



"Nothing beats kindness," said the horse. "It sits quietly beyond all things."

"BE KIND TO YOURSELF"
A COLLECTIVE COMPASSION CARE KIT

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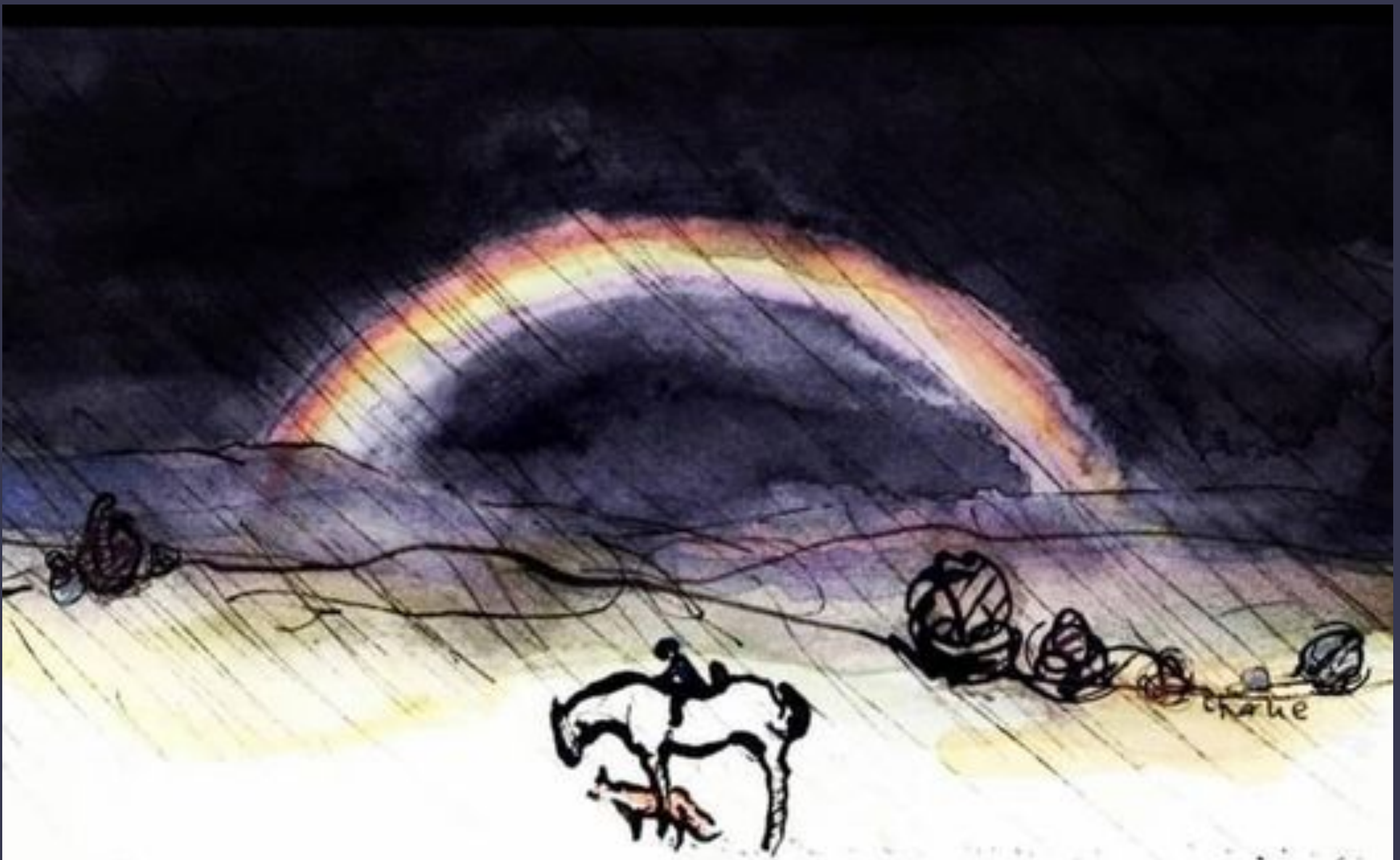
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"This storm is making me tired," said the boy
"Storms get tired too," said the horse, "so hold on."

PART 1

WHAT IS COMPASSION AND WHY IS IT USEFUL?

WHY IS SELF-COMPASSION IMPORTANT?

What is self-esteem?

First of all - self-esteem refers to the degree to which we evaluate ourselves **positively**. It can be an unhelpful idea because it focuses on how much we like ourselves and is often based on comparisons with others in a hierarchy.

What is self-compassion?

Instead of mercilessly judging and criticizing yourself for various inadequacies or shortcomings, self-compassion means you are kind and understanding when confronted with personal failings. Unlike self-esteem, it is not based on positive judgments or evaluations, instead it is a way of relating to ourselves. People feel self-compassion because they are human beings; not because they are special or above others. Self-compassion offers the benefits of self-esteem (strong mental health, stable sense of worth) without the pitfalls (e.g., social comparison).

