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

# What is Self-Compassion?

## TREATING OURSELVES WITH KINDNESS

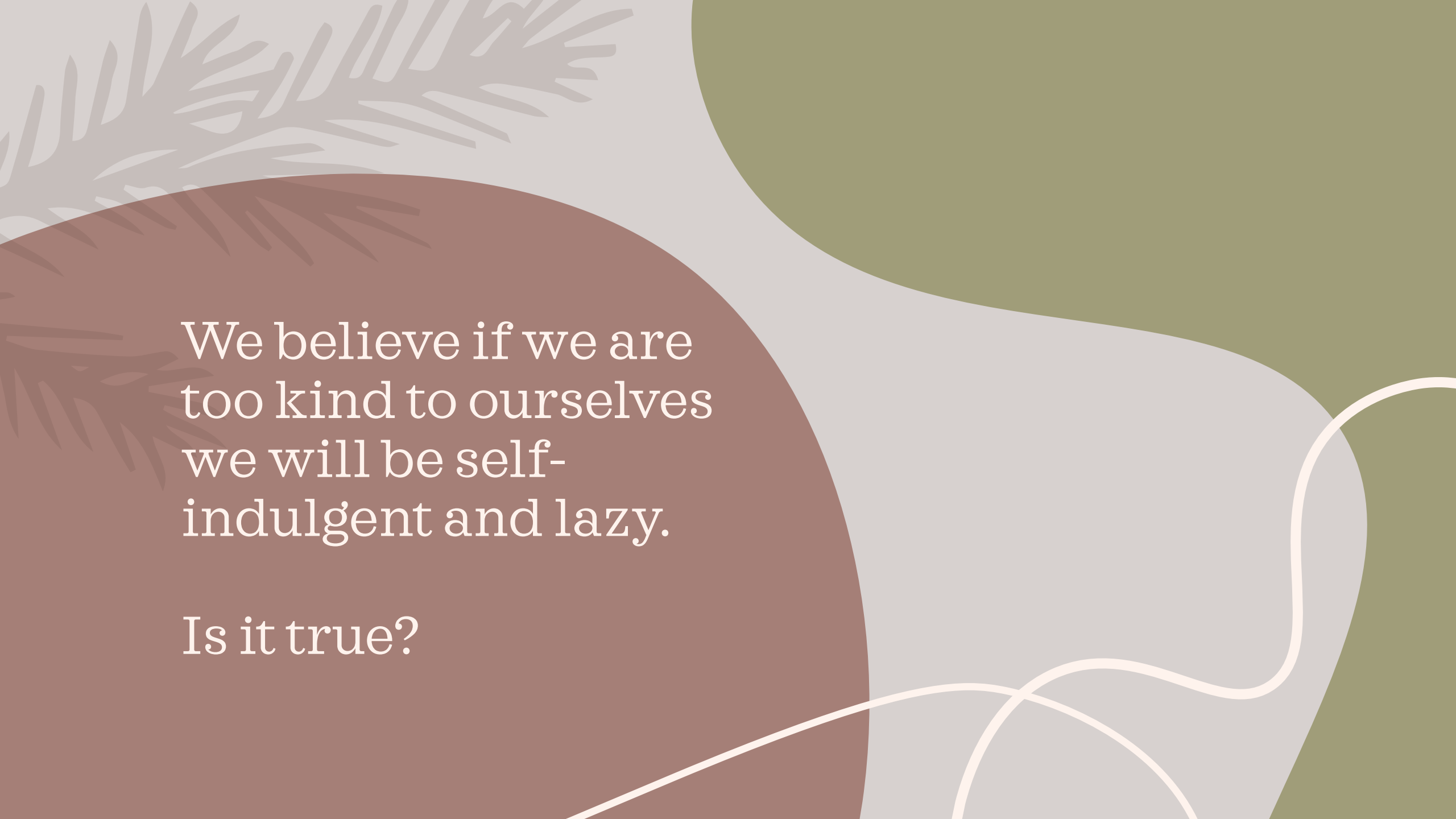
- Treating ourselves like we treat a good friend - with encouragement, understanding, empathy, patience, and gentleness.
- We often say things to ourselves that we would never say to someone we care about.

## 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.



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 feel good hormones put us in the optimal mindset to do our best.

# 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?

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

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What makes it difficult to practice self-compassion?

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

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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/>
- **TedxTalk by Kristin Neff Ph.D.:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvTZBUSplr4>
- **Book:** Fierce Self-Compassion by Kristin Neff, Ph.D.
- **Podcasts:**
  - **Unlocking Us (Brené Brown):** The Near and Far Enemies of Fierce Compassion with Chris Germer <https://brenebrown.com/podcast/the-near-and-far-enemies-of-fierce-compassion-part-1-of-2/>
  - **Semi-Together (Gillian Burgess & Melia Dicker)**
  - <https://www.rickhanson.net/being-well-podcast-self-compassion-with-kristin-neff/>
  - <https://www.tenpercent.com/podcast-episode/kristin-neff-360>
- **Instagram:** Follow [neffselfcompassion](https://www.instagram.com/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/)

# 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](https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/9074.Thich+Nhat+Hanh)