

A FREE PRACTICE FROM RIVERCALM

Self-compassion

For when the voice in your head is harder on you than anyone else would be.

BEFORE YOU START

The voice that's always watching.

Most of us carry an inner critic, a voice that comments on how we look, what we said, what we should have done better. Often it started as protection: if I'm hard on myself first, nobody else can hurt me.

The trouble is that harsh self-talk tends to make things heavier. It adds shame to whatever is already difficult, and shame makes it harder to try again, to rest or to ask for help.

You hear it most when life is already hard: after a loss, during an illness, while caring for someone, when you don't like what you see in the mirror. Those are the moments when kindness would help most.

Self-compassion means treating yourself the way you'd treat a good friend in the same situation. It can feel scary at first, because many of us have learned to link being strict, even punishing, with getting better. But you can keep your standards and still drop the cruelty.

So: three things to practice, and one week to try them in.

A SUGGESTION

Be patient with how long this takes. The critic has had years of practice. If you catch yourself criticizing your self-compassion, smile at it and start again.

THE PRACTICE

Three things, in this order.

01 Notice the critic

When the harsh voice shows up, give it a name: *"There's my critic again."* A little distance helps you hear it as one voice among others, and you don't have to obey it.

What does your critic say most often?

02 Talk to yourself like a friend

Ask yourself what you'd say to a friend going through this. Then say it to yourself, in the same tone: *"This is really hard. Anyone would struggle here. You're doing what you can."*

If it's hard to imagine how you'd treat a friend, or friendships have been painful for you, think of how a loving voice would speak, even if it doesn't belong to anyone you know.

What would a kinder voice say in your situation?

03 Do one kind thing

Turn the words into something your body can feel: a warm drink, a hand on your chest, a slow walk, an early night. Small acts of care tell your nervous system that you're on your own side.

What is one kind thing you can do for yourself this week?

ONE WEEK

Small and often beats big and once.

Fill in a row on the days the critic gets loud. Skip the others. Blank rows are part of the design.

DAY	WHAT THE CRITIC SAID	WHAT A KIND VOICE WOULD SAY	WHAT I DID FOR MYSELF
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

That's it.

Kindness toward yourself is a skill, and like any skill it grows with practice.

If you only keep one step, keep the second one. The kind voice gets easier to find each time you use it.

If you'd like, write to me at info@rivercalm.life and let me know how this worksheet worked for you.



— San

What's next?

Give the practice one week before you decide whether it works. Small steps, repeated, are what change things.

And if you'd like to go further:

— Therapy or coaching with me, in English, Spanish or German: rivercalm.life/#sessions

These pages are educational and can't replace therapy or medical care. If you're struggling with strong or long-lasting symptoms, please reach out to a mental health professional.