

Building & Teaching Self-Compassion

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B4Stage4

Overview



The science behind why we are so hard on ourselves



The impact of discrimination, exclusion, and culture on our wellbeing



The research behind self-compassion; and



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

Before we get started

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

Ongoing Uncertainty and Change

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



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 emphasising.

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**

Discrimination, Exclusion, & Culture



Not just us- messages we get from the world



Marginalized identities



We're wired to want to belong



Impact

- Psychiatric/addiction labels, toxic culture, and other marginalized identities resulting in social inequality have negative consequences of lowered self-esteem in addition to broader issues
- When we internal the culture, it contributes to our own social exclusion and loneliness
- Loneliness and exclusion destroy health and happiness

Impact

- When we adopt the negative view that is projected on us by others, we open ourselves up to feeling shame
- Shame (I'm bad) vs guilt (I did something bad)
- Feelings of shame are relevant predictors of depression
- As shame increases so does self-criticism

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



What can we do?

Activism and inclusion

- Strong group identification
- Challenge culture

Peer support

- Assists in developing self-identity as part of a larger group
- Space for honesty and support

A problem for almost everyone

- Human experience
- Especially hard for folks first making change, grappling with shame

Rewiring your brain



In addition to changing the culture



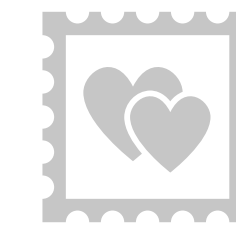
The brain can change



Repetition and neural pathways

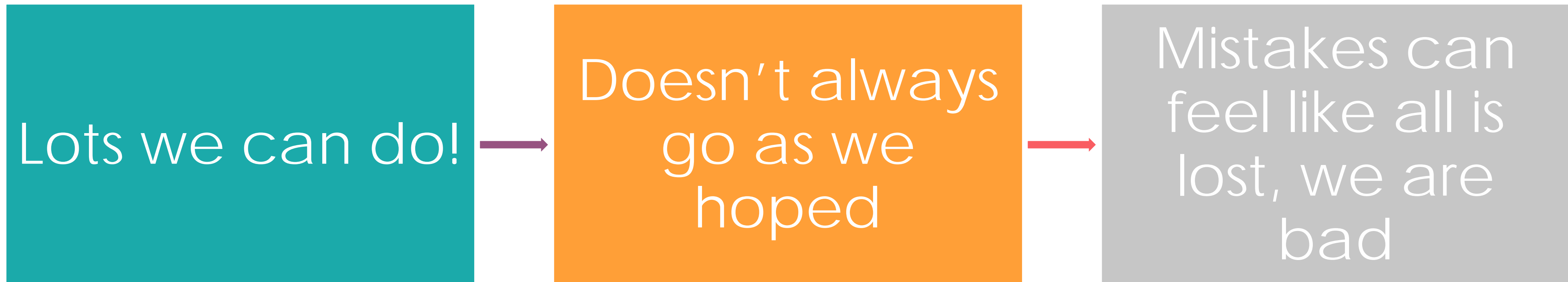


Train our automatic responses that stop progress

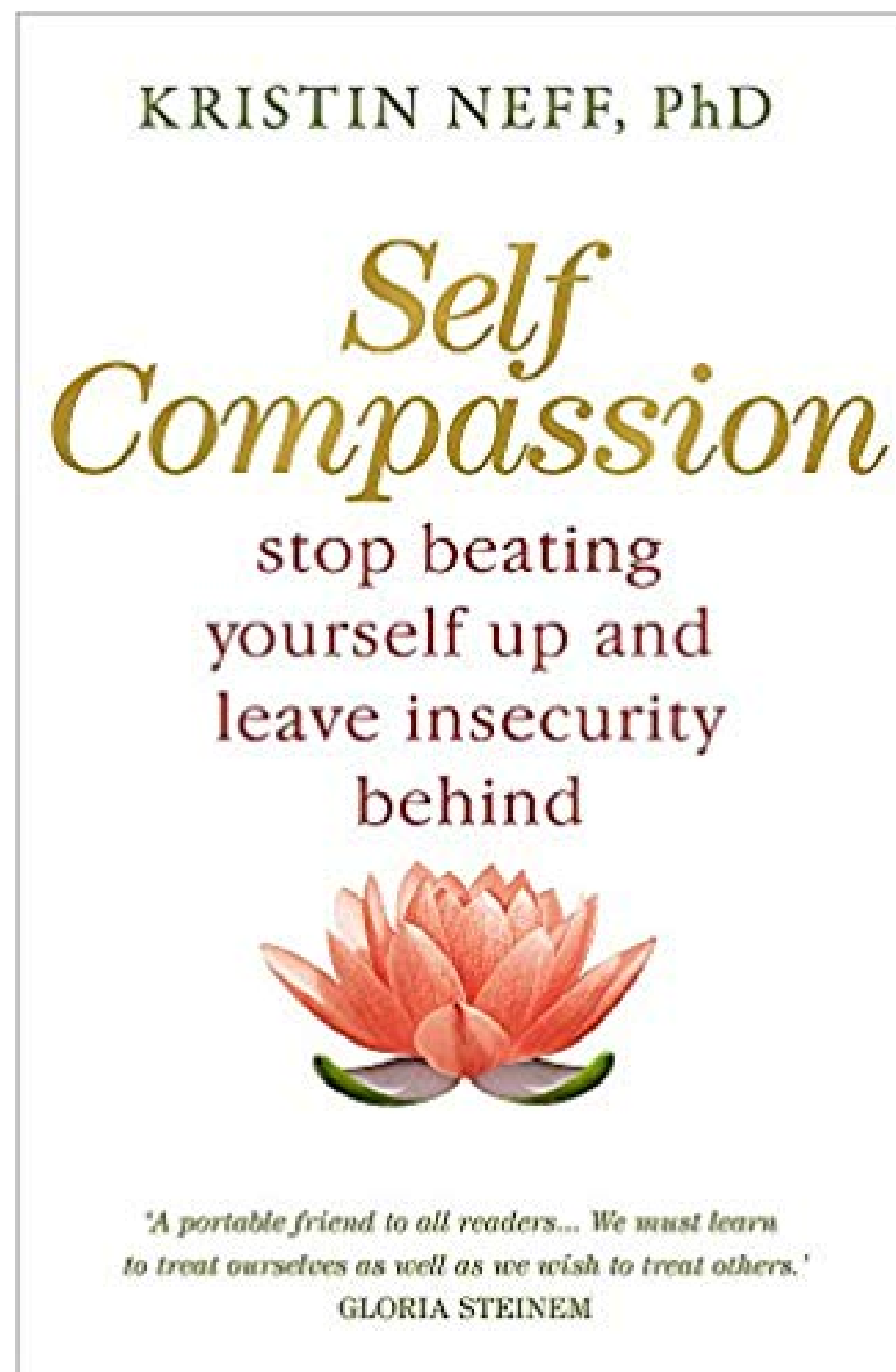


Noticing and kindness in the moment improves present and future

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 life 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

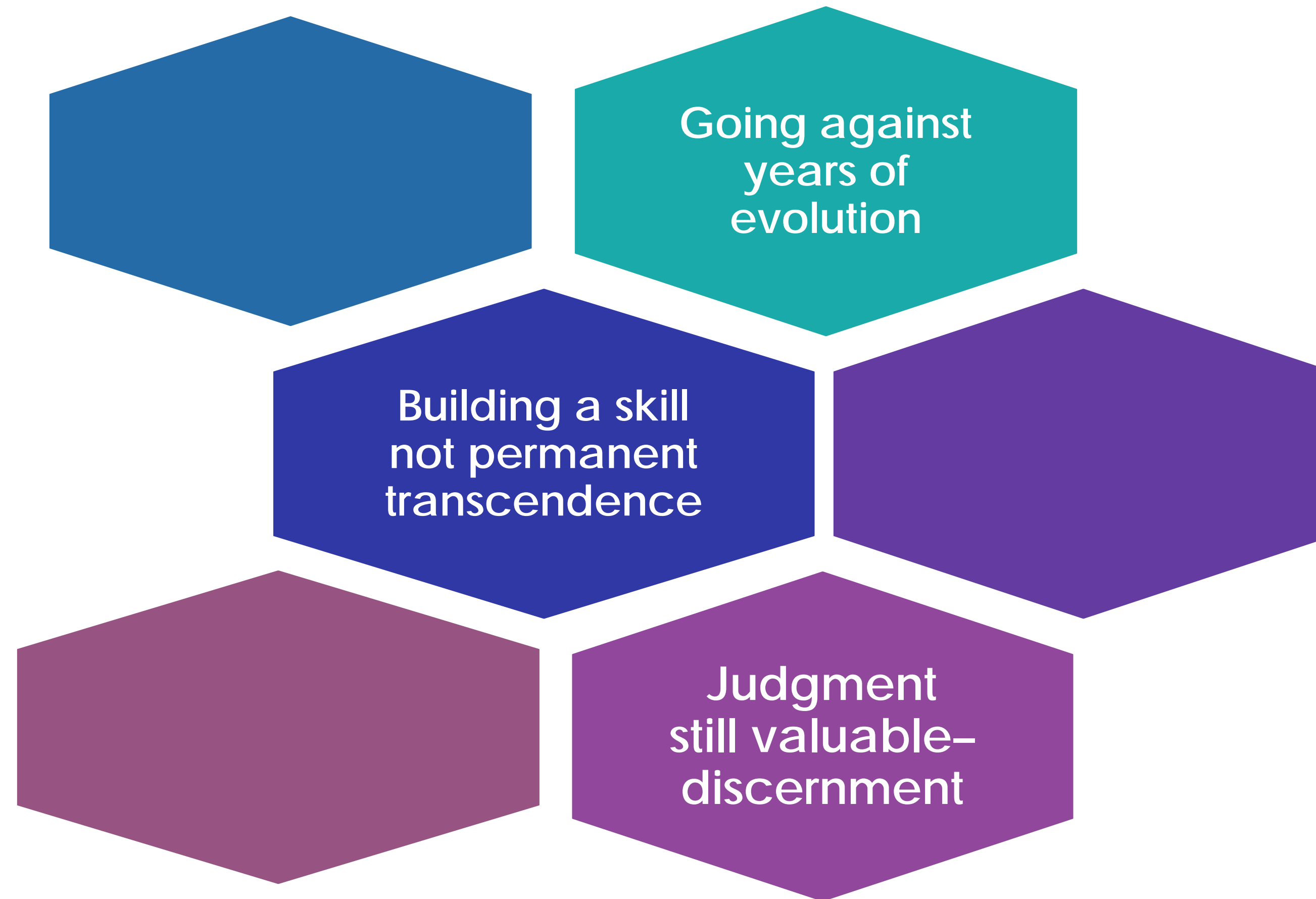
Attention: What you are directing your attention to

