

Exercise 1: Connecting with your compassionate mind

Start by shifting your breathing to a more rhythmic pattern – this means slowly breathing in for the same amount of time as you slowly breathe out (e.g. breathing in for three or four seconds, then out for three or four seconds)

Connect with your compassionate tone of voice, neutral facial expression and relaxed body position

Then think about:

- the wisdom of the situation – for example, the intentions of the critical mind, but also your knowledge of the full picture of what's going on and everyone's roles in it, including the fact that no parent is perfect or the 'ideal parent' we dream about becoming

- Your strength – to do something differently and to fight the critical mind's view of your parenting
- Your caring commitment – as you deserve to feel OK as a parent. You are trying your best and nobody is perfect. Therefore, it is all right to be kind to yourself too

Then allow yourself to be compassionate about the parenting situation you are thinking about and connect with this different way of speaking to yourself in your own mind

Jot down what your compassionate mind said to you:

How do you feel about what your kind voice said to you?