The 3 elements of self-compassion



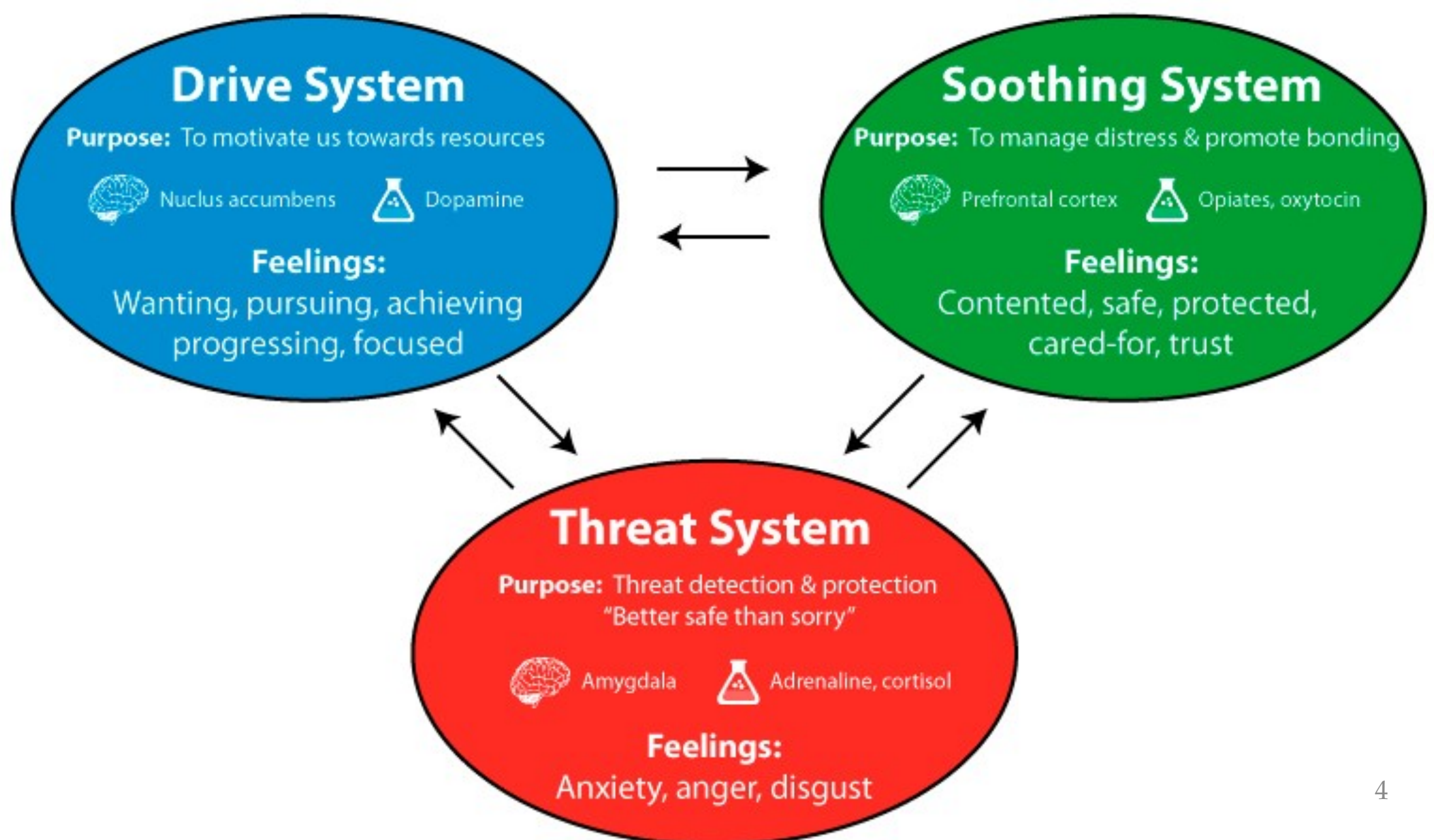
HOW DOES SELF-COMPASSION HELP US TO FEEL SOOTHED?

Here's a bit of geeky science about compassion:

Compassionate Mind theory proposes that humans switch between three systems to manage their emotions:

Drive System
Threat System
Soothing System

- Each system is associated with different brain regions and different brain chemistry.
- Distress is caused when the drive system or the threat system are not regulated.
- The key to finding balance, is to focus on what is known as the **soothing system**.
- We do this by first noticing what things we do to soothe ourselves and building on these at times of difficulty. Part 2 of this booklet contains some ideas to get you going!
- When we use our soothing systems, we activate non-judgment, strength, warmth, empathy, wisdom, kindness and moral courage – all of which are linked to compassion.





" Being kind to yourself
is one of the greatest kindnesses."
said the mole.

PART 2

COLLECTIVE COMPASSION EXERCISES



BODY BASED GROUNDING

What are they?

Grounding exercises are things you can do for yourself or with others, to bring yourself into contact with the present moment – the here and now. **They go hand in hand with compassion** since when we are present we can more easily notice our needs and the needs of others.

How to do them?

