

SOTM Self-Compassion Event

An Introduction: Laying the Groundwork

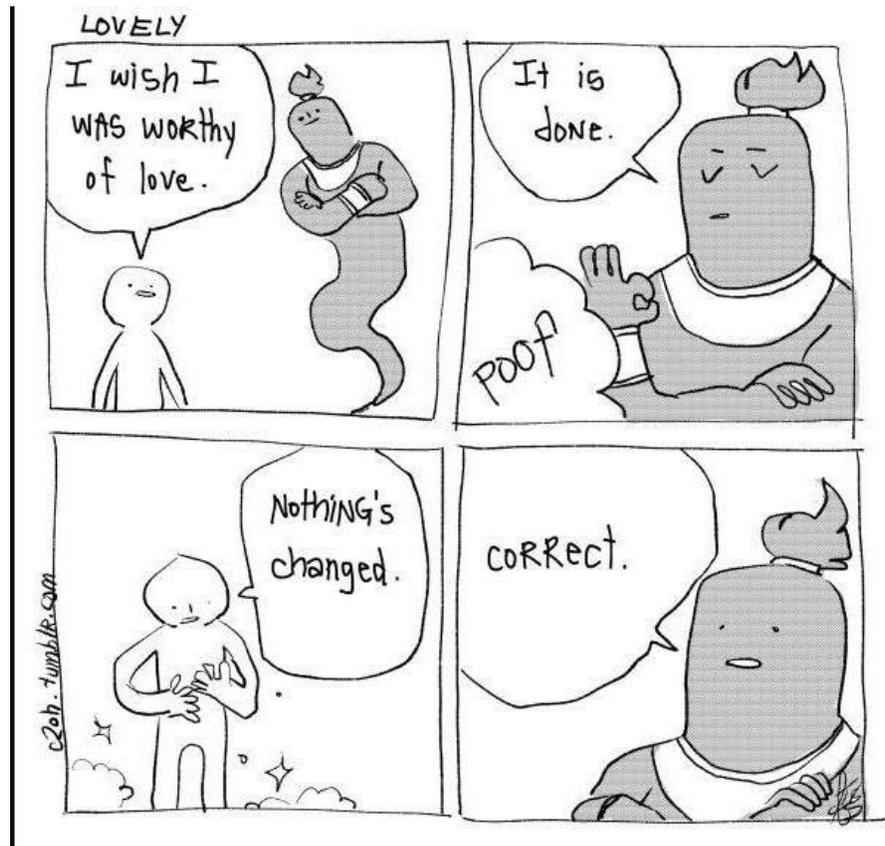
Wednesday, April 14, 2021 – 7-8:30 p.m.

Led by Pastor and Spiritual Director, DanaLee Simon

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“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

~Matthew 22:36-39



Opening Practice: Feeling the Soles of Your Feet

How do I already offer myself care and love?

Physically?

Mentally/Emotionally?

Spiritually?

The Definition of Compassion and Self-Compassion: (<https://www.mindfulnesscompassionforteens.com/what-is-self-compassion/>)

According to Dr. Kristin Neff: “Having compassion for one’s self is really no different than having compassion for others. Think about what the experience of **compassion** feels like.

First, to have compassion for others you must *notice that they are suffering*. If you ignore that homeless person on the street, you can’t feel compassion for how difficult his or her experience is. (Mindfulness)

Second, compassion involves feeling moved by others’ suffering so that *your heart responds to their pain* (the word compassion literally means to “suffer with”). When this occurs, you feel warmth, caring, and the desire to help the suffering person in some way. Having compassion also means that you offer understanding and kindness to others when they fail or make mistakes, rather than judging them harshly. (Kindness)

Finally, when you feel compassion for another (rather than mere pity), it means that you *realize that suffering, failure, and imperfection is part of the shared human experience*. “There but for fortune go I.” (Common Humanity)

