



SELF-COMPASSION LETTER

PART ONE | Write a letter to yourself from the perspective of an unconditionally loving imaginary friend.

Reflect on the issue you just shared in Week 3's class (the incident when you acted unskillfully) OR if that feels resolved, reflect on another area in your life that tends to make you feel inadequate or bad about yourself (physical appearance, work or relationship issues...). Now think about an imaginary friend who is unconditionally loving, accepting, kind, and compassionate. Imagine that this friend can see all your strengths and all your weaknesses, including the aspect of yourself you have just been reflecting on. Ponder what this friend feels towards you, and how you are loved and accepted exactly as you are, with all your very human imperfections. This friend recognizes the limits of human nature, and is kind and forgiving towards you. In his/her great wisdom this friend understands your life history and the millions of things that have happened in your life to create you as you are in this moment. Your particular inadequacy is connected to so many things you didn't necessarily choose: your genes, your family history, life circumstances – things that were outside of your control.

Write a letter to yourself from the perspective of this imaginary friend – focusing on the perceived inadequacy for which you tend to judge yourself. What would this friend say to you about your “flaw” from the perspective of unlimited compassion? How would this friend convey the deep compassion he/she feels for you, especially for the pain you feel when you judge yourself so harshly? What would this friend write in order to remind you that you are only human, that all people have both strengths and weaknesses? And if you think this friend would suggest possible changes you should make, how would these suggestions embody feelings of unconditional understanding and compassion? As you write to yourself from the perspective of this imaginary friend, try to infuse your letter with a strong sense of his/her acceptance, kindness, caring, and desire for your health and happiness.

PART TWO | Feel the compassion as it soothes and comforts you.

After writing the letter, put it down for a little while. Then come back and read it again, really letting the words sink in. Feel the compassion as it pours into you, soothing and comforting you like a cool breeze on a hot day. Love, connection, and acceptance are your birthright. To claim them you need only look within yourself.

REMINDER | You will share this letter with one other person during next week's class, so keep it brief (no longer than 1 page) for that purpose. If you wish to write a longer version of the Self-Compassion Letter, please do and also make a shortened version to share next week.