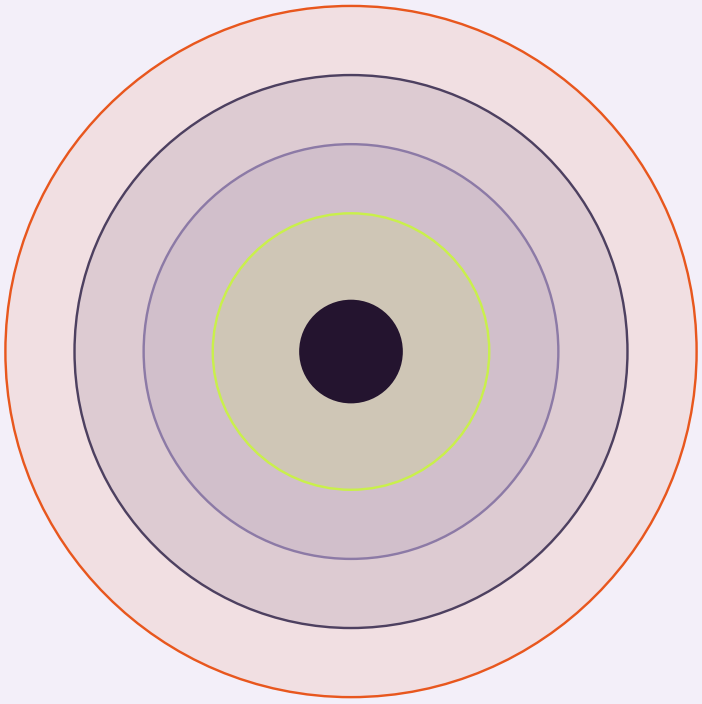


The Mindful Self-Compassion Workbook

A reading of the book by Kristin Neff & Christopher Germer (2018)

1. ACTION BOOK

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ABOUT THIS EDITION

This is HourLife's reading of The Mindful Self-Compassion Workbook, in our own words. It is not a substitute for the book.

BEFORE YOU START 01

The book in a minute

The eight-week Mindful Self-Compassion programme in workbook form — guided meditations, informal practices and reflections for treating yourself the way you'd treat someone you love, including the days when that means being fierce.

Below are the 8 ideas HourLife readers vote up most, each in our words with a note on what it asks of you, and then the steps that put them to work.

WHAT READERS KEEP

The takeaways

1

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Self-compassion is not self-esteem. It does not ask you to be above average at anything.

Self-esteem needs a comparison to survive; self-compassion is available precisely on the days you have failed, which is when you need it.

2

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Three ingredients: kindness instead of judgment, common humanity instead of isolation, mindfulness instead of over-identification.

Neff's definition is deliberately structural — if a practice is missing one of the three, it is usually self-pity, distraction or a pep talk.

3

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Compassion has a fierce side. Sometimes the kindest available act is a no.

Yin comforts, soothes and validates; yang protects, provides and motivates — and skipping yang is how self-compassion turns into self-indulgence.

4

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

When you first turn warmth toward yourself, old pain can come up to meet it. That is backdraft, not failure.

The workbook names this early and on purpose, because the people most helped by the practice are the ones most likely to be frightened by their first attempt at it.

5

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Shame says you are bad. Compassion asks what you needed and did not get.

The shift is from verdict to need, which is also what makes the practice usable in the exact moments self-criticism is loudest.

6 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Motivation built on self-criticism works until you are tired. Motivation built on care survives being tired.

The fear that kindness makes you lazy is addressed head on: the research points the other way, because fear of failure is an expensive fuel.

7 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Caregivers rarely burn out from caring. They burn out from caring with themselves left out of the circle.

The chapters on caregiver fatigue treat including yourself as part of the job rather than a reward for finishing it.

8 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

You cannot do this correctly. You can only do it often.

Every practice in the book is scored on frequency, not quality, which is what stops the exercises from becoming one more thing to fail at.

