

## Cultivating Self-Compassion

1. Think back to a time when you've struggled with eating. This might be a time when you felt like you failed or perhaps didn't have the *willpower* or self-discipline to stick with it. How did you usually respond? In this situation, what would you normally do or say to yourself? Take note of the tone of your thoughts – are they harsh and self-critical or gentle and kind?

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2. Think of a good friend and how you might respond if he/she were struggling with their eating. Would you speak to your friend in a tone that was humiliating or kind? What would you say to your friend?

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3. What differences do you notice in the way that you speak to your friend versus yourself? What factors or fears may be contributing to how you treat others versus how you treat yourself?

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4. How would things be different for you, if you could speak to yourself in the same way that you spoke to your friend that was struggling?

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5. Now we are going to work through the process of feeling emotional discomfort. Speaking harshly to yourself or fear-mongering in the name “health” do not work. In many cases self-bullying leads to a deterioration of health in the long run. Think back to a difficult situation you’ve encountered recently, specifically something relating to eating or your body. As you reflect on that situation, close your eyes and take a few moments to remember how this emotional discomfort felt in your body. As best you can, describe how this feels.

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6. We are going to be working to replace this inner bully. Think about words or phrases you could use to support a more nurturing, self compassionate and supportive inner dialogue. A good starting place would be to think about the words a good friend would say to you if you were struggling. Try these phrases out a few times, and describe how these words make you feel emotionally and physically.

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