

Practicing Self-Compassion

Kelly Davis



Presenter

Kelly Davis



Overview



The science behind why we are so hard on ourselves



The research behind self-compassion; and



Self-compassion tools to practice and share with those you support

During COVID-19 Pandemic

- Life is hard and scary right now especially
- Life has changed significantly for almost everyone
- Can support ourselves and others

Ongoing Uncertainty and Change

- May expect same level of outcome, outputs, identity and social roles
- Self-talk and blame
- Concerns about basic needs



Neil Webb @neilmwebb · Mar 31

"You are not working from home; you are at your home during a crisis trying to work."

I've heard this twice today. I think it's an important distinction worth emphasizing.

983

102.5K

369.8K



The Brain's Negativity Bias

Our brain's main goal: stay alive

Priority is avoiding danger and searching for threat

Negative mind chatter to help

Depression, anxiety, trauma can **intensify**

Exclusion and Connection



Not just us— messages we get from the world



Marginalized identities



We're wired to want to belong

Impact

- When we adopt labels and negative self talk it contributes to our own social exclusion and loneliness
- When we adopt the negative view that is projected on us by others, we open ourselves up to feeling shame
- Feelings of shame are relevant predictors of depression
- As shame increases so does self-criticism
- As self-criticism increases, self-compassion decreases

Impact

- A lack of self-compassion can contribute to feelings of shame resulting in self-destructive behavior which can then result in ongoing cycles of shame



Rewiring your brain



In addition
to
changing
the culture



The brain
can
change



Repetition
and neural
pathways

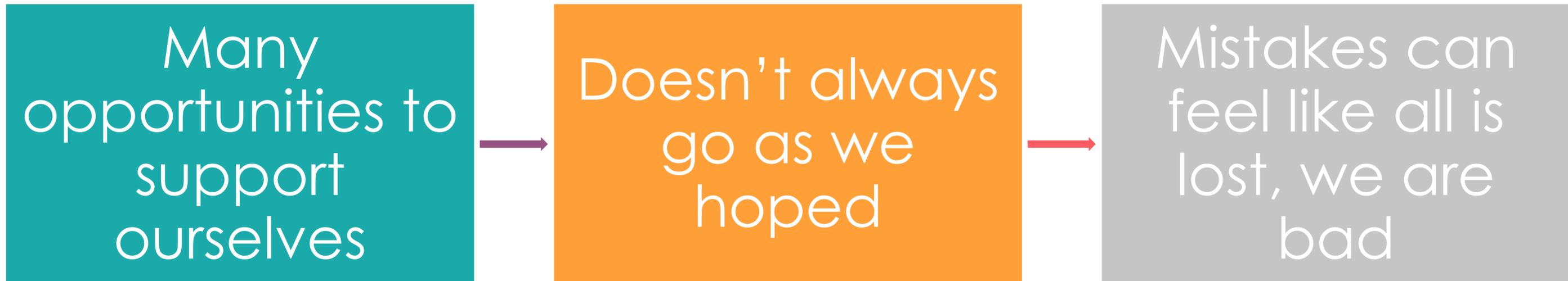


Train our
automatic
responses
that stop
progress

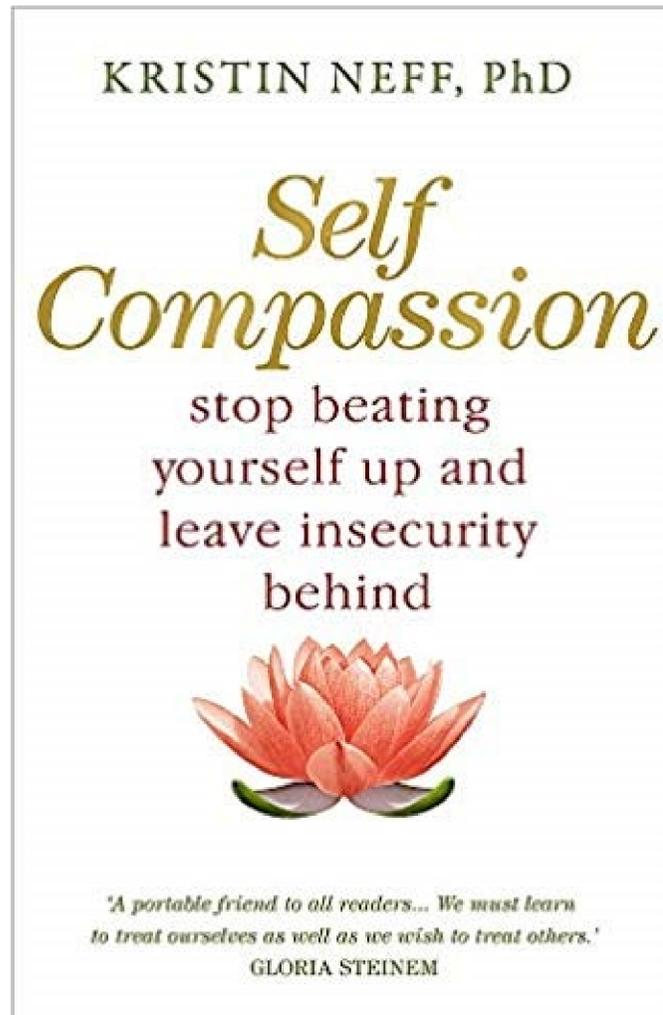


Noticing and kindness in
the moment improves
present and future

This work is a process



Self-Compassion



“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 and tell yourself ‘this is really difficult right now,’ how can I comfort and care for myself in this moment?”

