



THINKING SPACE CHALLENGE

DAY 3

COOL, CALM & COMPASSIONATE

Cool, Calm and Compassionate is a play on words for the term of reference we know as Cool, Calm and Collected.

The idea around this is to plug into more moments of connection than disconnection. Stress, anxiety and fear, these are all things that release cortisol and block access to higher capacities such as empathy and compassion which leads us to self-contraction and an exaggerated focus on self. Overwork can also impact our capacity for stable attention... All of the above impacts our self awareness & awareness of others. Compassion is the foundation for empathy. Giving someone your full attention tells them they matter.

The key to compassion is to remember that if we consider others to be just like us and to be experiencing their own set of unique challenges just like we do, we can open ourselves up to the thinking space that compassion creates. Neuroscience shows us that consistent mindfulness practice enhances the function of a part of our brain known as the insula; this raises both our self awareness and our empathy.

“The more we think about something, the stronger the neural pathways conducive to that thought become, and the easier it is to have that thought. Eventually, that thought becomes a mental habit and arises frequently and effortlessly.” Chade Meng-Tan

Thanks to the neuroplasticity, compassion is a trainable skill rather than a stable state.

Studies show that any mindfulness practice enhances the potential for compassion. Any mindfulness practice will enhance our capacity for compassion.

How to Have and Show Self-Compassion

Self-compassion is a positive attitude we can have towards ourselves, and it's also an empirically measurable construct. Having self-compassion means being able to relate to yourself in a way that's forgiving, accepting, and loving when situations might be less than optimal.

Self-Kindness

Self-kindness is about showing kindness and understanding toward ourselves when we fail at something, or when we are hurt. In short, showing self-kindness means treating our worth as unconditional even when we fall short of our own expectations, whether it's through our behaviors or even just our thoughts. Giving yourself the tenderness and care you need when you're going through a tough time; trying to understand and show patience regarding your own perceived personality flaws; and being tolerant of your own shortcomings.



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Mindfulness

Mindfulness is seen as the opposite of avoidance or over-identification in self-compassion theory - it entails acknowledging and labeling our own thoughts as opposed to reacting to them. When we have self-compassion, we are aware of our own hurtful thoughts and emotions without blowing up their significance through rumination. Instead, we adopt a positive balance between this over-identification at one extreme, and completely avoiding painful emotions and experiences at the other.

Start with The Self

We can't have capacity to for others, or manage the stressors of life, if we are not healthy in body and mind ourselves. Self care is not only about the lifestyle choices we make, it's also about how we treat ourselves in moments of difficulty. The more we practice compassion in our daily lives, even in the smallest ways, the stronger the neural pathway for compassion will become.

"It does not matter how long you are spending on the earth, how much money you have gathered or how much attention you have received. It is the amount of positive vibration you have radiated in life that matters." Amit Ray