- **Standing on one leg:** lift your knee is lifted to hip height in front (Karate Kid style), arms out by sides for balance. Try to maintain balance for at least a minute on each leg. Supporting leg is rooted to the ground Centring; the stomach and core will be likely to become more tense during this exercise.
- **Swinging arms:** feet are shoulder width apart, raise up both hands and then swing them down by the body in a relaxed way. By bending the legs with each swing we can generate the power to swing the arms from the legs and centre. Swing arms for one to two minutes, then spend time reflecting on how it felt.
- **Stomping grounding exercise:** to really feel the ground supporting you stomp from side to side for one to two minutes, then notice how your legs feet and the ground feel.
- **Centring with the breath:** stomp with each foot just once and then breathe in lifting the hands upwards then breathe out lowering the hands and arms slowly until you have fully breathed out. Repeat several times. Practice exhaling centring and grounding yourself without the stomping and arm movements. Try this kind of centring breathing each time before you say something to someone else and each time before you text someone

Body Work - Rufus May.com

Some body based knowledge and skills, practical and easy to learn for grounding and calming yourself or others. Rufus May is a Dr. with a lived experience of surviving mental health challenges himself. Check out his website for resources/videos of these techniques. ⁶



COMPASSIONATE BEINGS

What are they?

Compassionate beings have long been a way to bring about the effects of kindness. A compassionate being can be any being meaningful to you, that you can bring to mind when needed. For some they are people such as friends, parents, role models or ancestors, but they may also be animals, religious or spiritual beings or even special trees or plants which can be brought to mind to elicit caring feelings. You can have more than one and they can change over time.

What to do?

Choose a being that feels right to you, someone or something where there are not many complicated additional feelings towards. A being who is instantly someone you can feel spontaneous kindness for. A being that might instantly bring a smile to your face.

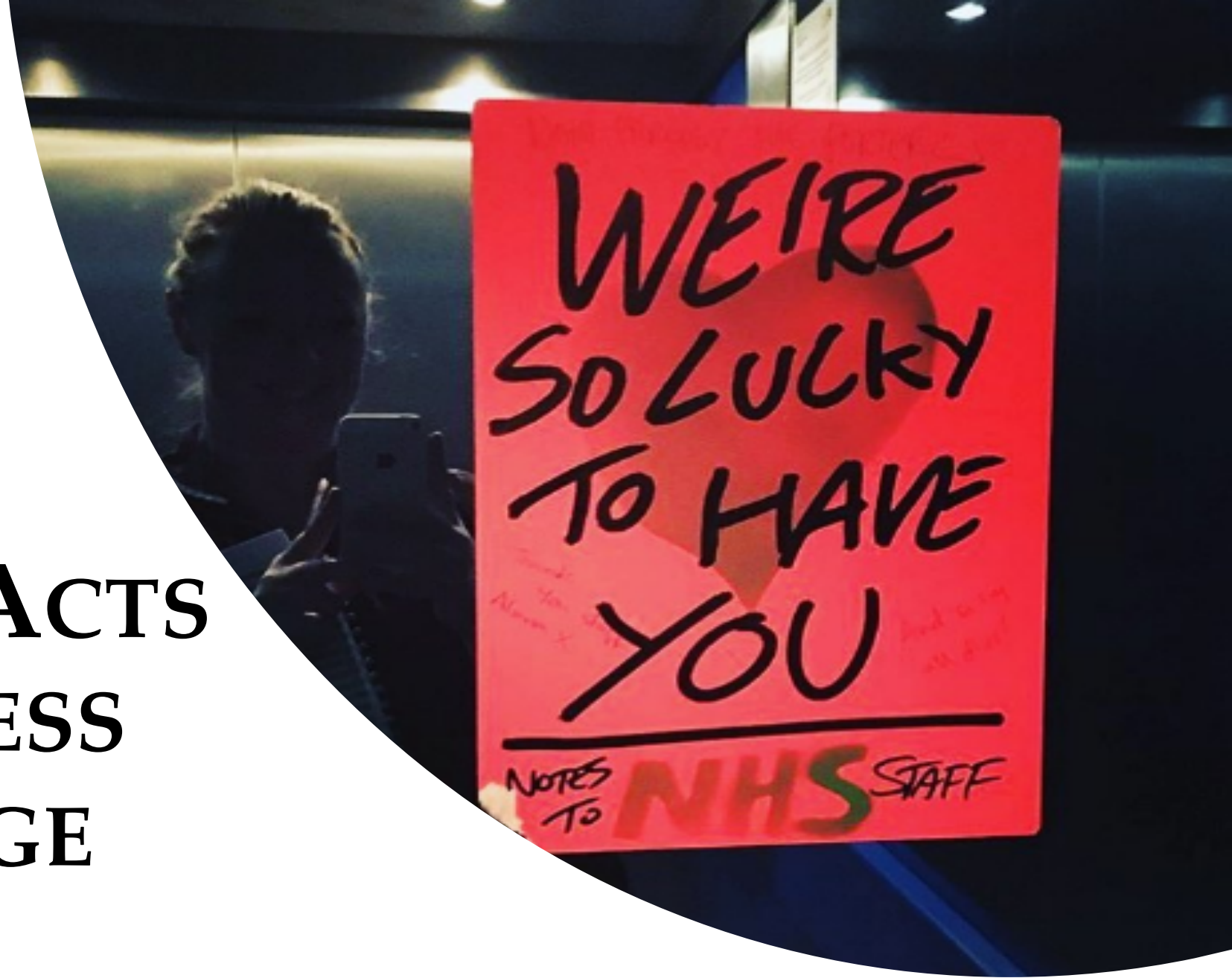
When needed: Simply take a moment to bring them to mind. You might have a moment to close your eyes for a few seconds and bring their image into your mind's eye. You might imagine what they might say in this moment. You could bring about a memory from a time with them.

