

When you experience a difficult moment in your day, take a few moments to say the following three phrases to yourself:

**1. “This is a moment of suffering” (mindfulness)**

If the word “suffering” doesn’t resonate, try another phrase, like “This is difficult” or “This is a stressful moment.” The idea is to acknowledge that whatever you’re going through is difficult.

**2. “Suffering is a part of life” (shared humanity)**

Remind yourself that this is part of the human experience. We all experience difficulties, and this connects us to each other, reminding us that we aren’t alone, even when it feels that way. Alternatives: “I’m not the only one who struggles with this” or “Other people feel this way too” or “We’re all in the same boat, trying to do the best we can with what we have.”

**3. “May I be kind to myself in this moment” (self-kindness) or “May I accept myself just as I am.”**

For the third phrase, feel free to use whatever words speak to your particular situation. You might use the phrases you selected for yourself or you can ask yourself, “What do I need to hear right now, as I am facing this difficulty?” Try out a few different phrases until you hit on one or two that resonate with you in the moment:

- May I find peace
- May I be safe
- May I be healthy
- May we learn to live together in peace
- May I cherish myself
- May I believe in myself
- May I be kind to myself, unconditionally
- May I have contentment
- May I be happy and free from suffering
- May I have courage

As you say these three phrases, you can also try putting your hands over your heart. This kind of physical gesture can help us connect with our intention to respond to difficulties with kindness and caring. The key is to offer yourself goodwill, not to change the difficult emotions but because of the difficult emotions you’re feeling. It’s like giving a hug to a child with the flu. You are not doing this to take away the flu but to give the child some comfort because he or she is feeling miserable.

Offering yourself kindness in moments of suffering is not about manipulating the particular circumstances of your life (e.g., “May I get all my work done by tomorrow’s deadline”). It’s about noticing your suffering and cultivating goodwill in the face of it, staying on the wishing side of the equation rather than the outcome side. Good feelings may come as a byproduct of this exercise, but the main purpose is to cultivate a kind attitude in the face of suffering regardless of the outcome.

You can practice this exercise with eyes closed or eyes open for just a few seconds in the middle of a difficult situation or for longer. See what works for you.

## ***Books***

[“Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself”](#) - Kristin Neff, Ph.D.

[“The Mindful Self-Compassion Workbook: A Proven Way to Accept Yourself, Build Inner Strength, and Thrive”](#)- Kristin Neff, Ph.D. and Christopher Germer, Ph.D.

[“Radical Compassion: Learning to Love Yourself and Your World with Practice of RAIN”](#) - Tara Brach, Ph.D.

## ***Podcasts***

[“Being Well Podcast: Self-Compassion”](#) with Kristin Neff, Ph.D.

[“Psychologists Off the Clock: Mindful Self-Compassion”](#) with Christopher Germer

[“Self-Compassion: A Podcast Interview”](#) with Rick Hanson, Ph.D.

## ***Video***

[“The Space Between Self-Esteem and Self-Compassion”](#) - Kristin Neff, Ph.D., TED talk

[“Self-Compassion Break in 13 Minutes”](#) - Christopher Germer, Ph.D.

## ***Articles***

[“Painfully Self-Critical? Try These 3 Self-Compassion Tips”](#) - Emma Seppala, Ph.D.

[“Can You Be Irreverently Self-Compassionate? A New Style of Compassionate Self-Talk to Try”](#) - Alice Boyes, Ph.D.

## ***Apps***

[The Self-Compassion App](#)

[Shine](#)

[Headspace](#)