

Class 06 – Self-Compassion: Theoretical Issues

The Yin and Yang of self-compassion

- YIN – Yielding, passive, soft, feminine
- YANG – Forceful, active, hard, masculine
- Yin Self-Compassion
 - Tender aspect of self-compassion
 - Comforting, reassuring, validating
 - Allows us to heal
 - The three components manifest as loving, connected, presence
- Yang Self-Compassion
 - Fierce aspect of self-compassion
 - Taking action to alleviate suffering
 - Protecting, Providing, Motivating
- Yang - Protecting
 - Kindness: Fiercely protect ourselves, draw boundaries
 - Common humanity: Find strength in numbers
 - Mindfulness: Clearly see and speak the truth
 - The three components manifest as fierce, empowered, clarity
- Yang - Providing
 - Kindness: Fulfill our needs
 - Common humanity: Give to ourselves as well as others
 - Mindfulness: Understand our authentic needs
 - The three components manifest as fulfilling, balanced, authenticity
- Yang - Motivating
 - Kindness: Encourage change, constructive criticism
 - Common humanity: Learning from our human mistakes
 - Mindfulness: Seeing what needs to change
 - The three components manifest as encouraging, wise, vision

<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Self-Kindness</u>	<u>Common Humanity</u>	<u>Mindfulness</u>
<u>Yin (Be With)</u>	<u>Loving</u>	<u>Connected</u>	<u>Presence</u>
<u>Yang (Protect)</u>	<u>Fierce</u>	<u>Empowered</u>	<u>Clarity</u>
<u>Yang (Provide)</u>	<u>Fulfilling</u>	<u>Balanced</u>	<u>Authenticity</u>
<u>Yang (Motivate)</u>	<u>Encouraging</u>	<u>Wise</u>	<u>Vision</u>

We must integrate both yin and yang self-compassion to alleviate suffering: CARING FORCE

Common misgivings and cultural blocks to self-compassion

It's weak

- Self-compassion is a strength that allows us to cope with life's challenges

It's passive and complacent

- Self-compassion takes action to alleviate suffering

It's really self-pity

- Self-compassion reduces self-focus

It's selfish

- Self-compassion provides the emotional resources needed to give to others

It's self-indulgent

- Self-compassion entails desire for long-term health not short term pleasure

It's just making excuses

- Self-compassion provides the safety needed to take responsibility for mistakes

Belief it will undermine motivation

- Motivation with self-compassion comes from the desire for health and well-being
- Giving support and encouragement is a more effective motivator than harsh criticism
- Provides supportive emotional environment for change and growth

Mindfulness versus Self-Compassion

- Mindfulness accepts painful experience without resistance, “being” with things as they are
- Compassion wishes the experiencer to be free from suffering, active self-soothing
- Paradox: We give ourselves compassion not to feel better but *because* we feel bad (we accept our pain but care about the fact we're in pain)
- Self-compassion gives us the safety needed to mindfully open to our pain

Backdraft

- Fire-fighting term: When oxygen rushes into a fire, flames rush out
- Often the pain stored inside gets released when give self-compassion
- When give self love, remember all the ways we haven't been loved
- May seem that self-compassion is making things worse, but part of healing process
- For those with history of trauma or abuse in childhood, backdraft can be strong
 - Process unfolds more slowly, but still possible
- Mindfulness practices useful for backdraft