

Exercise 6.9: Self-compassion (pages 179-80)

This exercise is like Exercise 6.4. The only difference is that you are focusing your compassionate attention on yourself, rather than on someone else. You will try to create a sense within yourself of being a compassionate person. You can use 'me at my best' (Exercise 6.2) or your practice of being a compassionate person (Exercise 6.1) to help you. The first step is to recall the version of you that can offer compassion, perhaps by using a recent memory of you being compassionate, and this being accepted by, and helpful to, another person.

Please prepare by having a photograph of you, ideally one that does not trigger self-criticism about the way you look. Sometimes using a headshot or picture of you as a child is easier. Or you can do this exercise whilst looking in a mirror. As with the other exercises, try this for a couple of minutes at first, using the audio to help you, then gradually build up the time when you feel ready. Your wandering mind is likely to be very active during this exercise, particularly at first. This is quite normal; just gently bring it back to the exercise.