Kristin Neff

Self-compassion



Treating yourself with kindness



Sharing a common humanity



Building mindfulness



Treating yourself with kindness

Responding to yourself the way you would a friend

Allowing yourself to be imperfect and make mistakes

Actively comforting ourselves

Knowing and being responsive to your own needs

Building a common humanity

All humans are imperfect

Normal to feel pain and distress

Not alone but attached to a broader community

Loving-Kindness Meditation

- May you be happy. May you be well. May you be safe. May you live with ease.

Building mindfulness

IAA Theory: intentionally attending with openness and non-judgment leads to specific shift in perspective

Intention: Why you're doing what you're doing, the compass of your heart

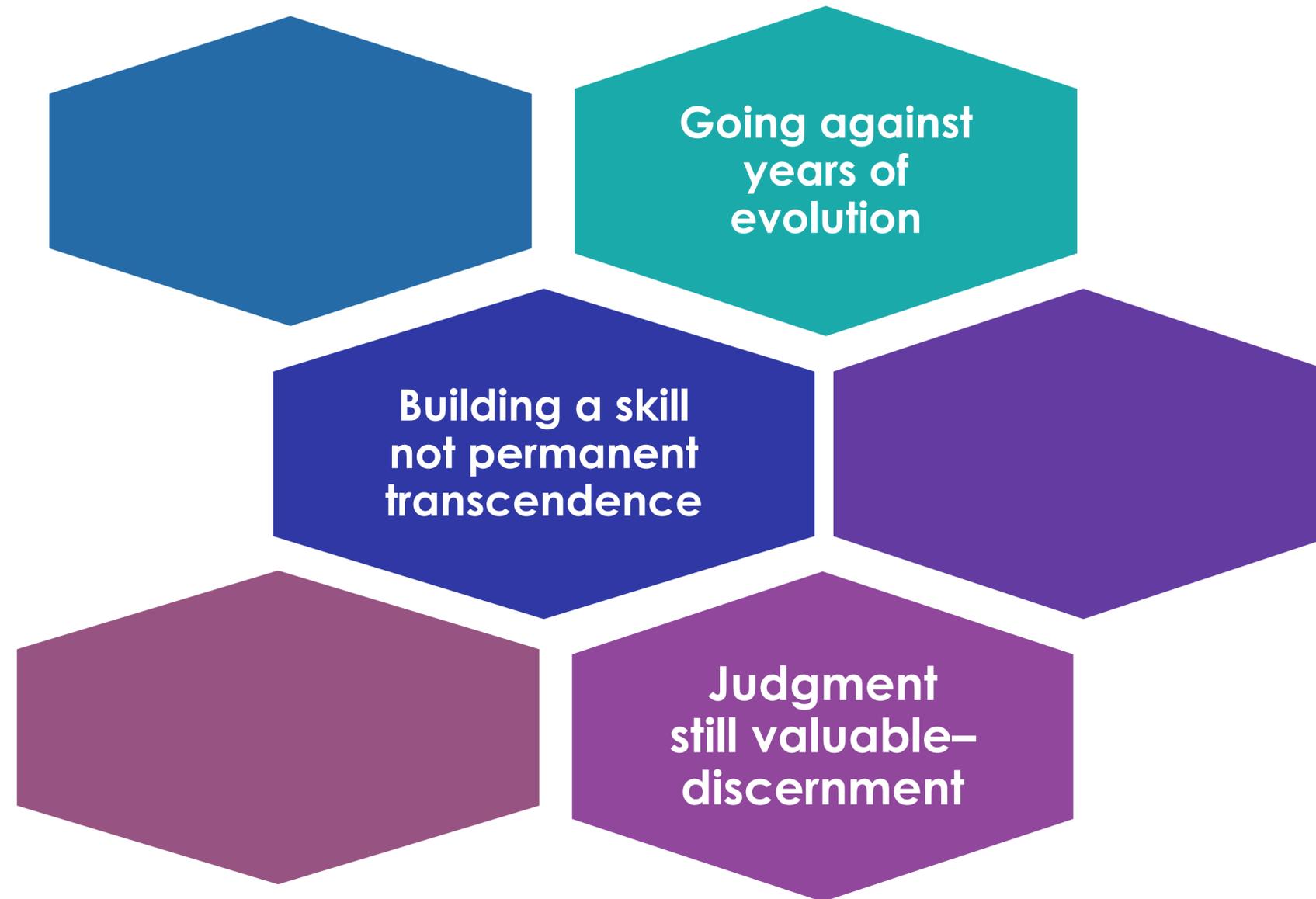
Attention: What you are directing your attention to

Attitude: How you are paying attention– acceptance, openness, curiosity

Mindfulness and MH

- Noticing thoughts, automatic, intrusive
- Understanding no inherent value
- Observe without reacting
- Notice/name feelings

Mindfulness & rewiring your brain



"THIS IS A MOMENT OF SUFFERING.
SUFFERING IS A PART OF LIFE.
MAY I BE KIND TO MYSELF IN THIS
MOMENT.
MAY I GIVE MYSELF THE COMPASSION
I NEED.

KRISTIN NEFF

Distinctions

- Not self-pity
- Not positive suppression/replacement
- Not good v bad
- Not less successful, achieving
- Linked to less depression & anxiety
 - Mock job interview

Neff, Kristin D., and Katie A. Dahm. "Self-compassion: What it is, what it does, and how it relates to mindfulness." *Handbook of mindfulness and self-regulation*. Springer, New York, NY, 2015. 121-137.

Kristin Neff's Self-Compassion Exercises

- How would you treat a friend
- Supportive touch
- Writing:
 - Which imperfections bother you, write a letter from unconditionally loving friend, feel the compassion
- Self compassion break:
 - This is a moment of suffering. Suffering is a part of life. May I be kind to myself in this moment. May I give myself the compassion that I need.

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