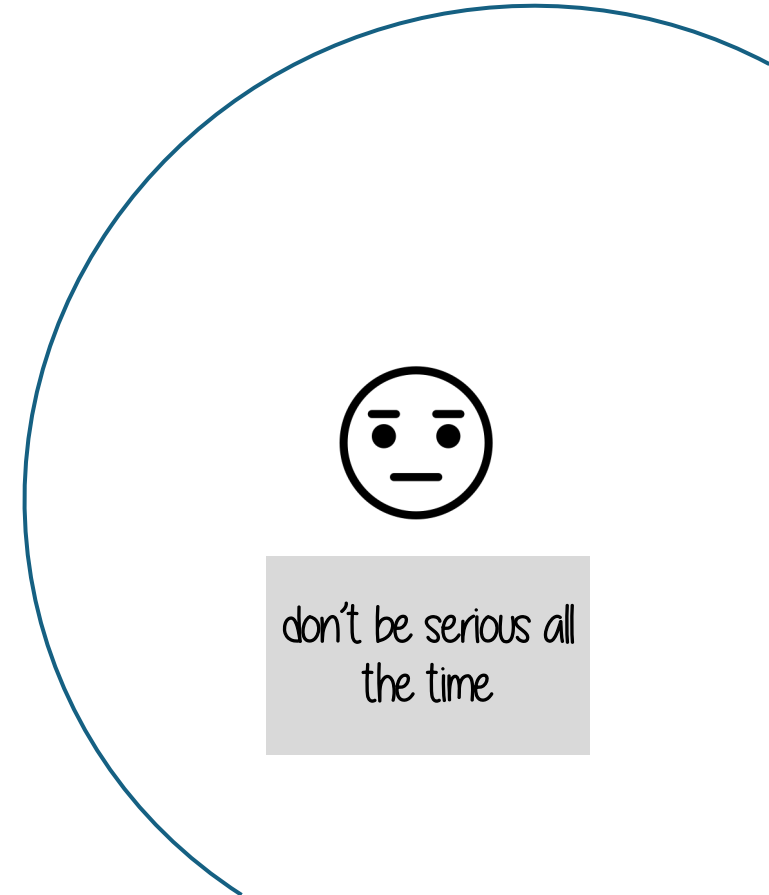
- When you're feeling bad, talk to someone you can trust.
- You'll feel relieved, lighter.
- You'll see things differently.



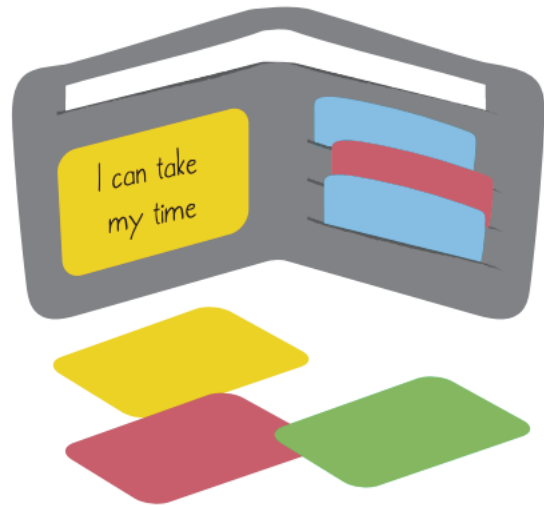
Practices for being kind to yourself



- How much do you laugh?
How often?
- Share something funny.
- Add a touch of playfulness to busy people's lives.



Practices for being kind to yourself



- What kind messages do you need to hear?
- Give yourself those messages.
- Write them down and carry them with you as a reminder.



don't be hard on yourself

Practices for being kind to yourself



- What would your future self thank you for?
- Write a letter to that person from the person you are now.
- Remind yourself of your content to keep on track.



don't forget your future.

