



YOUR JOURNEY THROUGH GRIEF: WALKING YOUR PATH WITH  
COMPASSION AND HOPE

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MY WHY



# TODAYS JOURNEY

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Your Grief Journey

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Guideposts To Healing

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Self Compassion





# YOUR GRIEF JOURNEY

- Unique To You
- Take What You  
Need...Leave the Rest
- Grief is unpredictable



# WHAT SHAPES YOUR GRIEF EXPERIENCE

The circumstances surrounding the person's death.

Who the person is and who the griever is.

The griever's relationship with the person who died.

The griever's loss history.

Society and culture of the griever.

Secondary losses occurring at the time of death.

Griever's access to and use of support.

(Dr. Alan Wolfelt, PhD When Grief is Complicated)



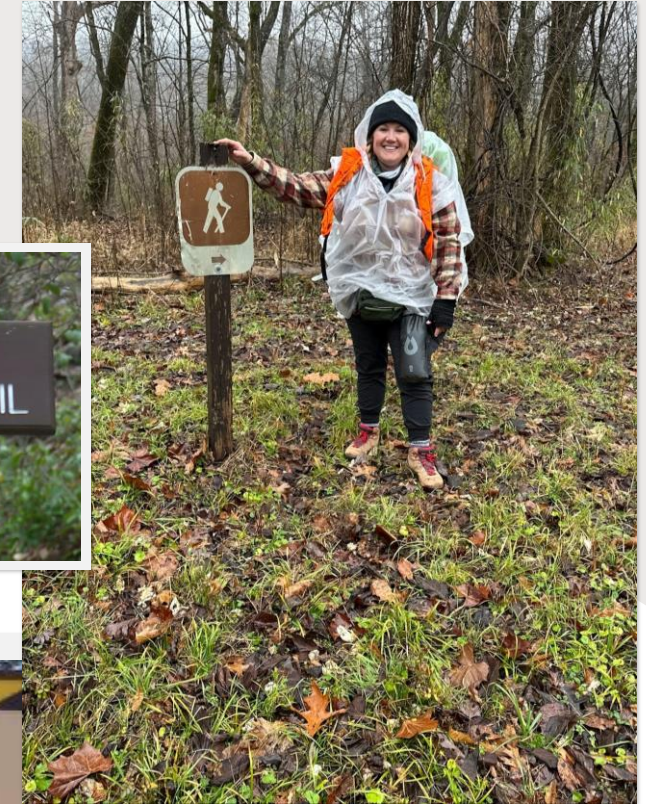


# GRIEF, GRIEVING, AND MOURNING


- Grief is the natural response to loss.
  - Grief is the collection of feelings that you experience.
  - Grieving is the process of coming to terms with that loss.
  - Grieving is the process of exploring those feelings and adjusting to life without the person you lost.
- Mourning is the external response to loss.



# GUIDEPOSTS







GUIDEPOSTS  
ALONG YOUR  
GRIEF  
JOURNEY

There are times when you may think you are “going crazy” or “losing it”... You are not.




GUIDEPOSTS ALONG  
YOUR GRIEF  
JOURNEY

Healing and Grief are not linear








GUIDEPOSTS  
ALONG YOUR  
GRIEF  
JOURNEY

Often you may feel  
like you are moving  
backwards...you are  
not.






GUIDEPOSTS  
ALONG YOUR  
GRIEF  
JOURNEY

There is no right or wrong  
way to grieve.



A landscape photograph of a sunset over a green field. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the scene. The sky is filled with soft, golden clouds. The foreground is a lush green field, and the background shows a line of trees. The left side of the image is partially obscured by a white, torn-paper-like edge.

GUIDEPOSTS  
ALONG YOUR  
GRIEF  
JOURNEY

Other people will have  
expectations of you...




GUIDEPOSTS ALONG  
YOUR GRIEF  
JOURNEY

You will never be the person  
you were before your loved  
one died.








GUIDEPOSTS  
ALONG YOUR  
GRIEF  
JOURNEY

It is ok to take breaks  
from your grief.






GUIDEPOSTS  
ALONG YOUR  
GRIEF  
JOURNEY

It is okay to say no to  
things you do not want  
to do





GUIDEPOSTS  
ALONG YOUR  
GRIEF  
JOURNEY

The relationship you have  
with your loved one does  
not end, it only changes.





## GUIDEPOSTS ALONG YOUR GRIEF JOURNEY

There is no moving on,  
getting over it, or any other  
cliché suggesting you can pack  
it away.