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

Mindfulness and MH

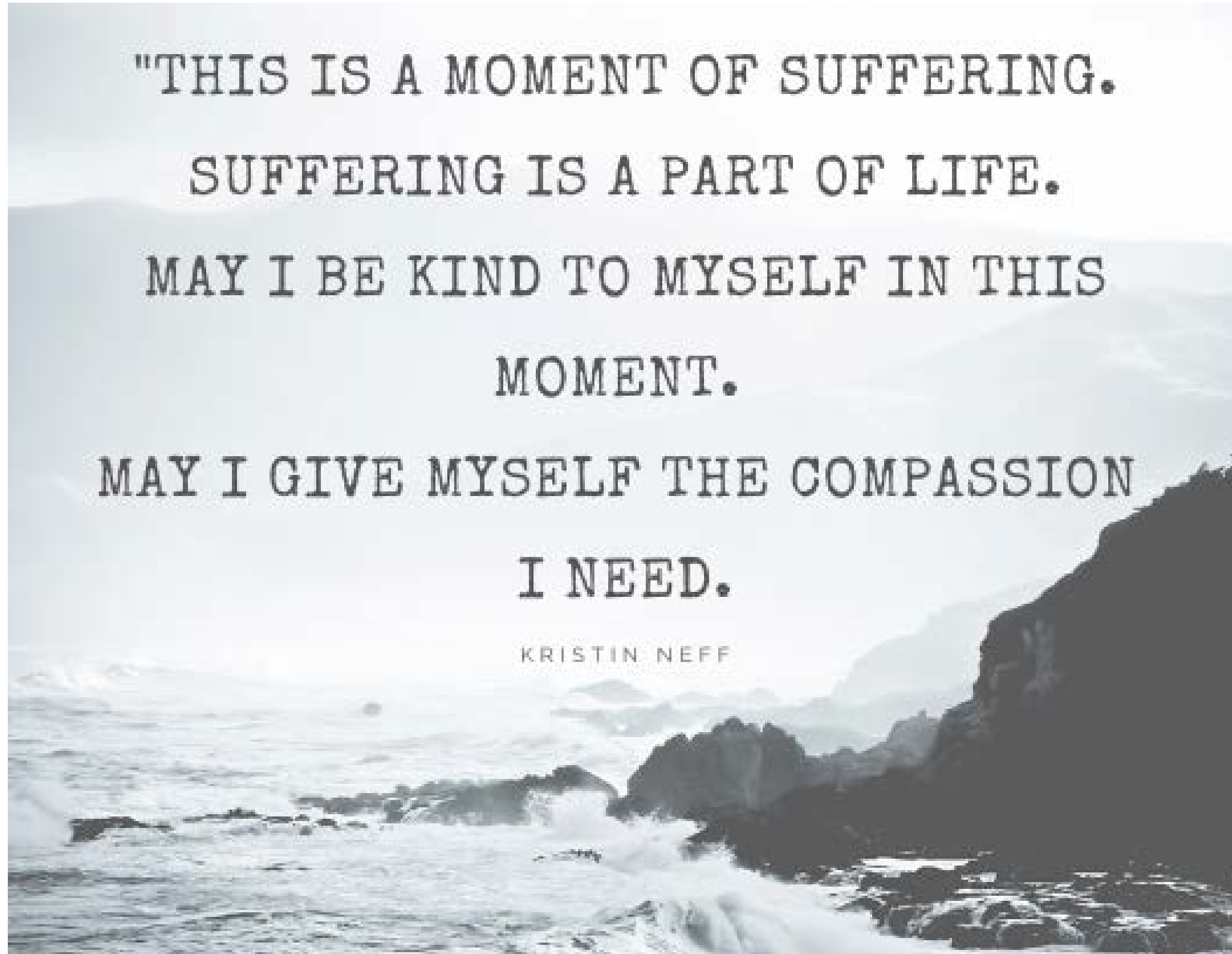
- Noticing thoughts, automatic, intrusive
- Understanding no inherent value
- Observe without reacting
- Notice/name feelings

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

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

How does this show up in your life? In
your work?

How can you build more self-
compassion into your life?

Contact Us



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THANKS FOR COMING

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