# How to Increase Self-Compassion

Unfortunately, it’s far too common for people to be under the spell of their inner critic. Being critical of oneself can lead to low self-esteem, low self-worth, mental health concerns, and in extreme cases, suicide. The way to combat this inner critic is to practice [self-compassion](https://selfcompassion.web.unc.edu/what-is-self-compassion/the-three-components-of-self-compassion/). Self-compassion is the practice of being kind to yourself in a way you would be towards a loved one.

According to self-compassion researcher [Kristen Neff](https://self-compassion.org/), **self-compassion** is made up of three parts. These parts are self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness. Self-kindness is defined as showing yourself the kindness and understanding that you would a friend or loved one. The concept of common humanity is that all humans suffer in some way. This can be a way to help people feel less alone in their suffering. Finally, this method teaches that practicing mindfulness regarding our thoughts can help in establishing self-compassion. By practicing mindfulness in this way, people can practice being non-judgmental over their thoughts.

Another way to incorporate self-compassion into our daily lives is by **practicing self-care**. Self-care can be anything that involves taking care of yourself. Some examples of practicing self-care are taking a bath, yoga, journaling, reading, calling a loved one, decluttering spaces, and spending time in nature. By practicing self-care, we are signaling to ourselves that we are worth taking care of.

**Affirmations** can also be a powerful tool in increasing self-compassion. An affirmation is a phrase that is positive about oneself and is in the present tense. An example of an affirmation is “I am enough as I am.” Practicing affirmations allows the brain to create new neural pathways in the brain. This creates new ways of thinking about oneself and, as a result, increases self-compassion. Affirmations can help increase self-esteem and confidence, which can increase a person’s overall well-being.

**Journaling** can be another helpful tool to help increase self-compassion. This can be done by using specific prompts that deal with self-compassion. These prompts will encourage the person to focus on ways they can improve their self-compassion. Another way to use journaling as a tool for this is by writing a compassionate letter to yourself. If the person struggles with doing this exercise, they might consider imagining writing a letter to a loved one.

Self-compassion and [self-love](https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10097885/) are similar in some ways, but they also have some differences with each other. Self-compassion teaches us to be compassionate to ourselves when we are struggling. While self-love is about learning to accept and love yourself for who you are today. Self-compassion is such an important part of the healing journey. Learning to be kind to yourself and develop a supportive relationship with yourself will lead to improvements in almost all areas of life. We understand the idea of self-love or self-compassion can be hard to wrap your head around if you are someone who struggles with an inner critic. We also know that it is possible to have a kind relationship with yourself. If you are interested in working with someone from our practice, you can reach out to us [here](https://michiganpsychologicalcare.com/contact.php).

**References**

<https://self-compassion.org/>

<https://selfcompassion.web.unc.edu/what-is-self-compassion/the-three-components-of-self-compassion/>

<https://www.odu.edu/equity/civility-month/affirmations>

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