

# Self-Compassion Summary

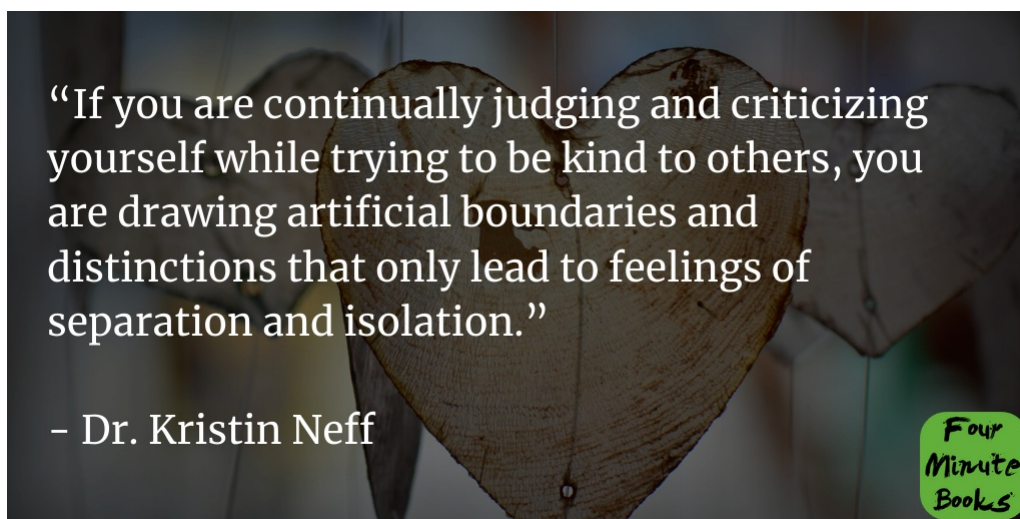
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**1-Sentence-Summary:** *Self-Compassion* teaches you the art of being kind to yourself by identifying what causes you to beat yourself up, how it affects your life negatively, and what you can do to relate to yourself in healthier and more compassionate ways.

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



Everybody these days seems so selfish. Always posting on social media only about them or something that only has to do with them. But in this world of people who are self-serving and self-absorbed, there's one aspect of this all that we overlook: self-hatred.

Right now, you might be beating yourself up over something stupid you did. Even if you aren't, it's still hard not to get angry at yourself for even the smallest mistakes. And we all set standards for ourselves that are too high, fall short, and just get more frustrated that we "can't do anything right."

What makes us behave like this? Is there a way to overcome it? Dr. Kristin Neff answers these questions and more in *Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself*.

These are the 3 most encouraging lessons I got out of this one:

1. The source of your self-criticism is most likely going through traumatic experiences when you were a child.
2. Consider how you would help a friend who is suffering to begin practicing self-compassion and reaping the rewards of it.

3. Create psychological distance between yourself and your pain and practice mindfulness to become a master at taking care of yourself.

Hey, after all those years of being hard on yourself, you're going to be okay. Let's dive right in and learn how to make it happen!

## Lesson 1: Look to your childhood to discover the source of your self-criticism.

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It's kind of a cliché in psychology to take whatever problems you have and blame them on your parents. Although this might be an oversimplification, there's some truth to how it works in terms of being hard on yourself.

Research indicates that the chances of beating yourself up skyrocket if you had a parent that was critical to you as a child.

As if scientific proof wasn't enough, just consider it from a logical standpoint. When you're a kid, you rely on your parents to guide you. They help you make sense of the world and keep you feeling safe and loved. It makes sense that we have a tendency to want their approval.

Put all of this together with a demanding parent and you're asking for trouble. Consider yourself a child for a moment. **If you had critical parents that were hard on everything you did, right or wrong, it would add up after a while.**

Eventually, you'd develop an unhealthy view of yourself as not being worth loving. You would feel like you had to be better, perfect, even, or you couldn't be loved. Of course, you would want to avoid them criticizing you, so you'd likely begin doing it yourself before they could.

Before long you've internalized all of this and it's simply a habit to be hard on yourself for even the smallest slip-up.

## Lesson 2: You can start practicing self-compassion by thinking about how you would help a friend in the same position.

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Visualize yourself walking down the street with your best friend in the middle of winter. As you round a corner, she hits an icy patch falls to the ground. How would you respond?

This scenario, or any similar to it, identifies a key point in the difference between how we treat ourselves versus how we treat others.

If it was just you falling on your own, you might get angry because of your clumsiness. You'd be embarrassed and may call yourself stupid, even.

But when it's a friend, you ask if they're okay, help them up, and take care of them. Another word for this is compassion. When we try these things in response to our own problems, that's called self-compassion.

**A key point here is to shut down the logical thinking that looks to the reasons for the error and instead focus on just feeling.** What does it feel like when you mess up? Let yourself go through the emotions, just like you would for a friend whose dog had just died.

It starts with asking a question to gain an awareness of the pain you're feeling. You might ask yourself how you feel after something terrible, for example, instead of trying to fix it.

You may show compassion to others by hugging, like in the case of a friend that lost a loved one. Even this, although it seems strange, is something you can do to yourself to feel better.

### **Lesson 3: Mindfulness combined with the ability to put psychological distance between you and your pain will make you a master at self-care.**

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You might be sitting there wondering why this all feels a little tough to do. Part of the reason is that the Western world-view maximizes the self and bearing trials without suffering. But there's another reason, too.

When you begin comforting yourself for something that's amiss, you're actually taking on two separate roles. When your friend slips on the ice, for example, you are the one giving the compassion and they are receiving it. But in the case of self-compassion, you are both the giver and receiver at the same time. And that feels a little weird.

**It works so well, however, because the piece of you that's playing the giver has to become separate from the pain to help relieve it.** Again, think of your friend laying there on the ice. You're not the one feeling her pain, but you *can* sympathize with it.

This is what it means to put psychological space between you and whatever you're upset about. It lets you accept that you are suffering, but it doesn't define you. It's not everything. There is more to life than just pain.

Another way to get that space is through mindfulness. This means not letting yourself get sucked into the emotions, but just letting them run their course. Think of it like taking a mental step away from how you feel and just watching from the sidelines.

You can still experience the frustration or disappointment, but just watch it play out instead of grasping it with a mental grip that makes it feel catastrophic.

## **Self-Compassion Review**

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This is such an incredible book! *Self-Compassion* is something that I think we could all use in this age of pushing ourselves to the point of burnout and mental illness. Although not always fun, the steps that this book outlines are sure to help you feel better about yourself and become more productive as a result!

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## **Who would I recommend the Self-Compassion summary to?**

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The 31-year-old who was abused as a child and still hasn't fully recovered, the 47-year old perfectionist who is tired of being so hard on themselves, and anyone that wants to finally be at peace with and love themselves.