What might their presence evoke for you in terms of care? Might they encourage you to soothe in a particular way? How might they be showing their care towards you with their gestures?

Notice how you feel in your body afterwards. Ask yourself what your being would have you do or say (or not do, or not say!) in this moment?

You may choose to take their connection with you for the day. Perhaps you might carry their photo or image with you going forward.

3 RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS CHALLENGE



What it is?

We can contribute in mini ways that help cultivate a culture of kindness at home or at work.

We all perform acts of kindness at one time or another. These acts may be large or small, and their beneficiaries may not even be aware of them. Yet their effects can be profound, not only on the recipient but on the giver as well. This exercise asks you to perform one act of kindness for three days. This is a way of promoting kindness in the world and cultivating happiness in yourself and others.

How to do it?

For the next three days, perform one act of kindness. It doesn't matter if the acts are small or big. It is more effective if you perform a variety of acts. Your Random Acts of Kindness does not have to be for the same person and they don't have to know you are the one being kind.

For example, you could tip the person at the café, help a friend with an activity or create art with a child or an elder.

After you commit your Random Act of Kindness you might want to write down what you did and describe how you it made you feel.



BEFRIENDING YOURSELF

What is this?

Perhaps the single best way to provoke compassion for yourself is through this exercise: **treating yourself like a good friend.**

It's easy to give our friends love, compassion, and understanding, even when they fail or make a mistake. It can be much harder to extend that same understanding and compassion to ourselves when we make a mistake.

How to do it?

Follow these instructions to start showing yourself more compassion:

1. First, think about times when a close friend feels bad about him or herself or is really struggling in some way. How would you respond to your friend in this situation (especially when you're at your best)? Please write down what you typically do, what you say, and note the tone in which you typically talk to your friends.
2. Now think about times when you feel bad about yourself or are struggling. How do you typically respond to yourself in these situations? Please write down what you typically do, what you say, and note the tone in which you talk to yourself.

Did you notice a difference? If so, ask yourself why. What factors or fears come into play that lead you to treat yourself and others so differently



SOOTHING BREATHING

Why Practice Soothing Breathing?

Using our breath can be a helpful way of settling our mind and body when we are experiencing uncomfortable sensations such as worry, sadness, irritability, frustration or, stress. It can help to create a more secure and grounded feeling and reduce the impact of the body's natural fight or flight reflex. By deliberately using our breath, we are helping our mind to receive the message that we are safe.

What to do?

Technique 1: Alternate Nostril Breathing

1. Take a comfortable and tall seat, making sure your spine is straight and your heart is open. Relax your left palm comfortably into your lap and bring your right hand just in front of your face.
2. With your right hand, bring your pointer finger and middle finger to rest between your eyebrows, lightly using them as an anchor. The fingers we'll be actively using are the thumb and ring finger.
3. Close your eyes and take a deep breath in and out through your nose.
4. Close your right nostril with your right thumb. Inhale through the left nostril slowly and steadily.
5. Close the left nostril with your ring finger so both nostrils are held closed; retain your breath at the top of the inhale for a brief pause.
6. Open your right nostril and release the breath slowly through the right side; pause briefly at the bottom of the exhale.
7. Inhale through the right side slowly.
8. Hold both nostrils closed (with ring finger and thumb).
9. Open your left nostril and release breath slowly through the left side. Pause briefly at the bottom.
10. Repeat 5-10 cycles, allowing your mind to follow your inhales and exhales.

Technique 2: Square Breathing

1. Begin by slowly exhaling all of your air out.
2. Then, gently inhale through your nose to a slow count of 4.
3. Hold at the top of the breath for a count of 4.
4. Then gently exhale through your mouth for a count of 4.
5. At the bottom of the breath



