

# Compassionate Self Help

We are often supportive, understanding and compassionate to others, but are much harsher and critical towards ourselves in the same situation. Learning to be more compassionate with ourselves leads to a calmer mind, better relationships, less anxiety and depression, and an increased sense of self worth.



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## Slow Down - Breathe

Just take a few moments to slow down, and breathe

- **STOPP** [www.stopp.gg](http://www.stopp.gg)
- **Breathe** [www.get.gg/breathe.htm](http://www.get.gg/breathe.htm)
- **NOW** [www.get.gg/now.htm](http://www.get.gg/now.htm)

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## Treat Yourself the way you treat Others

We are often very compassionate with others, but are much harder and more critical of ourselves. We are much more understanding and compassionate with someone else, particularly someone we care about.

Talk to yourself the way you would talk to someone else in the same situation.

"If someone else was telling me these things, what would I say to them?"

Start to replace "I'm sorry..." with "Thank you...". For example, if you arrive late for a meeting, say "Thank you for waiting for me.."

## Compassionate Mind / Kind Mind

Kind Mind helps us be more mindful of our thoughts and how we talk to ourselves. Use your Compassionate Image. "What would compassionate image or kind mind say?"

Acknowledge that we have a Tricky Brain - this is not my fault, it's just how the brain works! "I'm thinking this way because of Tricky Brain.

"If I was feeling calmer and less emotional right now, how else would I see this?"

Use **THINK**: Is this thought True, Helpful, Important, Necessary, Kind?

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**Write** a compassionate letter to yourself: see the [Write webpage](http://www.get.gg/write.htm) [www.get.gg/write.htm](http://www.get.gg/write.htm)

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## Self Care

Look after yourself the way you would care for someone you loved.

Eat healthily

Ensure you get quality [sleep](http://www.get.gg/sleep.htm)

[www.get.gg/sleep.htm](http://www.get.gg/sleep.htm)

Exercise regularly: [BACES](http://www.get.gg/baces.htm)

[www.get.gg/baces.htm](http://www.get.gg/baces.htm)

Plan activities you enjoy and/or find relaxing

[ACE](http://www.get.gg/ace.htm): Achieve, Connect, Enjoy

[www.get.gg/ace.htm](http://www.get.gg/ace.htm)

[SEEK LIFT](http://www.get.gg/seeklift.htm): Positive Steps to Wellbeing

[www.get.gg/seeklift.htm](http://www.get.gg/seeklift.htm)

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## Be Gentle with Yourself

Notice Tricky Brain or the [Mind Bully](http://www.get.gg/mindbully.htm) ([www.get.gg/mindbully.htm](http://www.get.gg/mindbully.htm)) or the [Poisonous Parrot](http://www.get.gg/parrot.htm) ([www.get.gg/parrot.htm](http://www.get.gg/parrot.htm)), and respond to that critical and criticised self with gentleness and supportive understanding.

Acknowledge your difficult life experiences and challenges. Write your life story using the Time Line worksheet. Learn and understand that it's no wonder you think and react the way you do, given what you've been through.

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## Use Compassionate Self Talk

We all have internal dialogue in our heads, it is very often self critical and we judge ourselves far harsher than the way we judge other people. We can practise noticing when we do that, and start to use Compassionate or Kind Mind.

- Bring your Compassionate Image to mind.
- See situations using Kind Mind: "If I wasn't feeling so emotional, how else would I see this situation?"
- Use kind affirmations: [www.get.gg/affirmations.htm](http://www.get.gg/affirmations.htm)

## Develop a Compassionate Image

Being able to use a compassionate image is central to Compassion Focused Therapy. We need to create and build an imaginary idea of compassion. It is best to use an object or idea that is NOT a REAL person. This is important, as nobody is perfect.

Whatever image you choose, it needs to have specific compassionate qualities and be: wise, understanding, kind, all-knowing, forgiving and totally accepting (of you, your past etc).

If you can only think about a real person, then **change** that person to look and become the **best** version of them, with those perfect qualities of compassion.

Start by just slowing down, and thinking about your breathing. Slow down your breathing a little and notice the rhythm of your breathing.

Notice what images come up and if you can use one of them. Build the image by thinking about:

What would they look like? Human, animal, light, nature? Single or a compassionate team?

What would they look at you if they were wise, understanding, kind and accepting?

What expression would they have as they looked at you with wisdom, understanding, compassion and acceptance?

How else would you like them to look?

How would they communicate or interact with you?

What voice would you give them?

What would their voice sound like for them to sound wise, understanding, kind and accepting?

What colour do you associate with wisdom, understanding, compassion and acceptance?

How else would they communicate with you?

What does your compassionate image want you to know? What words are they saying?

What do you feel as you spend time with your compassionate image? What do you notice?

Know that your compassionate image is yours and yours alone, is in your mind and therefore is there for you at all times.



## Compassionate Kit Bag - Your Tool Kit for Life's Journey

A Compassionate Kit Bag is a place to put reminders for your compassionate self, so you can use your resources to nourish you along life's journey.

Collect together items that are meaningful, or those you know will be helpful. You might find these items inspiring, empowering, calming, soothing, motivating, bringing confidence, strength, calm composure and wisdom.

Some items you might choose may have some sadness attached by their association with an event or person. You will need to decide if it is right to include this item.

If you physically cannot put the item in the bag or box, then perhaps use a reminder of the item, for example, a picture of an iPod, mp3 player.

Start small. You may have some items that you immediately know would fit in this compassionate kit bag. Other items can be added gradually, over time.

Choose items that make you feel good about yourself - perhaps they bring up a positive memory, or represent something that is important, inspiring, motivating or gives you a boost in some way.

Consider:

- Music [www.get.gg/music.htm](http://www.get.gg/music.htm)
- Picture
- Smells
- Reminder of compassionate image (self or other)
- Book, poem, quotes
- Letter from your compassionate self [www.get.gg/write.htm](http://www.get.gg/write.htm)
- Objects with meaning
- Hobby
- Reminders of your strengths
- Grounding or soothing objects

Keep your compassionate kit bag nearby, maybe next to your bed to remind yourself every day.

You can use your compassionate kit bag with or without the emergency / soothe bag ([www.get.gg/emergency.htm](http://www.get.gg/emergency.htm)), or you might merge them.