PUT IT TO WORK

Your action book

Do the setup steps once, then keep the habits going. The setup changes your week; the habits keep it changed after the first good one.

The download puts this whole reading and a printable action book in one PDF: the setup checklist, then a page of real calendar days for each habit, starting on the day you choose.

SET UP ONCE

- [ ] Write your Self-Compassion Break in your own words
- [ ] Find the soothing touch that works on you
- [ ] Write the letter from a compassionate friend
- [ ] Name your core values, then check the diary against them
- [ ] Interview your inner critic about its motive

KEEP UP DAILY

- [ ] Take the break at the moment of struggle, not after
- [ ] Run soften–soothe–allow on one difficult emotion
- [ ] Say the equanimity phrases while caring for someone

30 days · Nov 11 - Dec 10, 2026

Part two, after the reading, prints each of these as a page to fill in by hand.

THE LAST WORD

Before you go

Pick one step from the action book and do it today. An idea from a book starts to count once it changes what one ordinary day looks like.

PART TWO

The action book

Change the setup once, then keep it up. 5 setup actions to do once, and 3 habits to mark each day for 30 days.

Nov 11 - Dec 10, 2026

Print it, or write on it in any PDF app.

SET UP ONCE

The setup checklist

Each of these is done once. Do one a day, and check it off when it is done.

☐ SETUP 1

Write your Self-Compassion Break in your own words

Three phrases: one that names the struggle, one that places it inside the human condition, one that offers what you need.

Borrowed wording rarely lands — write the version you'd actually say to yourself in a car park.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

☐ SETUP 2

Find the soothing touch that works on you

Test them physically: hand over heart, both hands on the belly, one hand cradling the other, arms crossed in a light hug, a palm on the cheek.

Keep whichever one changes your breathing and discard the rest.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

☐ SETUP 3

Write the letter from a compassionate friend

Describe your situation, then answer it as an imagined friend who knows everything about you and loves you anyway.

Put it away for a day and read it as the recipient.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

☐ SETUP 4

Name your core values, then check the diary against them

The Living Deeply exercise: list what you'd want said about how you lived, then find where this month's calendar actually agrees.

The gap is information, not an indictment.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

☐ SETUP 5

Interview your inner critic about its motive

Ask what it is trying to protect you from and what it fears if it goes quiet.

Almost always it turns out to be a badly-worded attempt at safety, which is what makes it possible to thank it and rewrite the wording.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

DAILY HABIT 1 OF 3

Take the break at the moment of struggle, not after

The practice is designed to be used standing up, mid-day, in three breaths — the point is to catch the difficulty while it is happening rather than to debrief it at bedtime.

Nov 11 - Dec 10, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11 ○	12 ○	13 ○	14 ○	15 ○
16 ○	17 ○	18 ○	19 ○	20 ○	21 ○	22 ○
23 ○	24 ○	25 ○	26 ○	27 ○	28 ○	29 ○
30 ○						

December 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○
7 ○	8 ○	9 ○	10 ○	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 2 OF 3

Run soften–soothe–allow on one difficult emotion

Find where it lives in the body, soften around that place, soothe yourself for having it, and allow it to be there without needing it to leave.

Nov 11 - Dec 10, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 3 OF 3

Say the equanimity phrases while caring for someone

"Everyone is on their own life journey.

Nov 11 - Dec 10, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

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December 2026

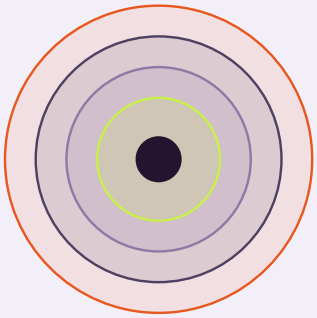
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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP



A moment of self-compassion can change your entire day. A string of such moments can change the course of your life.

CHRISTOPHER GERMER