



So now, with that in mind,
let's do a guided meditation
that is a variance on
the classic lovingkindness practice,
but tailored specifically
to cultivate self-compassion.

So first,
make sure you are in a comfortable position,
sitting either on a meditation cushion
or on a chair,
something very comfortable where you can sit upright
and yet relaxed.

And settle into your posture.
Notice how your body feels,
the sensation of your feet touching the floor,
your bottom touching the cushion,
the weight of the arms
and your head.
Be in your body, right here, right now,
fully inhabiting
your lived experience.

Then allow your attention
to move outward to sounds.
What sounds are arising right now?
Are there noises outside your window?
A fan blowing?
Leaves rustling?
What sounds do you hear?

Try not to
reach out to the sounds,
but just let the sounds arrive,
the sound waves entering your
mind and body.



Now focus on your breathing,
the sense of inhaling
and exhaling,
whether you feel the breath
most strongly at your nostrils
or perhaps that your chest rises and falls.
We'll take a few moments just to rest with our breath,
simple and easy.

Notice the peacefulness of being quiet,
of resting,
as you just gently breathe.

And now I'd like you to bring to mind
some aspect of your personality,
or perhaps some mistake you made,
a failure,
that has been bothering you lately.
Something that
perhaps you've been criticizing yourself for
or that has made you feel inadequate
in some way.

Whatever this
trait or action is,
try to get in touch with
your feelings about it.
What does it make you feel?
Sad?
Frightened?
Isolated?
Inadequate?
How have you felt
when you've thought about this
inadequacy?

See if you can locate the sensations
of the emotions in your body.
Perhaps it's a tightness in your throat,



a heaviness in your heart,
tension in the shoulders.
What emotions do you feel
when you think about this
mistake or inadequacy, and
where are those emotions felt in the body?

Just actually
allow them to be there
instead of resisting feeling
these natural feelings that arise when we judge ourselves.
Just notice them.
What am I feeling?
Where are the emotions in my body?

Get in touch with how much suffering
is caused by our self-judgement,
our fears of not being good enough.
Some of our greatest suffering is caused
at our own hands,
by the belief that somehow, we should be perfect.

Take your hand, or both hands if you prefer,
and place it gently over your heart
in a calm, soft, comforting manner.
You might even want to
rub a little soothing, reassuring circle.

See if you can sense your heart right now.
See if you can let your heart be moved
by how difficult your emotional experience is
when you think about this thing that makes you feel bad about yourself.

And so what we'll do now is repeat some phrases,
lovingkindness phrases, designed to
help you feel compassion
for the fact that
you are an imperfect being.
You try your best, but no one,



no one on this planet is perfect. We're all
inadequate in some way.
We all make mistakes. We all fail.
This is the human experience. It's okay.

So, repeat the phrases silently. I'll say a few
sets of phrases
aloud and then you can repeat them silently.

May I be safe.
May I be peaceful.
May I be kind to myself.
May I accept myself as I am.
Feeling the warmth of your hand
on your heart.

May I be safe.
May I be peaceful.
May I be kind to myself.
May I accept myself as I am.

So, repeat these phrases silently,
really trying to get in touch with the intention behind the words,
the intention to offer yourself
kindness, compassion, acceptance.

As your mind wanders,
which it will inevitably do,
just refresh
the phrases in your mind.

May I be safe.
May I be peaceful.
May I be kind to myself.
May I accept myself as I am.

Giving yourself the same kindness and support
and acceptance you would give to a good friend
who was feeling bad about themselves.



May I be safe.
May I be peaceful.
May I be kind to myself.
May I accept myself as I am.

Remembering that
everyone is in the same boat.
Everyone feels
inadequate in some way.
Everyone makes mistakes.
Everyone fails.
This is the human condition. This is normal.
This is something we all share.
It's okay.

May I be safe.
May I be peaceful.
May I be kind to myself.
May I accept myself as I am.

And remembering all your fellow humans
who struggle with self-judgement the way you do,
let's change the phrases slightly
so that we include everyone in our intention
for self-compassion.

May we all feel safe.
May we all be peaceful.
May we be kind to ourselves.
May we accept ourselves as we are.

May we be safe.
May we be peaceful.
May we be kind to ourselves.
May we accept ourselves as we are.
Just gently repeating the phrases silently.

Now I'd like you to think of something



that's been causing you suffering
that you don't necessarily blame yourself for. Maybe
you have a loved one who is sick,
or something's going wrong in your life
just due to external circumstances.
Something that's very hard to bear,
hard to deal with.
And also, give yourself compassion
for this source of suffering.
Your suffering comes from two main sources,
from ourselves not being as we want,
or from our lives not being as we want.

So, thinking of this aspect of your life that's
causing you pain,
repeat the following phrases.

May I be safe.
May I be peaceful.
May I be kind to myself.
May I accept my life as it is.
This is the way things are.

May I be safe.
May I be peaceful.
May I be kind to myself.
May I accept my life as it is.

Repeating the phrases silently
to yourself,
soothing and comforting yourself with the difficulties
of living the human life.

Really feel your caring concern,
tenderness for yourself,
struggling like so many others.

May I be safe.
May I be peaceful.



May I be kind to myself.
May I accept my life as it is.

Again, put your hand on your heart, or if it's
been there the whole time,
really feel your hand on your heart.
And while we've been focusing on comforting ourselves
for painful feelings, for suffering,
now see if you can feel
what the compassionate self feels like.

Maybe your heart is tingling
or feels warm,
feels vibrant in some way.
Notice the good qualities
of an open heart that's filled with compassion,
the beautiful feelings of tenderness,
care, concern, kindness.

Noticing the joy of
compassion,
of connectedness,
of open-heartedness.
This also is part of the human experience.

And thank yourself for
being a good, supportive friend.

May we all be well
and safe,
happy and free.