

A Self-Compassion Walking Exercise



Self-compassion is based on three core components:

Self-Kindness – being kind & understanding towards ourselves when we are facing challenges

Common Humanity – recognising how similar we are to each other & that we are never alone

Mindfulness – noticing how we think & feel in the present moment without judgement

You can use this walking exercise at any point of your day to enhance your self-compassion practice. Find a route that is easy to navigate – you can use this walking practice for as long as it feels right for you. Initially, start walking at a steady pace and focus on your feet as they make contact with the ground. Notice each step as you walk along. You can do this for a few minutes.

Now start to notice the environment you are in. Take in the sights, sounds and smells that surround you. Notice what you are thinking and how you are feeling – whether these feelings/thoughts are pleasant, unpleasant or neutral – this is an opportunity to increase your awareness with no judgement. You can do this for a few minutes. Bring your attention to your breathing – notice the in-breath and out-breath as they happen. If your mind wanders, that's ok – just bring your awareness back to the breath. You can do this for a few minutes.

Now repeat the following phrase silently in your mind:

“May I be well, may I be happy, may I be safe, may I live with ease.”

This phrase generates warmth and goodwill towards yourself.

Bring your focus back to your walking, your feet as they make contact with the ground, connect with your environment by noticing it with interest as you pass by, acknowledge what you are thinking and feeling with no judgement, bring your awareness back to your breathing. Follow this cycle for as long as you like.

When you pass another person, you can repeat the following phrase silently:

“May you be well, may you be happy, may you be safe, may you live with ease.”

This phrase generates warmth and goodwill towards other people.

You can keep using the phrases for yourself and others as you walk. You can bring your attention back to your breathing, the environment, your thoughts and feelings – your only task is to maintain awareness in the moment. There is no right or wrong way to practice this self-compassion walking exercise. Use the awareness-raising suggestions above as you walk before bringing the practice to a close.