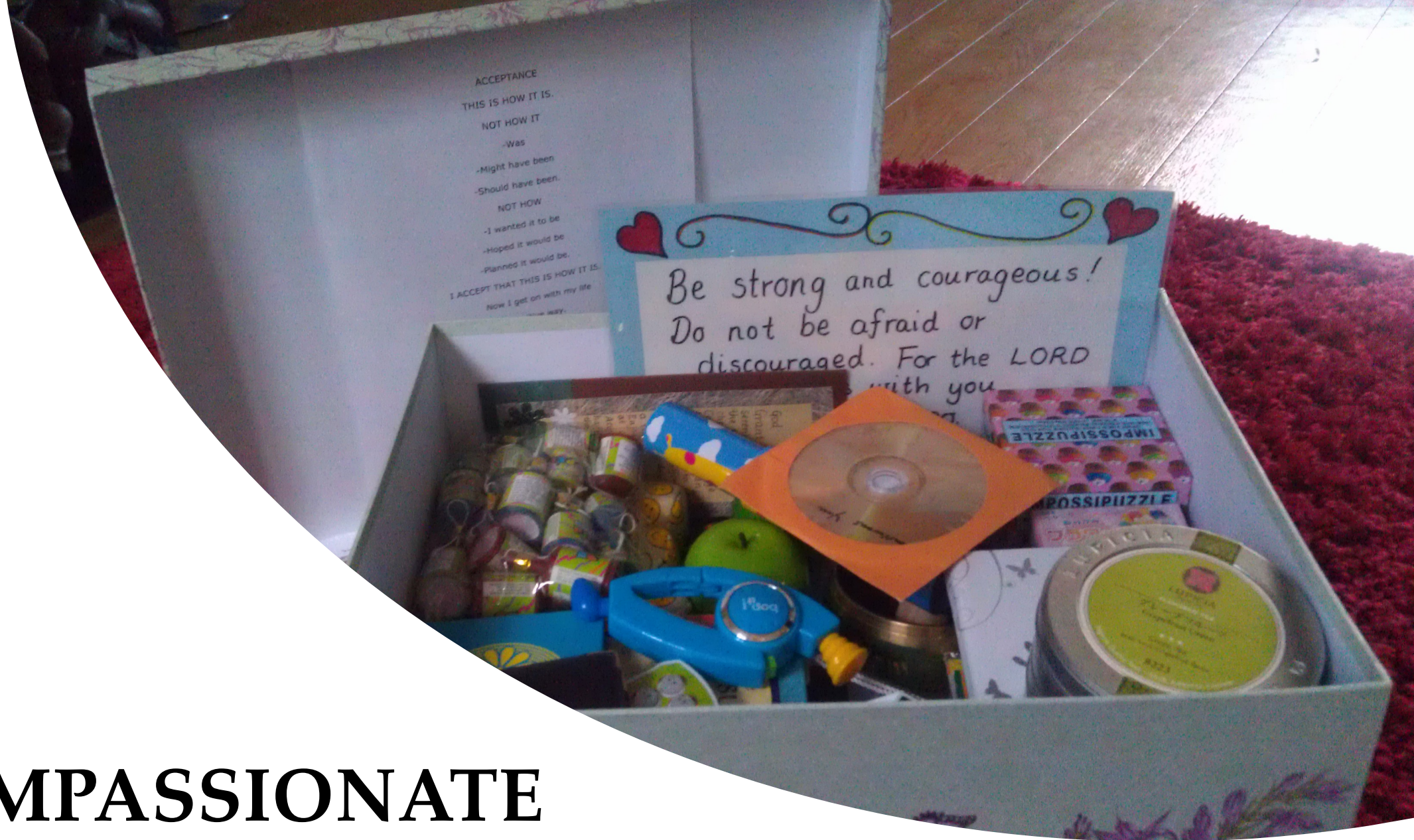
SLEEP AS SELF COMPASSION

Three Great Sleep Resources:

6 Tips For Better Sleep– Dr. Matt Walker Short YouTube video with tips on how to not only fall asleep quickly but also stay asleep for longer from sleep Scientist Matt Walker author of ‘why we sleep’ who outlines a checklist of easy yet important factors for getting a good nights sleep for adults and children alike.

Deep Sleep Body Scan – David Gendelman This is a short guided imagery exercise which scans through the body using a simple but effective visualization, to help calm busy minds. Available online or via the free app: Insight Connect.

Guided Sleep Relaxation - Saqib Rizvi This Sleep meditation is on ‘Insight Connect’ free app. It guides you through how to relax your mind and body to prepare for sleep. Available online or via the free app: Insight Connect.



COMPASSIONATE BOX

What is it?

A box which you can make dedicated to self soothing things which you fill over time and which is then available whenever you need it. Having a box dedicated to caring for yourself says “this is important” and means you can check when your soothing strategies may need topping up. Keep it in an accessible place.

How to make it?

Find a small box ... fill with items/objects/quotes/messages you find personally soothing.

Some ideas:

- **Vision:** photo album, DVD, book or magazine, a picture of friends/ a pet, place a reminder for a funny or inspiring YouTube video, a walk or sit in the park or garden
- **Hearing:** soothing or inspiring music on CD or mp3 player, recordings of a friends voice, reminder of phone numbers to ring, a talking book.
- **Smell or taste:** oils, fruity snack or treat, favourite perfume, a sachet of coffee or ready prepared cake mix.
- **Touch:** soft woolly socks or blanket, grounding object, hand or foot lotion, massage oil, warm bubble bath, nail varnish, make-up.



COMPASSIONATE PLAYLIST

What it is:

A playlist that includes songs which are motivating and make you feel good which you can listen to during challenging times.

How to do it:

Take your go-to music platform and sit down and make a playlist.

Include:

1. A song that sparks a great memory.
2. A song that makes you feel good.
3. A song that has lyrics with an uplifting message.
4. A song that makes you smile.
5. A song from an artist that reminds you of a great person in your life.
6. A guilty pleasure song.

Lastly give the playlist a name, something to remind you to listen to it in hard times. You may wish to share the playlist with a colleague or a friend.

If you're struggling to think of songs check out the feel good playlist on Spotify.

Dear Self,

I know you're doing the best you can. I believe in you. I love you!

COMPASSIONATE LETTER TO THE SELF

What is it?

Compassionate letter writing is an idea to help you refocus your experience on being supportive, helpful and caring of yourself. In practicing doing this it can help you access an aspect of yourself that can help cultivate kindness.

How to do it?

