



5-day self-compassion challenge

*Gentle exercises to cultivate self-compassion
without feeling overwhelmed*



by FAITH TOH

Welcome



to the *5-day self compassion challenge*! At *Life in the Grey*, a Mums At The Table podcast, we believe that life is rarely black and white. When it comes to self-worth and personal growth, there's no one-size-fits-all approach. True self-compassion isn't about ignoring our struggles or pretending everything is fine—it's about acknowledging our challenges while offering ourselves the same grace and understanding we would give a friend. This challenge is an invitation to step out of harsh self-judgement and into a space of kindness and care.

This challenge is designed to help you pause, reflect and practise self-compassion in small but meaningful ways. Over the next five days, you'll explore simple exercises to shift your inner dialogue, embrace imperfection and build a mindset that nurtures rather than criticises. Each day of this challenge will guide you through a short, practical exercise designed to help you become more aware of your self-talk, recognise your emotional needs and cultivate a habit of self-acceptance.

You don't need hours of free time or a perfect quiet space to benefit—just a few minutes a day and a willingness to show up for yourself. Whether you're a busy parent, a partner or simply someone looking to develop a healthier relationship with yourself, this challenge is for you. As you move through these five days, remember: self-compassion isn't about getting it “right” but about being present with yourself, just as you are. Let's begin!

DAY ONE

When self-compassion feels wrong



Self-compassion can feel unnatural or even “wrong” at first. This is because your brain is used to self-criticism due to early life experiences and cultural conditioning. Change feels unfamiliar before it feels right.



Challenge

1. Write down 1–3 beliefs you have about self-compassion (e.g., “If I’m kind to myself, I’ll become lazy”).
2. Reflect: Where did these beliefs come from? Who told you these things?
3. Gently challenge one of these beliefs by asking yourself: Is this universally true? What if the opposite were true?



Key takeaway

Feeling resistance to self-compassion is normal. You’re not doing it wrong.

DAY TWO

Speaking to yourself like a friend



Many of us speak to ourselves in ways we'd never speak to a loved one. This challenge helps reframe inner dialogue.



Challenge

1. Think of one thing you're struggling with today.
2. Ask: If my best friend were feeling this way, what would I say to them?
3. Say that sentence out loud to yourself.
4. If you want, place a hand on your heart while saying it.



Key takeaway

Self-compassion is simply speaking to yourself with the same kindness you'd give to someone else. Your brain is listening.

DAY THREE

Meeting self-criticism with compassion



Self-criticism often comes from a place of fear or shame. Instead of suppressing or avoiding painful emotions, this challenge helps meet them with kindness.

Challenge



1. Close your eyes and place a hand over your heart.
2. Think about a situation where you were harsh on yourself recently.
3. Instead of pushing the feeling away, name it gently (e.g., “I’m feeling disappointment”).
4. Use a self-soothing touch (place a hand on your heart, hug yourself or rub your arms gently).
5. Whisper:
 - “This is hard and I’m allowed to be kind to myself in this moment.”
 - “Even though this is hard, I want to support myself through it.”
6. Complete this short sentence:
 - “Of course I feel this way because . . .” (Validate your feelings).
7. Say these sentences softly or write them down in just a few words.



Key takeaway

Shame is part of being human. Self-compassion isn’t about fixing emotions but being present with them, like you would for a friend.

DAY FOUR

Writing a compassionate letter to yourself



Engaging in self-compassionate writing helps reshape self-perception and reduces shame.



Challenge

1. Write a letter to yourself as if you were writing to a younger version of you.
2. Use gentle, kind language (e.g., “I see how hard you’re trying. You deserve kindness.”)
3. If it feels hard, start with: “Dear [Your Name], I want you to know . . .”
4. Read it out loud or record it and listen back.



Key takeaway

Writing is a powerful tool for rewiring negative self-beliefs into self-compassion.

DAY FIVE

Looking yourself in the eyes with kindness



Many people struggle with self-acceptance because they avoid truly seeing themselves. This challenge helps cultivate warmth toward yourself.



Challenge

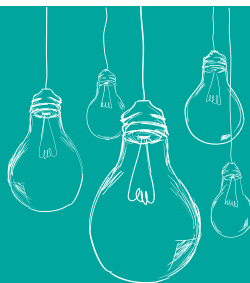
1. Look at yourself in a mirror.
2. Make eye contact with yourself for just five seconds.
3. Say one kind thing to yourself (e.g., “You’re trying, and that matters”).
4. If it feels hard, just nod at yourself in acknowledgement.



Key takeaway

Self-compassion is an embodied practice, not just a mental one.

Remember...



This is not a race. If a day feels too much, pause and return when you're ready.

Some challenges take more time than others. Give yourself permission to move at your own pace.

If shame resurfaces, return to Day 1 and remind yourself: Feeling resistance is normal. Compassion is a skill I'm learning.

This *5-day self-compassion challenge* and the *Life in the Grey* podcast are products of Mums At The Table, the village it takes to not just raise a child, but a mum too.

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