

Exercise 6.2: Me at my best (pages 158-9)

In this exercise you can explore your compassionate self by reminding yourself of a time when you felt compassion or acted in a compassionate way – it doesn't matter to what degree. You can think of your compassionate self as 'me at my best'.

It can be helpful to begin by bringing your soothing system online. Please choose a memory of when you were compassionate for someone else and when you were satisfied that your compassion was helpful to them. Try not to focus on times when you have been compassionate with someone who was very distressed – especially if this is the first time you've tried this exercise. It may help to write down the specific memory you want to focus on, and to 'risk assess' it first, making sure it is not too distressing for you to work with, otherwise you might find yourself focusing on the other person's distress, and maybe your inability to alleviate it entirely, rather than bringing your attention to your own compassionate qualities. The aim is to focus on your feelings of wanting to help and your capacity for compassion. This is an exercise you can practice every day for 5-10 minutes, perhaps choosing different memories each time.

You might find Worksheet 4 is a helpful way to organise your thoughts and keep your focus when practicing. The audio will talk you through these steps.