

## Self-Compassion!

February is the month marked by Valentine's Day where we have the opportunity to pause and express our affection for others. It might be a good time to also consider engaging in self-compassion. Many of us can expend a great deal of emotional fuel being hard on ourselves about our performance in school, at work, or in relationships. When we practice self-compassion, we are not ignoring that mistakes might have been made or goals not met. We are instead facing the disappointments with an acceptance and understanding for ourselves that can help us move forward with strength, confidence and hope. This self-compassion can help decrease the time that can be wasted in self-denigration that is rarely useful, works against our well-being, and in fact slows down our ability to work toward our goals.

Psychologist, Kristen Neff has written a great deal about self-compassion. Dr. Neff encourages you to face your pain with the compassion that you would offer others: "When you feel compassion for another (rather than mere pity), it means that you realize that suffering, failure, and imperfection is part of the shared human experience." There but for fortune go I. Self-compassion involves acting the same way towards yourself when you are having a difficult time, fail, or notice something you don't like about yourself. Instead of just ignoring your pain with a "stiff upper lip" mentality, you stop to tell yourself "this is really difficult right now," how can I comfort and care for myself in this moment?" Dr. Neff emphasizes that self-compassion is not self-pity. In the latter, you can become focused on your own troubles and assume you alone are suffering, while self-compassion helps you accept your suffering without harsh judgment.

Self-compassion reminds you that pain and disappointment are part of the human condition which in turn prevents feelings of isolation and disconnectedness. She also emphasizes that self-compassion is not self-indulgence. People can make the mistake that they need to beat up on themselves in order to grow. "The care intrinsic to compassion provides a powerful motivating force for growth and change, while also providing the safety needed to see the self clearly without fear of self-condemnation." It is important to remember

By Dr. Margaret Rea

that self-compassion is not based on an evaluation of how good or accomplished you are. All human beings deserve compassion and your fallings should not be hidden but accepted and with that comes greater resiliency.

<http://self-compassion.org/>

Dr. Neff outlines the steps toward self-compassion:

### Dr. Kristen Neff: 3 Elements of Self-Compassion



#### 1. Self-kindness vs. Self-judgment.

Self-compassionate people recognize that being imperfect, failing, and experiencing life difficulties is inevitable, so they tend to be gentle with themselves when confronted with painful experiences rather than getting angry when life falls short of set ideals

#### 2. Common humanity vs. Isolation.

Self-compassion involves recognizing that suffering and personal inadequacy is part of the shared human experience – something that we all go through rather than being something that happens to "me" alone.

#### 3. Mindfulness vs. Over-identification.

We cannot ignore our pain and feel compassion for it at the same time. At the same time, mindfulness requires that we not be "over-identified" with thoughts and feelings, so that we are caught up and swept away by negative reactivity.

Please take a moment to visit Dr. Neff's webpage that contains great resources for how to engage in self-compassion including MP3 audio guided meditations as well as the resources from Dr. Chris Germer another expert on self-compassion.

<http://self-compassion.org/category/exercises/#guided-meditations>

<https://chrisgermer.com/>



Wishing you a wonderful Valentines filled with kindness and compassion for others and yourself.

## Wellness Events

### Work Life and Wellness Events

<http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/hr/wellness/index.html>

### UC Living Fit Forever

[http://intranet.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/clinops/resources/living\\_fit\\_forever.shtml](http://intranet.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/clinops/resources/living_fit_forever.shtml)

### Open Invitation: Crafting & Creative Circles

**What:** enjoy knitting, crochet, needlepoint, calligraphy & more!  
**When:** Every other Wednesday beginning Feb. 13th, drop in 12pm – 1:30pm;

**Where:** BIMH, 1150 and/or 1st floor commons depending on available space.

No RSVP needed. Contact: Kristen(kbettega@ucdavis.edu) or Sarah (sementze@ucdavis.edu)

### Therapy Dogs Are Back!

February 21; 12-1PM

Vanderhoff Commons



## Wellness Tip: Self-Compassion Break for your Wellness



search is focused on how different interventions modify behavioral and brain indicators of emotion regulation. Dr. Goldin stated, " I am motivated to provide tools for well-being to medical and nursing students because they are exposed to multiple factors during their academic and clinical study that have been shown to contribute to high levels of depression, anxiety and stress and that training the next generation of health care providers to be well so they can provide lifelong care for others is vitally important."

### Self-care/compassion break #1:

Place the palm of your left hand over your belly. Slow down and breathe deeply down into the palm of your left hand over your belly. Place the palm of your right hand on your chest over your heart. Slow down and gradually feel your heart beating. Allow your eyes, neck and shoulders to relax; release the 43 muscles in your face; let

go of everything and just notice your body as you remind yourself: "body breathing, heart beating." Settle into an awareness of the lungs expanding and contracting as you gently breath in and out; and the heart beating effortlessly from moment to moment. Tune into and rest in the awareness of the physical sensations detected by your left and right hands. You can keep your eyes open or close them as you feel comfortable. I encourage you to try each way. You can do this practice standing up or sitting down. I encourage you to try each way.

### Self-care/compassion break #2:

Find a comfortable place to stand or sit. Gently close your eyes, let your hand rest by your sides, and slow down your breathing. Take 2-3 intentionally slow inhalations and exhalations to begin settling into your body. Visualize that you are under a waterfall. Imagine feeling the cool sensation of water splashing down onto your head, neck and shoulders, and then running down the front and back sides of your body. Imagine that with each dose of water touching your head, your thoughts, concerns, preoccupations dissolve and are swept downward by the rush of water being pulled down to the earth by gravity. Allow the water to serve the function of cleansing all mental and physical distress and discomfort. Rest in the residual purified state. This is a gift that you can give to yourself.

All students, staff and faculty are encouraged to contribute wellness stories, tips or recipes to the newsletter.

Monthly Recipe from the UC Davis Community

This month's recipe is from Woubejig Shiferaw, M.A., Advisor, Office of Medical Education, School of Medicine.

"I grew up in Ethiopia and Keye Sir, Ethiopian Beets Salad is my favorite dish that does not require unique Ethiopian spices. Food and coffee play a major role in Ethiopian social gathering. I grew up eating traditional Ethiopian dishes that are spicy. But for those who don't like spicy food, Keye Sir is a great healthy option for the whole family. My kids, who are 10 and 8 years old, love to eat Keye Sir because of the color effect on their tongue. Enjoy this delicious, easy to make salad with your whole family".

## Keye Sir, Ethiopian Beets Salad



## Wellness App: Unplug Guided Meditation

MEDITATION FOR EVERYONE

Browse through a range of categories with meditations for every situation.

## MEDITATION TIMER & AMBIENT SOUNDS

Prefer to meditate on your own? You can use Unplug's relaxing ambient sounds and meditation timer to help with self-guided meditation sessions.

UNWIND IN JUST A FEW MINUTES!

Not everyone has the time for long meditation sessions. They have meditations ranging from 1 minute to over 45 minutes.

## CLASSES BY CELEBRATED TEACHERS

Our passionate, skilled teachers guide classes for you to join in CURATED & CUSTOM PLAYLISTS

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/unplugged-meditation/id1188080269?mt=8>