Practices for being kind to yourself

self esteem & self compassion



validated
aligned
tall
in flow

accepting
knowing
present



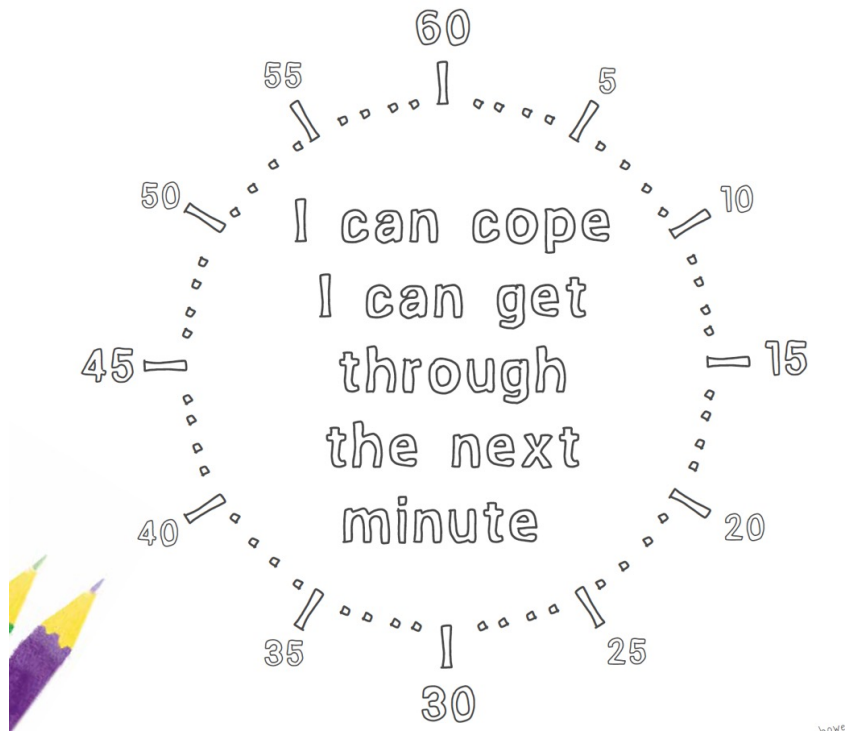
fragmented
pieces
dirty
hiding
refuge

accepting
soothing
present
comforting



- Realise the difference between self-esteem and self-compassion.
- Self-compassion is there for you through good and bad.
- A constant presence without judgement or conditions.

Practices for being kind to yourself



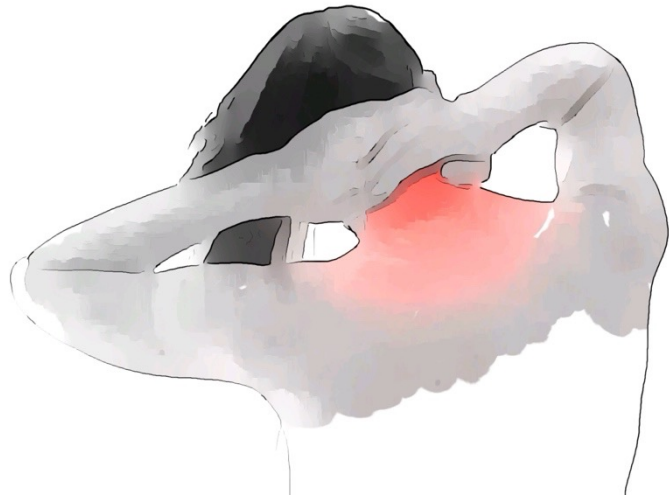
- Gift yourself a minute.
- Breathe deeply and colour in the seconds.
- Restore your composure mindfully, creatively.

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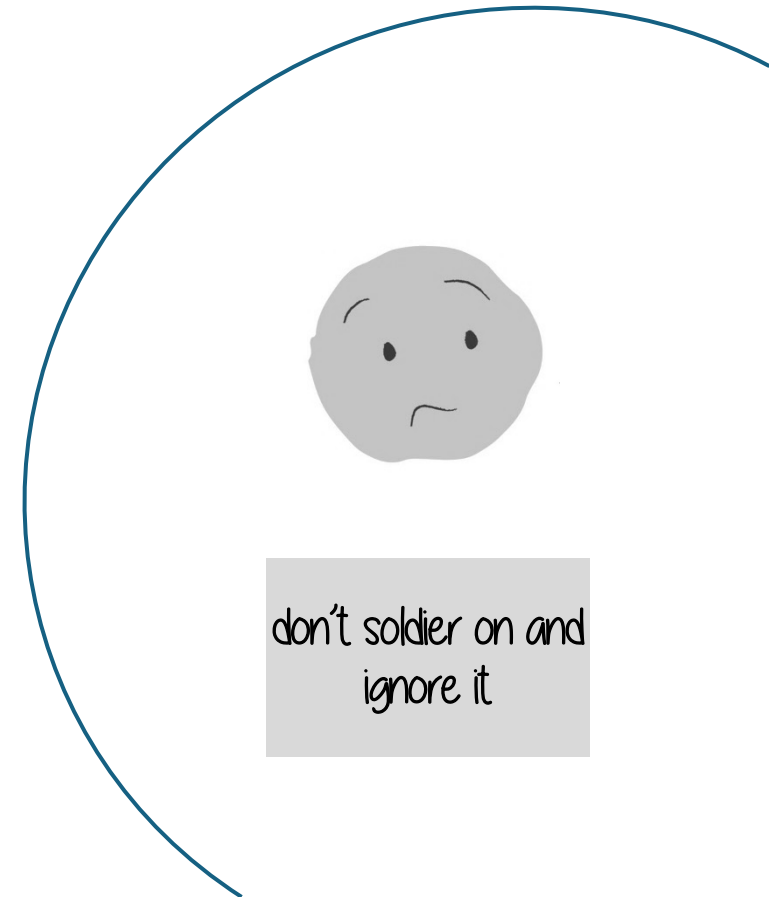
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Practices for being kind to yourself



- Use your interoceptive awareness.
- Notice what your body is signaling to you.
- Respond to what your body needs.



