

COMPASSIONATE LETTER TO MYSELF

Everybody has something about themselves they don't like; something that causes them to feel shame, insecure, or not "good enough" (i.e., an unhealthy habit, a physical attribute, or a way of relating to others). When you notice that you are being unnecessarily critical toward yourself, the following exercise can help to cultivate a more compassionate, encouraging voice.

From a Friend to Yourself

- Think about an imaginary friend who is unconditionally wise, loving and compassionate. Imagine that this friend can see all your strengths and weaknesses, including what you don't like about yourself. This friend recognizes the limits of human nature, and is kind, accepting, and forgiving.
- Write a letter to yourself from the perspective of this imaginary friend, focusing on the perceived inadequacy you tend to judge yourself for. What would this friend say to you from the perspective of unlimited compassion? And if you think this friend would suggest possible changes you should make, how might these suggestions embody feelings of care, encouragement, and support?
- After writing the letter, put it down for a little while. Then come back to it and read it again, really letting the words sink in. Feel the compassion as it pours into you, soothing and comforting you. Love, connection and acceptance are your birthright. To claim them you need only look within yourself.

From Yourself to a Friend

- Write a letter as if you were talking to a dearly loved friend who was struggling with the same concern that you are. What words of compassion and support would you offer? Then go back and read the letter, applying the words to yourself.

From Your Compassionate Self to Yourself

- Write a letter from the perspective of your own compassionate self. This part of you would like to help you because he or she cares deeply about you. The intention behind your compassionate self is "I love you and I don't want you to suffer." Put the letter away and read it to yourself later on.