SELF COMPASSION AS A FOUNDATION FOR  
HEALING





# WHAT IS SELF COMPASSION

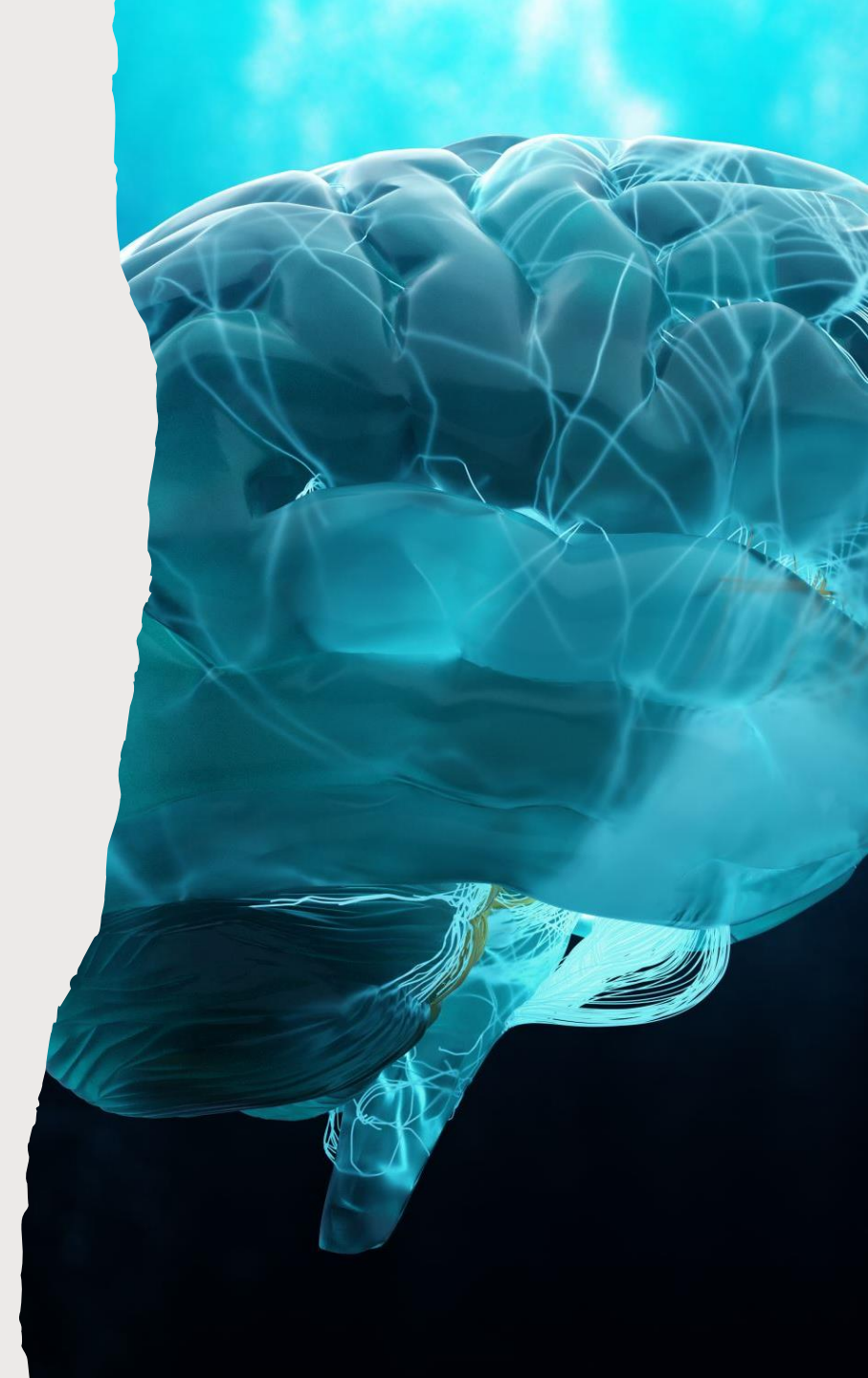
(KRISTIN NEFF, P.H.D.)

- Treating yourself in the same way you would treat a friend you love when you are going through a difficult time.
- Self-compassion for grief is the practice of making skillful choices that will reduce suffering and improve the quality of your life.
- Self-compassion is about both awareness and action. Awareness that you are suffering and action to alleviate your own suffering.



# OBSTACLES TO SELF COMPASSION

- The threat system
- Early life experiences
- Negative beliefs about self-compassion





WHAT DOES THE  
RESEARCH SAY?

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Less negative mind states

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Less depression

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Less anxiety

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Less negative self-image/body image

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Higher immune function

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Less afraid of failure

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Increased motivation



# COMPONENTS OF SELF-COMPASSION

**Self Kindness** is being understanding, accepting, and compassionate to oneself rather than harsh or critical while sitting with the pain and suffering of grief.