Practices for being kind to yourself



- Take what you do when you comfort others and apply that to yourself.
- We need to learn this, to soothe our pains, relieve our stresses and feel safe.
- This isn't weird or selfish, it's high-level self-empowerment.



Practices for being kind to yourself



- What do you need to calm down?
- Look at the calming colours. Breathe in and say 'Relax' to yourself.
- Breathe out and say, 'Let go'.



don't listen to the
noise

Practices for being kind to yourself



- Take some photos of what you appreciate about your work, your role,
- or what you love about life.
- Inspire yourself.



especially if you feel disheartened

Practices for being kind to yourself



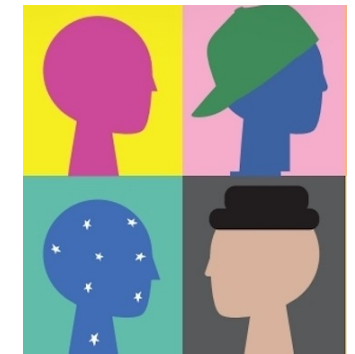
Follow your compass
moment by moment
step by step
in the right direction



Practices for being kind to yourself



- It's not always black and white.
- There are other perspectives.
- What are the facts?
What are the feelings?
For you and for others.

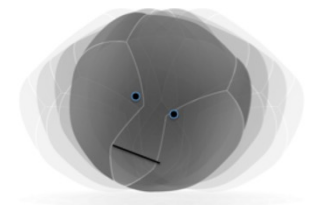


we all see things differently

Practices for being kind to yourself



- Your inner bully wants you to compare yourself negatively with others.
- Your inner coach encourages you to aspire.
- And take steps towards your aspirations.



don't use harmful comparisons

Practices for being kind to yourself

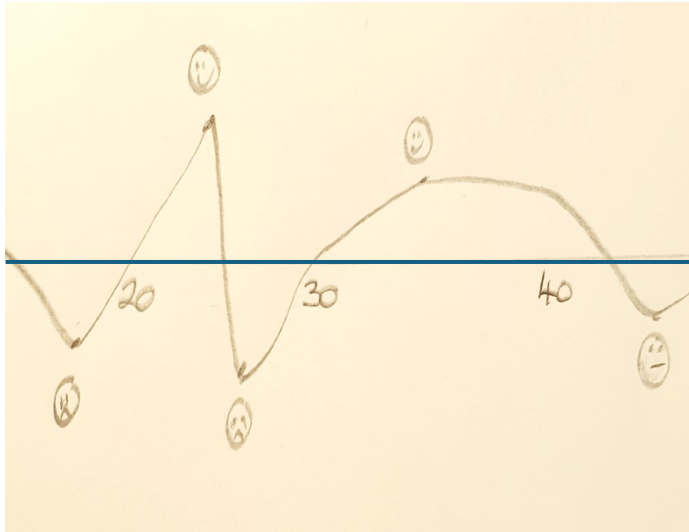


- When your thoughts and feelings are too much to contain, write them down.
- Free flow writing to vent, offload, reflect...
- The page doesn't judge you.

