



USE WITH:

n/a



GRADE LEVEL:

Upper elementary, middle school, or high school



CONTEXT:

Remote friendly

EDUCATOR PRACTICE

Write a Letter of Self-Compassion

Work through challenges and mistakes, while showing yourself compassion.

Created by [Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley](#)

Description:

Through writing a kind letter of compassion to yourself, you will be encouraged to be more mindful and self-compassionate, and develop more emotionally supportive relationships with your students.

Est. time to complete:

15 minutes

Steps:

1. First, identify something about yourself that makes you feel uncomfortable or insecure—something you see as a flaw or shortcoming. It could be something related to your work with students or colleagues; your personality, behavior, or abilities; your relationships; or any other part of your life.
2. Once you identify something, write it down and describe how it makes you feel. Sad? Embarrassed? Angry? Try to be as honest as possible, keeping in mind that no one but you will see what you write.
3. The next step is to write a letter to yourself expressing compassion, understanding, and acceptance for the part of yourself that you dislike.
4. While writing, imagine that there is someone who loves and accepts you unconditionally for who you are. What would that person say to you about this part of yourself?

5. Remind yourself that everyone has things about themselves that they don't like, and that no one is without flaws. Think about how many other people in the world are struggling with the same thing that you're struggling with; if you're struggling with something at school, think about how many educators face the same issue.
6. Consider the ways in which events that have happened in your personal or professional life, the family environment you grew up in, or even your genes may have contributed to this negative aspect of yourself.
7. In a compassionate way, ask yourself whether there are things that you could do to improve or better cope with this negative aspect. Focus on how constructive changes could make you feel happier, healthier, or more fulfilled, and avoid judging yourself.
8. After writing the letter, put it down for a little while. Then come back to it later and read it again. It may be especially helpful to read it whenever you're feeling bad about this aspect of yourself, as a reminder to be more self-compassionate.

Tips for Educators:

- If you feel challenged to express self-compassion, consider what positive ways others might describe you. Use these to spark ideas for your writing.
- This activity can potentially be used with students. When using it with students, it's important to keep in mind that students may have different struggles based on their different cultural backgrounds. Consider that what a student—or adult—sees as a flaw, or as a strength, may vary depending on those different backgrounds.

Inspired by:

1. Wilson, A. C., Mackintosh, K., Power, K., & Chan, S. W. (2019). Effectiveness of self-compassion related therapies: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Mindfulness*, 10(6), 979-995. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-018-1037-6>