

THE SCIENTIFIC BENEFITS OF SELF-COMPASSION

Society has taught us to be perfect, achieve more, win, work harder, and be the best. Of course there's nothing wrong with having an objective in life. However, some people do not know when to stop and are continuously self-critical. In that case, instead of helping you to improve yourself, your objectives will actually stand in your way. New research suggests self-compassion may be a far superior alternative.

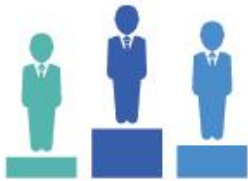
SELF-CRITICISM: A SELF-DEFEATING TENDENCY



When our self-worth depends on out-competing others, we become more insecure, anxious and self-critical, which adds to our misery.



When facing criticism, we become defensive and feel crushed.



Competition, instead of strengthening relationships, tends to lead to isolation.

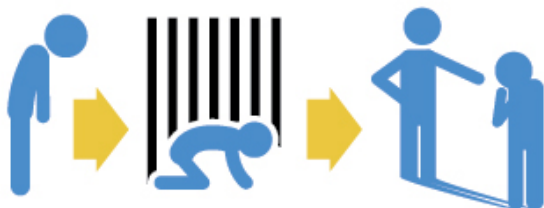


In competition, people will see others as obstacles to overcome and this view separates them from others.



Self-criticism and competition get in the way of our primary goal to be successful, to belong, and to be loved.

SELF-COMPASSION: A HEALTHY ALTERNATIVE THAT REAPS RESULTS



When we fail, feel insecure or inadequate, many people fall into the trap of self-criticism, which is actually a self-defeating tendency.



Self-compassion is the source of empowerment, learning, and inner strength.

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SELF-COMPASSION LEADS TO RESILIENCE

Self-Compassion involves facing failure, insecurity or mistakes in a completely different way. Unlike self-criticism, self-compassion builds greater resilience, strength and happiness. Self-compassion involves 3 things:

1) SELF-KINDNESS



Being kind and understanding with oneself as one would be with a friend. Understanding that we are intrinsically deserving of care and concern just like everybody else.

2) COMMON HUMANITY



Understanding that we're not alone in our mistakes, weakness and failures, that making mistakes is intrinsically human, and that they are a normal part of everyone's life.

3) MINDFULNESS



Being mindful of one's emotions and feelings without over-identifying with them i.e. validating our emotion without adding fuel to the fire.



Self-compassion is learnable. The first step is to recognize how you respond to failure and choose the 3 elements of self-compassion instead of self-criticism.



Self-compassion is not being lazy or having no objective in life. In times of over-indulgence and laziness, self-compassion involves toughening up and taking responsibility.



Compassionate people aren't always self-compassionate. Self-critical over-achievers are not the only ones that lack self-compassion. Some of the kindest people do as well. People can be very compassionate towards others but forget to extend that kindness to themselves.

SELF-COMPASSION IS ABOUT A CHANGE IN ATTITUDE AND IS LINKED WITH GREATER WELL-BEING AS WELL AS SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES:

SELF-COMPASSION LEADS TO INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY

SELF-CRITICISM

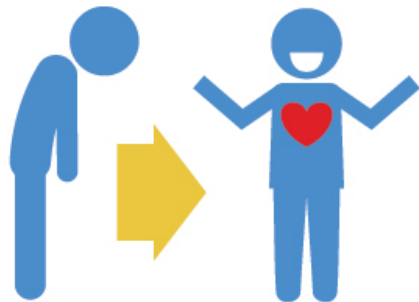


When you are motivated by self-compassion, failure is not an indicator of defeat, but a learning opportunity.

FAILURE



Self-criticism will turn failure into despair.



Self-compassion is likely to improve one's performance after failure.



Self-compassion will maintain peace of mind. When you remain calm in the face of failure, rejection and criticism, you experience higher well-being and are more productive and successful.

SELF-COMPASSION LEADS TO DECREASED STRESS



Harsh self-criticism activates our sympathetic nervous system and elevates stress hormones. The sting of self-criticism can be so intense that it stops us from learning and being resilient in the face of failure.



Self-compassion, on the other hand, may activate our biological nurturance and soothing system which leads to greater feelings of well-being.

PRACTICES FOR BOOSTING SELF-COMPASSION

Write yourself a letter



Imagine that you are writing to your friend what a compassionate friend would say to you. Write it down, and read it later.

Write down your self-talk



Write down self-critical words that come to your mind, and ask if you would say these words to a friend.

Develop a self-compassion mantra



Develop easy-to-remember self-compassion phrases to help you get a hold of yourself.

Meditation



Meditation is a process by which, through contemplation and relaxation, we can begin to loosen the grip of self-critical thoughts and emotions.

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