Option one:

Write the letter as if it was from someone who knows you well, and cares for and accepts you totally for who you are – (with all your past experiences and weaknesses, as well as your positives). It is better if you can imagine a kind being - or perhaps a version of someone you trust and know. This compassionate being will be wise, kind, accepting and forgiving. Remind yourself in the letter that we are all human, we all make mistakes and cannot escape pain and suffering. What do you imagine this being might say to you now, as you think about yourself and your experiences? What might your compassionate being have you do in this moment? How would this compassionate being say these things in a kind, wise, forgiving and understanding way, wanting only the best for you?

Option two:

Elizabeth Gilbert writes: *“Every day I write myself a letter from love – divine, unconditional love. I ask for advice, and love always gives me kind answers, which I write down as they come to me. Even in my darkest hours, love has always shown up, saying, “I’m right here. I’ve got you. You’re never alone.”*

Dear (Your Name Here),

...See what comes out. I bet it will surprise you.
Here's some prompts if you feel stuck

- I'm proud of you for...
- It's okay that...
- We never really talked about...
- You're scared of... (I am your fear, and this is what I want to say to you...)
- My favourite thing about you is... 14
- Have you noticed that you...

COMPASSIONATE BULLET JOURNAL (Print me)



INTENTIONS FOR THE DAY: & HOPES FOR TOMORROW

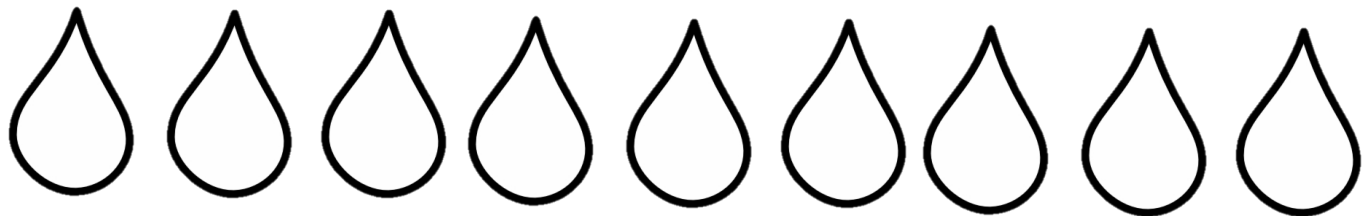
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WHAT WENT WELL TODAY:

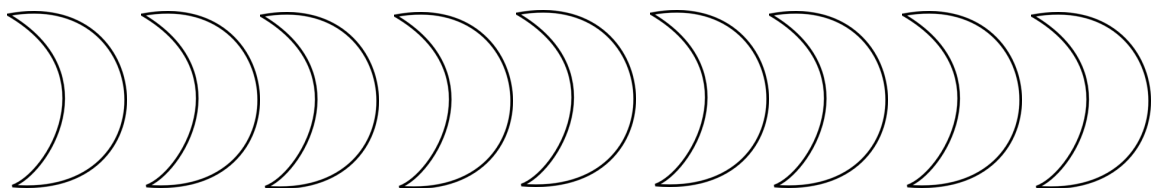
MEALS:

-
-
-
-

WATER:



HOURS ASLEEP:



KIND THINGS I DID FOR MYSELF:

KIND THINGS I DID FOR OTHERS:

3 THINGS OR PEOPLE I APPRECIATE ARE:



"What's the best thing you've learned about storms?"

"That they end" said the horse.

PART 3

EXPLORING AN ONGOING COMPASSION JOURNEY

COMPASSION ONLINE

Websites:

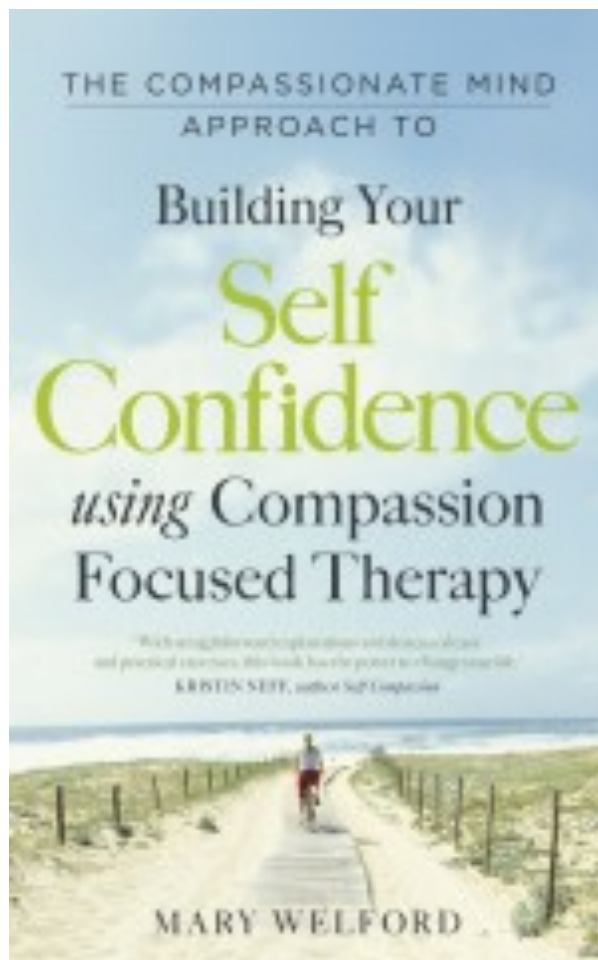
- [Self-compassion.org](https://self-compassion.org) – Dr Kristin Neff website includes lots of resources including guided meditations and self-compassion exercises.
- <https://www.drsusanpollak.com> - Susan Pollak's website offers free meditation practices, interviews, podcasts and more
- <https://mymoodpath.com/en/> – Personalised mental health companion to assess, track, reflect and improve your mental health