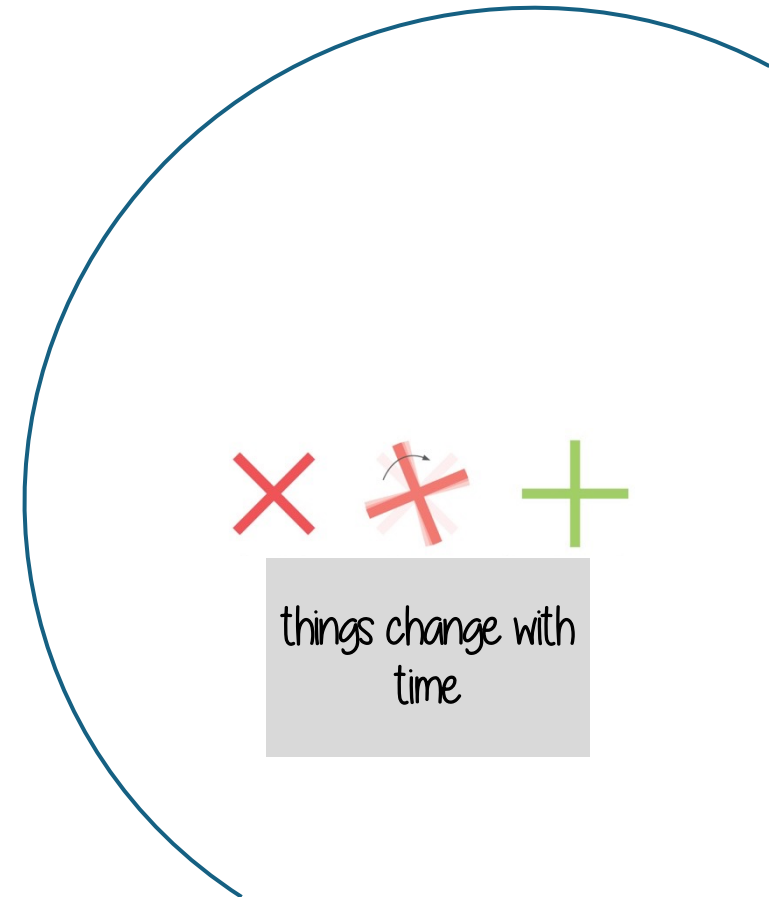


don't leave your words where others might see

Practices for being kind to yourself



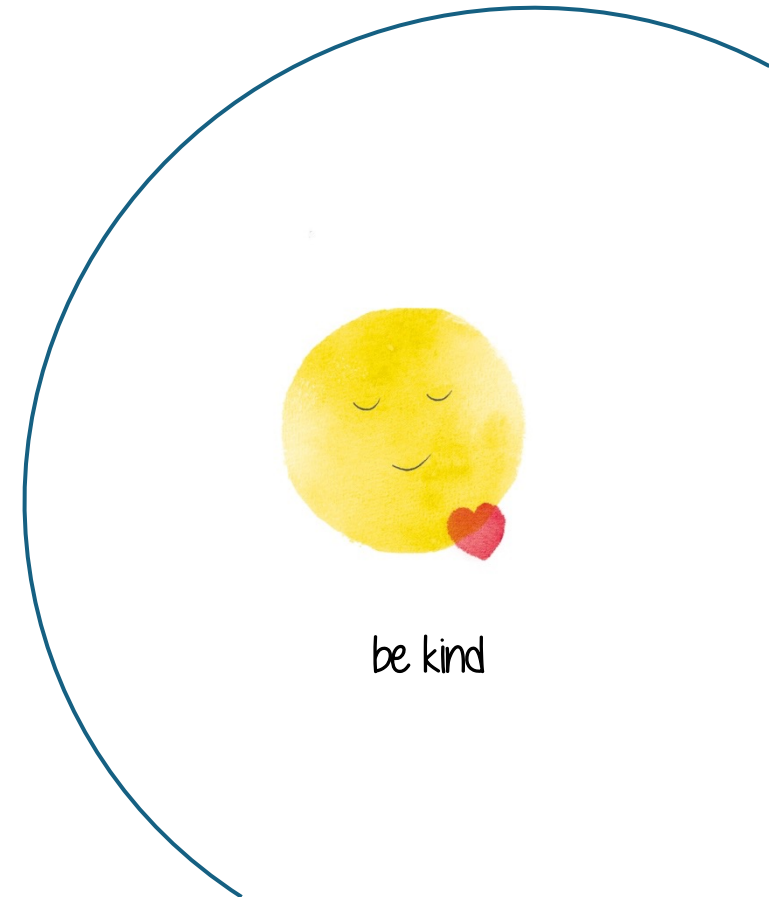
- Sketch a simple timeline of your life so far with the highs and the low points.
- The perspective of time shows how things change – for everyone.
- You're not alone. This will pass.



Practices for being kind to yourself



- You benefit so much when you are kinder to yourself.
- Those around you benefit when you are kinder to yourself.
- The world benefits too.



be kind

More resources from the author

Book

People Solutions for School Leaders

What they didn't tell you and you really need to know

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/People-Solutions-School-Leaders-really/dp/1032945397>

Solutions

Website that the book is based on
[solutions.peopleintelligence.com](https://www.peopleintelligence.com/solutions)

whentheensiongoes.com

Website dedicated to self-compassion with short video and free downloads.

Reassuring myself

Free 36-page download for children
(or the child in all of us)

<https://www.peopleintelligence.com/self-compassion/>