CHRISTOPHER GERMER

“Self-compassion is simply giving the same kindness to ourselves that we would give to others.”
What is Self-Compassion?

TREATING OURSELVES WITH KINDNESS

- Treating ourselves like we treat a good friend - with encouragement, understanding, empathy, patience, and gentleness.
- We often say things to ourselves that we would never say to someone we care about.

ACKNOWLEDGING WE ARE HUMAN

- To be human means to be imperfect. We are imperfect as people and our lives are imperfect.
- When something goes wrong we feel isolated in our suffering and imperfection; when in fact that’s precisely what connects us to other people.

NOT WALLOWING IN SELF-CRITICISM

- We often get lost in self-criticism. “You should be doing better.”
- We believe we need our self-criticism to motivate ourselves.

Information in this presentation comes from the work of Kristin Neff, Ph.D. and Christopher K. Germer, Ph.D.
We believe if we are too kind to ourselves we will be self-indulgent and lazy.

Is it true?
Nope. Research shows the opposite. Self-criticism actually undermines our motivation.

WHEN WE ARE CRITICAL OF OURSELVES

- Research shows our bodies tap into our threat defense system which releases adrenalin and cortisol.
- Cortisol causes a stress response in our body.
- To deal with chronic stress, our body will eventually shut itself down mentally which leads to depression and lack of motivation.

WHEN WE GIVE OURSELVES COMPASSION

- Research shows we feel safe and comforted and our body responds by reducing stress hormones (decrease in cortisol) and releasing feel good hormones (oxytocin and opiates).
- Increases in fell good hormones put us in the optimal mindset to do our best.

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How can we practice self-compassion?

- Recognize that beating ourselves up makes it harder to change.
- Set small, realistic goals and if we mess up, be kind, readjust, and keep moving forward.
- Think about mistakes as opportunities to grow and learn.
- Remember that everyone struggles and we are just as human as everyone else.
- Let go of unrealistic expectations and acknowledge that not everything needs to be perfect.
- Do our best to eliminate negative self-talk.
Let’s Talk About Self-Compassion

What other suggestions do you have for practicing self-compassion?

What differences have you noticed in your life when you treated yourself with more kindness?

What makes it difficult to practice self-compassion?

What small self-compassion goal can you set for yourself this holiday season?

How can we help others show themselves more self-compassion?
If you want to know more about self-compassion, here are ways to dive in:

- **Website**: Find more information on self-compassion, as well as links to the research, at [https://self-compassion.org/](https://self-compassion.org/)
- **TedxTalk by Kristin Neff Ph.D.**: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvtZBUSplr4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvtZBUSplr4)
- **Book**: *Fierce Self-Compassion* by Kristin Neff, Ph.D.
- **Podcasts**:
  - *Semi-Together* (Gillian Burgess & Melia Dicker)
  - [https://www.rickhanson.net/being-well-podcast-self-compassion-with-kristin-neff/](https://www.rickhanson.net/being-well-podcast-self-compassion-with-kristin-neff/)
- **Instagram**: Follow neffselfcompassion
- **Vasculitis and Mental Health Videos from VF**: [https://www.vasculitisfoundation.org/mcm_webinar/vasculitis-and-emotional-health/](https://www.vasculitisfoundation.org/mcm_webinar/vasculitis-and-emotional-health/)

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Even more ways to dive in:

Some in the support groups mentioned that the writings of Thich Nhat Hanh helped them find self-compassion.
His foundation:
https://thichnhathanhfoundation.org/thich-nhat-hanh

His Goodreads page which has a list of all his books:
https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/9074.Thich_Nhat_Hanh