Podcasts / videos:

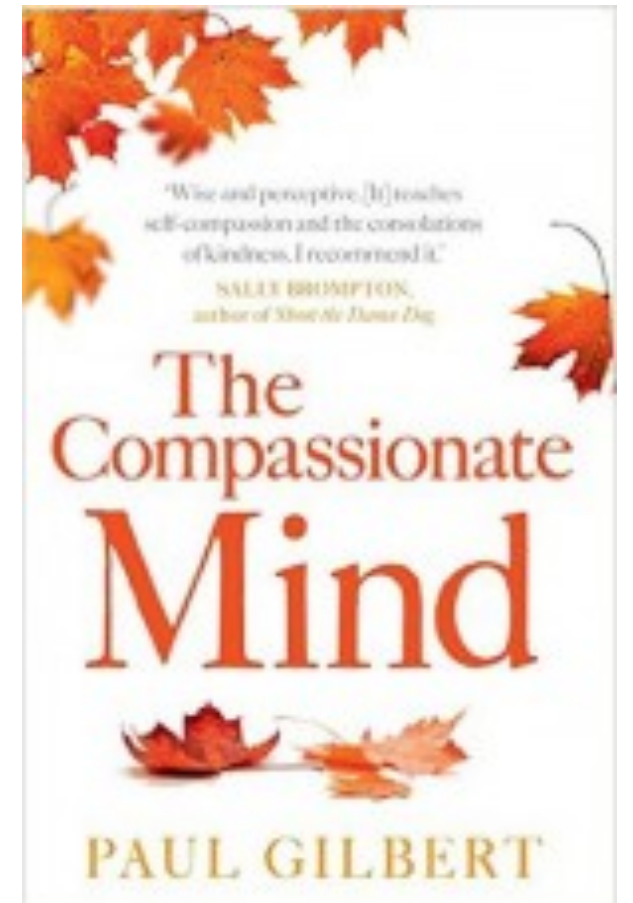
- [YouTube video](#) – “The school of Life: Self- compassion”.
- <http://compassionatemind.uk/individuals/audio-for-individuals> – Some more audio guided material
- <https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/feeling-good-positive-mindset/>– Relax your body and mind with a series of audio tracks designed to help you build confidence, energy and a positive mindset
- <https://player.fm/podcasts/compassion> – compassion podcast



