

### **Exercise 6.1: Imagining the compassionate self (pages 155-7)**

This exercise is designed to help you focus on the feelings associated with creating compassion in yourself. It is hard to offer ourselves, or others, compassion if we don't have a good idea what this feels like. Please keep in mind that it doesn't matter whether you feel you have these qualities or not. It is the act of imagining that you have them that is important. As with so many of the exercises in this book, the more you practice this the easier you'll probably find it.

What you will do in this exercise is take each of the qualities we've just described in turn – wisdom, strength, warmth, responsibility – hold it in your mind, and imagine yourself having it. Work through each quality steadily, playfully and slowly. You may find some qualities easier to imagine yourself having than others – and this is perfectly normal. Try to notice how each quality can affect your body differently.

Remember that you may get only glimmers of images and feelings, perhaps because your mind wanders, or you can't really focus. This is very typical of what happens when we're trying something new, just as if we were trying to learn to play a piano, we'd be all fingers and thumbs to start with, but regular practice will help us improve. Use the audio of this exercise to help you to imagine your compassionate self.