“It isn’t what happens to us that causes us to suffer: its what we say to ourselves about what happens”  
– Pema Chodron





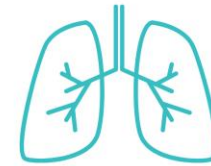
# PRACTICE

- **Comfort your body.** Eat something healthy. Lie down and rest. Massage your own neck, feet, or hands. Take a walk. Breathe. Anything you can do to improve how you feel physically gives you a dose of self-compassion.
- **Write a letter to yourself.** Think of a situation that caused you to feel pain (death of a loved one, a job loss). Write a letter to yourself describing the situation, but without blaming anyone — including yourself. Use this exercise to nurture your feelings.
- **Give yourself encouragement.** Think of what you would say to a good friend if he or she was facing a difficult or stressful situation. Then, when you find yourself in this kind of situation, direct these compassionate responses toward yourself.

## SQUARE BREATHING

**inhale** 2... 3... 4

**breathe**



**exhale** 2... 3... 4

**rest** 2... 3... 4

**hold** 2... 3... 4





## COMPONENTS OF SELF- COMPASSION

**Common Humanity** is the understanding and recognizing how we are more alike than we are different. All humans are flawed works in progress. Everyone makes mistakes, and experiences suffering.



# PRACTICE

- **A meditation for compassion:** Begin in a comfortable seated position. Take a few deep breaths to settle into your body and into the present moment. Place one hand on your heart and the other on your belly. Begin to scan your body for tension and notice any particularly strong emotions you are experiencing. Repeat to yourself, “It is OK for me to feel this way,” and meet yourself in this moment with loving compassion and acceptance. Continue for around 5 minutes or until you feel a sense of peace and expansion.





# COMPONENTS OF SELF-COMPASSION

- **Mindfulness** is being present and riding the waves of emotion as they come as you practice letting go of expectations that things be any different than they are right now.
- If you can't be present to your own grief then how can you offer yourself kindness and understanding?





# PRACTICE: SELF COMPASSION BREAK

- Think of a situation in your life that is difficult, and that is causing you stress. Call the situation to mind and see if you can feel the stress and emotional discomfort in your body.
- Now, say to yourself:
  - **1. This is a moment of suffering**
  - That's mindfulness.
  - **2. Suffering is a part of life**
  - That's common humanity
- Now, put your hands over your heart, feel the warmth of your hands and the gentle touch of your hands on your chest. Or adopt the soothing touch you discovered felt right for you.
- Say to yourself:
  - **3. May I be kind to myself**
- You can also ask yourself, "What do I need to hear right now to express kindness to myself?" Is there a phrase that speaks to you in your particular situation, such as:
  - *May I give myself the compassion that I need*
  - *May I learn to accept myself as I am*
  - *May I forgive myself*
  - *May I be strong.*
  - *May I be patient*
- This practice can be used any time of day or night, and will help you remember to evoke the three aspects of self-compassion when you need it most.







## BRINGING ALL COMPONENTS TOGETHER

- **Be present in your grief:** Mindfulness helps us ride the waves of grief as they come. Acknowledge what exists instead of denying, avoiding, or criticizing to get away from the pain.
- **Remember that suffering and grief are both an important and inevitable part of being human:** You are not alone. Your support system can bring connection and even more important validation.
- **Meet your grief with kindness:** Be curious about what you are feeling. Sometimes we resist feelings of guilt, frustration, or relief resulting in them becoming stuck. Offer compassionate warmth, love, and unconditional acceptance





# CULTIVATING SELF-COMPASSION AS PRACTICE

- Trusting yourself
- Giving yourself permission to grieve fully and deeply
- Slow down/ allow for reflection
- Remember to Breathe
- Allowing yourself to rest
- Giving yourself grace when you struggle with focus, motivation, attention (or anything else, as things that were easy before the loss may be difficult or unavailable to you now.)



A scenic view of a mountain town with a rainbow in the sky. The town is nestled in a valley, surrounded by dense green forests. In the background, there are rolling mountains under a clear blue sky. A vibrant rainbow arches across the sky, starting from the right side and extending towards the center. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and serene.

# CULTIVATING SELF COMPASSION AS PRACTICE

- Letting people know what you need from them (Communication)
- Practice self-forgiveness
- Be kind to yourself
- Physical acts of self-compassion: placing a hand on your heart and feeling the warmth and pressure of your hand, giving yourself a hug, squeezing your hands together.
- Spend time imagining yourself as a small child in need of love and care, send that child the love and care they need.
- Turn your attention toward your suffering, rather than away



EFFECTIVE GRIEF WORK IS NOT  
DONE ALONE





THANK YOU