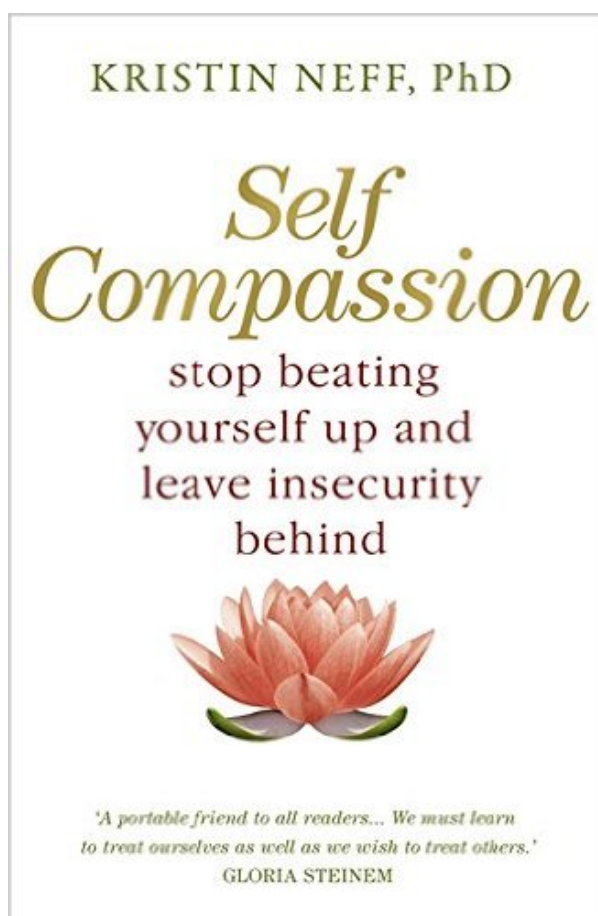
COMPASSION BOOKS



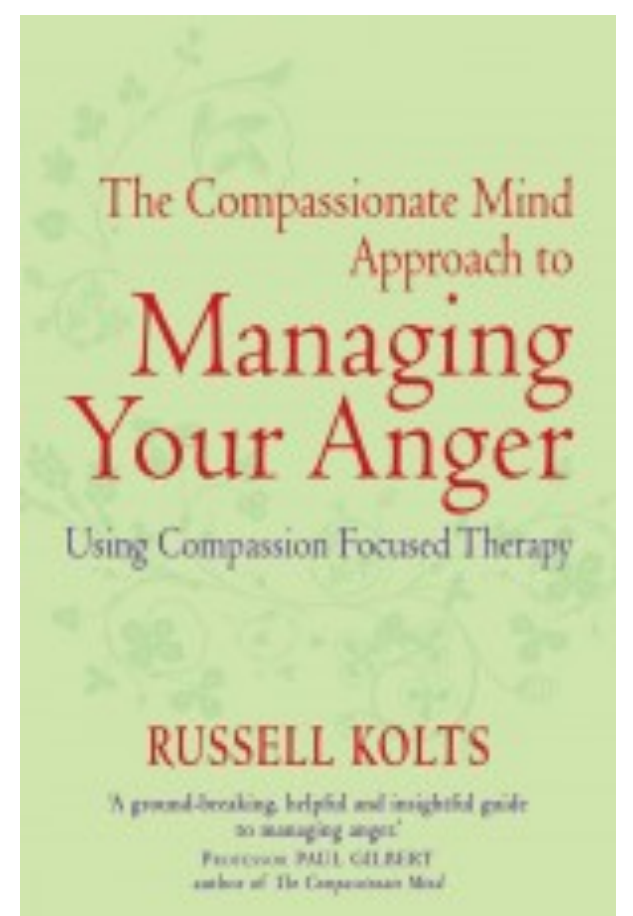
The Compassionate Mind Approach to Building Self-Confidence
By *Mary Welford*



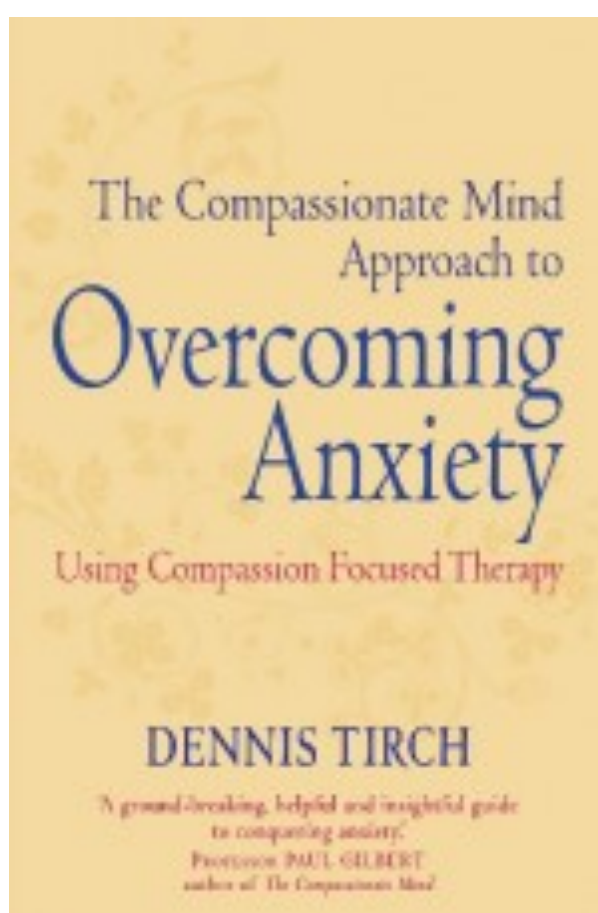
The Compassionate Mind
By *Paul Gilbert*



Self Compassionate
By *Kristin Neff*



The Compassionate Mind Approach to Managing Your Anger
By *Russell Kolts*



The Compassionate Mind Approach to Overcoming Anxiety
By *Dennis Tirsch*

APP RECOMMENDATIONS



Mind Shift is a mental health app designed specifically for teens and young adults with anxiety. Rather than trying to avoid anxious feelings, Mind Shift stresses the importance of changing how you think about anxiety. It can encourage you to take charge of your life, ride out intense emotions, and face challenging situations.



Self Help for Anxiety Management might be perfect for you if you're interested in self-help, but meditation isn't your thing. Users are prompted to build their own 24-hour anxiety toolkit that allows you to track anxious thoughts and behaviour over time and learn 25 different self-help techniques. You can also use SAM's "Social Cloud" feature to confidentially connect with other users in an online community for additional support.



Happify. Need a happy fix? With its psychologist-approved mood-training program, the Happify app is your fast-track to a good mood. Try various engaging games, activity suggestions, gratitude prompts and more to train your brain as if it were a muscle, to overcome negative thoughts.



The **Headspace** app makes meditation simple. Learn the skills of mindfulness and meditation by using this app for just a few minutes per day. You gain access to hundreds of meditations on everything from stress and anxiety to sleep and focus. The app also has a handy "get some headspace" reminder to encourage you to keep practicing each day.



Calm provides people experiencing stress and anxiety with guided meditations, sleep stories, breathing programs, and relaxing music. This app is truly universal; whether you've never tried meditation before or regularly practice, you'll find the perfect program for you.



Smiling Mind is a way to practice daily meditation and mindfulness exercises from any devices. Smiling Mind is a unique tool developed by psychologist and educators to help bring balance to your life. This is really helpful during times of stress and is a fun and unique way to help you put a smile on your mind.



Insight Timer is a smartphone app and online community for meditation. The app features guided meditations, music and talks posted by contributing experts.