

# BECOMING *Wildly* RESILIENT

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## Mindful Self-Compassion

**Amy Rodquist-Kodet:** [00:00:00] You are listening to Becoming Wildly Resilient, brought to you by University of Kentucky Human Resources, Health and Wellness. Join us as we explore tools, practices, meditations, and conversations with members of the UK community. Together, we will discover how we can thrive at work, home, and beyond.

Hello, everyone! This is Amy Rodquist-Kodet, Health Coach with the University of Kentucky Health and Wellness Program. And welcome back to Becoming Wildly Resilient: Practices. This month, we are talking about a practice that continues to support me in really dark and difficult days.

And that [00:01:00] is Self-Compassion; and this work and research really started with Dr. Kristen Neff. She is a researcher and associate professor of human development at the University of Texas in Austin, and she defines self-compassion quite simply as giving ourselves the same kindness and care that we'd give to a good friend. She said the biggest reason people aren't more self-compassionate with themselves is that they're afraid that they will become self-indulgent. They believe that self-criticism is what keeps us in line. And in fact, it's the opposite.

So, the research on self-compassion has been [00:02:00] linked to greater well-being, including diminished anxiety and depression, better emotional coping skills, and more compassion for others. This practice is incredibly helpful when we are in a downward spiral. When we're in that place of self-loathing, overwhelm - when that critical voice is going bonkers in our brains reminding us quite frankly, that we suck, right? That maybe we are a terrible employee, that we are a terrible parent, that we are just the worst partner in the world, right?

All these extreme ways of thinking that things are never going to get better, that it's always going to be like this. This is the time to pull this practice out. I found it to be incredibly helpful in the pandemic when I was [00:03:00] feeling really, really isolated and alone. And, you know, for me, it was just this really difficult time.

I had brand new identical twins about three months before the pandemic started. And then we all went into lockdown. And even though we were incredibly privileged and able to be safe at home without being a first responder. I was in this place of total overwhelm.

And we're all locked down. My husband and I are trying to figure out how to work when we don't have daycare for these twins. We had a middle schooler who besides being in the throes of just being a new teenager, trying to figure out all this stuff with working and being online. It was then that I was like, I have got to get a grip.

And I do this work professionally, right? I am a health coach [00:04:00] and have been such for many, many years. And I felt like I was drowning. Self-compassion was the tool that I turned to again and again, as a way to remind myself, I'm not alone here. I'm not the only one that feels like this. And to be able to offer in some kind of systematic way some gentleness towards myself.

So here is the practice. It is a tool that Dr. Neff calls the self-compassion break. Here's how it works: that first piece is to think of a situation right now in your life that's causing you stress.

Don't pick the one that is the most traumatic or the most daunting. For our intents and purposes today, we just really want to work with something that is causing some frenzy, some overwhelm; and see for a [00:05:00] moment - if you can feel the stress and that emotional discomfort come up in your body.

And now the self-compassion break has three parts to it.

The first part is to offer yourself some radical acceptance that this hurts, that this is a moment of pain and suffering. This is a moment of stress, fear, or overwhelm. No need to change it; no need to make it better in the

moment. This is the human experience, and you are feeling a lot of difficult feelings in the moment.

The next piece is to remind yourself of our common humanity. That is, that suffering is a part of life, it is part of the human experience, [00:06:00] that you are not the only person that has ever felt like this, that you're not alone, and that you are connected with people around the planet right here, right now, that are in the midst of struggle.

The third part is to offer yourself some kindness. And the way that I like to do this is to put my hands over my heart and to just simply feel the warmth and the gentle touch on my chest; and say to yourself: may I be kind to myself; may I give myself the compassion that I need; may I offer myself forgiveness. May I have courage to do something really hard.

You can also ask yourself what do I need to hear right now to express kindness to myself. [00:07:00] I find that query has the ability to go directly to my pain point. What do I really want somebody to say to me? What do I want my best friend to say?

What do I want my partner to say? What do I want them to see in me? Maybe I want them to say, I see how hard you're working. I see how much struggle you're in, and yet you don't give up. This idea of what we want somebody else to say to us can be a really helpful way to us to get clear on the words that we can offer ourselves.

Combining those kind words with a physical gesture, like the hand over your heart, is especially powerful. So, the key to finding a phrase that resonates for you is something that feels truthy-truth, that doesn't feel - kind of that toxic [00:08:00] positivity, fake it till' you make it - like everything's gonna be fine, just don't give up, right?

Well, everything may not feel fine, and you may feel like giving up. So, you want to find some sort of phrase that feels true, and real, and honest. One of my favorite mantras and words of comfort comes from Dr. Becky Kennedy. I think I've shared her words of wisdom before, because it really, really resonates with me, which is simply, this feels hard because it is hard, not because I'm doing anything wrong. So, play with this practice for yourself, finding those three pieces of reminding yourself in mindfulness that this is a moment of suffering, it hurts; that this suffering is part of our

common humanity. And then that third piece, which is [00:09:00] to offer yourself some kindness that you so desperately long to hear from somebody else. What happens when we can offer ourself that kindness that we so freely offer other people in our world?

If you would like to go deeper into the work of Dr. Kristen Neff, you can Google her, or at the website [selfcompassion.org](https://selfcompassion.org) will invite you towards many of her other practices and research that go along with self-compassion.

Thanks for joining me today and for practicing together, because practice makes possible. And that's how we become more wildly resilient. So, until next time, keep practicing. And be well.

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