

We all can be hard on ourselves. We can judge or criticize ourselves when we feel upset, when things are not going well, or when we make mistakes. When we think about relationships, we might think about relationships we have with other people around us. We also all have a relationship with ourselves. It can be helpful to think about it in this way. We can learn and practice how to improve our relationship with ourselves. Little by little, we can learn to be more kind, compassionate, and understanding towards ourselves.

Learning Point # 1 → *Acknowledging our feelings*

Acknowledging our own feelings is a kind and caring thing to do for ourselves. When we feel upset, we naturally want our feeling acknowledged by someone. Why not start with ourselves being the one to acknowledge our own feelings? When we feel upset, we can try our best, to genuinely acknowledge and validate our own feelings. We might say to ourselves: *"I feel sad right now. It's okay to feel sad."*

- From your perspective, why do you think it's important to acknowledge your feelings?

Learning Point # 2 → *We all struggle*

All human beings struggle and make mistakes. When having a hard time, sometimes we can feel alone in our struggle, and this can make us feel worse. It can be helpful to step back and remind ourselves that personal struggle is part of the shared human experience of life. We all go through hard times. We all make mistakes and fail, and no one is perfect. So when we are upset, we can remind ourselves: *"I'm not alone feeling the way I'm feeling. I'm human after all. We all go through hard times."*

- What is one reason it might be helpful for you to remember that all human beings struggle in life?

Learning Point # 3 → *Treating ourselves like a friend*

Self-kindness means treating ourselves like a friend or loved one. If we sense that a close friend or loved one is upset, we might check-in with them with an attitude of openness, support, and non-judgment. We might say something kind to a friend like: *"It's okay. You will get through this."* Or we might do something kind for a friend like baking them cookies. Self-kindness is about bringing this same kind and compassionate approach to ourselves when we are upset. We can SAY kind and gentle things to ourselves: *"It's okay. I'm doing the best I can. Hang in there."* We can also DO kind things for ourselves (treat ourselves to our favorite food, watch our favorite show, take a nap).

- When you are upset, what's one kind thing you can SAY to yourself?
- When you are upset, what's one kind thing you can DO for yourself?

Daily Practice

Your brain is like a muscle. DAILY PRACTICE makes it strong.

Research studies show that daily practice...

- Makes your brain healthier and stronger
- Reduces stress and anxiety
- Increases positive emotions

Recommendations for Daily Practice

- Set aside a little time every day to do ONE lesson or exercise. The lessons focus on *learning* key concepts. Exercises focus on *strengthening* your skills.
- The key is to CHOOSE what works for you. Develop a personalized practice of your own. If you miss a day, no worries. You can always get back on track the next day
- An exercise that goes well with this lesson is the **Kindness Exercise**, available in the *Classic Mindfulness Exercise Category* at MindfulCoping.com

Plan Your Daily Practice for the Next Week

	What date/day of week will this be for me?	What Lesson or Exercise will I plan to do on this day? <i>(Tips: Consider repeating the “Being Kind to Yourself” lesson or trying the Kindness Exercise)</i>	When and where will I practice?
Day 1			
Day 2			
Day 3			
Day 4			
Day 5			
Day 6			
Day 7			

Keep in mind, the Mindful Coping Program is designed to be FLEXIBLE. Don't worry about doing the lessons or exercises in a particular order. You can go through the lessons and exercises in any order you prefer.
