

As you engage in the self-empathy steps described below, it's very important to pause frequently and re-anchor in a compassionate and warm relationship to your experience. Most of us have been conditioned with a lot of bias regarding feelings and needs, so it's easy to become self-critical. Any time you notice tension, a pulling, pushing, or shrinking sensation, pause to anchor. As you practice, your ability to access the expansive perspective will increase and stabilize. In this way, you will begin to live from a new ground of being.

Steps for a Self-empathy Process

Mindfulness: Whether in the moment or later in reflection, begin with mindfulness. Turn attention toward your experience. Stabilize attention by naming everything you notice as it's happening: feelings, body sensations, posture, thoughts. Access an attitude of acceptance by saying things to yourself like: "I'm reacting. It's okay to react." Or "I can pause and notice what's happening inside." Or "This is just part of being human. Everyone gets reactive."

Anchor: Put your full attention on an anchor most useful for the situation. Keep your attention on your anchor until your perspective expands and your body relaxes a bit. Write the anchor you will practice with here:

Name Feelings (body sensations and emotions): For example, "My chest feels tight." "I feel angry." "I feel anxious." "I feel content." Etc. Use the feelings list.

Name Needs "What needs do you perceive to be met, unmet, or at risk in this situation?" Use the needs list.

Articulate the Neutral Observation: Ask yourself: "**What happened the moment I got triggered?**" Describe the external trigger event as a neutral observation (something a video camera could record).

Identify Thoughts immediately connected to the trigger event: Ask yourself: "**What am I telling myself about what happened? What interpretations or assumptions have I made?**"

Articulate Requests What do you want to ask yourself or someone else to do to respect or contribute to the needs you just identified? Effective requests are specific and doable and answer most of these questions: What? When? Who? Where? How long? How often?