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 to tell yourself “this is really difficult right now,” *how can I comfort and care for myself in this moment?* (Mindfulness)
- Instead of mercilessly judging and criticizing yourself for various inadequacies or shortcomings, self-compassion means *you are kind and understanding when confronted with personal failings* – after all, who ever said you were supposed to be perfect? You may try to change in ways that allow you to be more healthy and happy, but this is done because you care about yourself, not because you are worthless or unacceptable as you are. (Kindness)
- Perhaps most importantly, having compassion for yourself means that *you honor and accept your humanness*. Things will not always go the way you want them to. You will encounter frustrations, losses will occur, you will make mistakes, bump up against your limitations, fall short of your ideals. This is the human condition, a reality shared by all of us. The more you open your heart to this reality instead of constantly fighting against it, the more you will be able to feel compassion for yourself and all your fellow humans in the experience of life.” (Common Humanity)

Self-Compassion Break (A guided informal practice)



Practices in the Three Doorways of Self-Compassion

Mindfulness – Exploration of Awareness using our Senses

Kindness – Practice of Soothing Touch

Soothing Touch

(https://center4msc-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Soothing-Touch_2017.pdf)

An easy way to support ourselves when we're feeling badly is to offer ourselves comforting or soothing touch.

Hand-on-Heart

- ∞ When you notice you're under stress, take 2-3 deep, satisfying breaths.
- ∞ Gently place a hand over your heart, simply feeling the gentle pressure and warmth of your hand. If you wish, placing both hands over your heart.
- ∞ Feel the natural rising and falling of your chest as you breathe in and as you breathe out.
- ∞ Linger with the feeling for as long as you like.

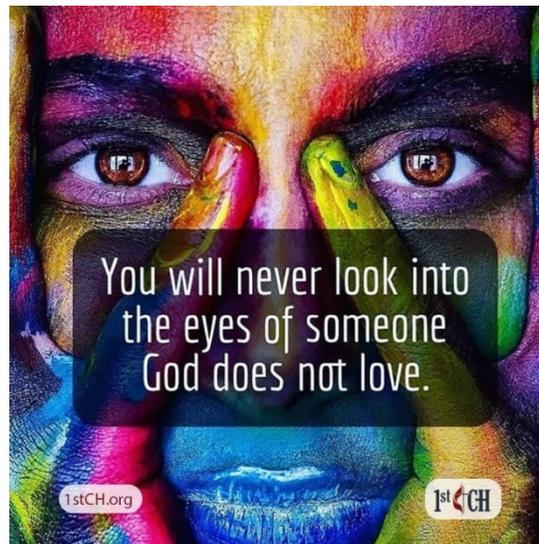
Some other possibilities are:

- ∞ Cupping your hand over a fist over your heart
- ∞ One hand over your heart and one on your belly
- ∞ Two hands on your belly
- ∞ One hand on your cheek
- ∞ Cradling your face in your hands
- ∞ Gently stroking your arms
- ∞ Crossing your arms and giving yourself a gentle squeeze
- ∞ Gently stroking your chest, back and forth or in small circles
- ∞ One hand tenderly holding the other
- ∞ Cupping your hands in your lap

Common Humanity – Practice of Wonder from Valarie Kaur’s book, *See No Stranger*
“You are a part of me I do not yet know.”

1. As we sit on ZOOM together tonight, I want to invite you to take turns focusing on different faces that are in front of you. One by one, as you focus on each face, say to yourself, “You are a sister, brother, child of God, or human, just like me”. Notice what you feel like in your body. Notice what you are thinking. This has been a practice of noticing Common Humanity.

2. I want to invite you to practice this in your real life in between now and when we meet again. With schoolmates, co-workers, your family, people on the news/tv shows, even trees, animals and other things in nature. When we come back together in two weeks, I will allow space for people who would like to speak to share about what this practice has been like for you.



Some Self-Compassion Resources

Self-Compassion by Kristin Neff

The Mindful Self-Compassion Workbook by Kristin Neff and Christopher Germer

The Self-Compassion Workbook for Teens by Karen Bluth

<https://self-compassion.org/>

<https://centerformsc.org/practice-msc/>