

Embrace Self-Compassion: Overcoming Setbacks

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. critic: (Noun) /'krɪtɪk/ a person who judges the merits of literary, artistic, or musical works.
Example: The critic gave the film a positive review.
2. blame (verb): /bleɪm/ to assign responsibility for a fault or wrong.
Example: He tends to blame others for his mistakes.
3. silly: (Adjective) /'sɪli/ having or showing a lack of common sense or judgment; absurd and foolish.
Example: Don't be silly; it's just a harmless prank.
4. control (verb): /kən'trəʊl/ to exercise restraint or direction over; dominate; command.
Example: She struggled to control her anger in the heated argument.
5. setback: (Noun) /'set,bæk/ a reversal or check in progress; a change from better to worse.
Example: The project faced a setback when funding was cut.
6. reject: (Verb) /rɪ'dʒekt/ to refuse to accept or consider; to discard as useless or unsatisfactory.
Example: The publisher rejected his manuscript for being too controversial.
7. self-indulgent: (Adjective) /,self ɪn'dʌldʒənt/ characterized by excessive or unrestrained gratification of one's desires; indulging one's own desires, passions, whims, etc., especially without restraint.
Example: Her self-indulgent behavior often led to overspending.
8. optimistic: (Adjective) /,ɒptɪ'mɪstɪk/ disposed to take a favorable view of events or conditions and to expect the most favorable outcome.
Example: Despite the challenges, she remained optimistic about the future.
9. mindset: (Noun) /'maɪnd,seɪt/ a fixed mental attitude or disposition that predetermines a person's responses to and interpretations of situations.
Example: Adopting a growth mindset can lead to greater resilience in the face of adversity.



Are you your own worst **critic**? Do you **blame** yourself for your failures and feel angry if you make a **silly** mistake? Experts say many of us are too hard on ourselves, and might feel better if we used more self-compassion. Self-compassion means being kind to yourself, understanding that everyone makes mistakes, and **controlling** your negative thoughts. Thinking too much about our mistakes, or feeling sad or angry at ourselves, can make it more difficult to bounce back from setbacks. Self-compassion can help us overcome those setbacks and improve our mental health.

When you experience a **setback**, you should treat yourself as you would treat a friend in a similar situation, says psychologist Serena Chen. For a friend, "More likely than not, we'd be kind, understanding and encouraging," Chen wrote for Harvard Business Review. Self-compassion can also help you learn from your mistakes. Psychologist Kristin Neff, who is a leading writer on self-compassion, thinks it can improve people's general well-being. Neff teaches self-compassion using the Buddhist idea of compassion, which focuses on thinking about the suffering of other people.

And she wants people to use these ideas to think compassionately about their own experiences. Margie Warrell, an expert on personal development, has found that some business executives **reject** the idea of using self-compassion, seeing it as **self-indulgent**. But studies have shown that self-compassion can help people to be more motivated to work hard and "get ahead," Warrell wrote for Forbes. People who use self-compassion are in fact "more likely to try things and risk failure," she said.

Researchers at the University of British Columbia found that first-year university students who showed more self-compassion often felt **optimistic** and energetic, and were more motivated to study. Chen, the psychologist, said her research showed that self-compassion helps people develop a "growth **mindset**" by trying to do something better after each setback. One way to create a growth mindset is to stop seeing your abilities as fixed, she said. Rather, we can all work to grow and improve in the future.

DISCUSSION

1. How would you use self-compassion if you made a mistake at work or school?
2. How do you explain why self-compassion is important to someone?
3. How might self-compassion help a student with learning and studying?
4. When have you seen someone being too hard on themselves? How could self-compassion have helped them?
5. Think of a recent setback. How could self-compassion with a growth mindset help in similar situations?
6. If you wrote a short story about self-compassion, what would it be about?
7. How might people's views on self-compassion change if they understood its benefits?
8. Describe a situation where someone practiced self-compassion. How did it affect the outcome, and what can we learn from it?