

## Self-Compassion Practice #5

# Self-Appreciation

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**Duration:** 5-10 minutes

**Frequency:** Weekly or as needed

**Level of Difficulty:** Moderate

**Overview:** As many of us know from experience, it's often far easier to focus on our weaknesses than our strengths. This tendency flows from our more common tendency of engaging in self-criticism, which includes magnifying and focusing on our perceived faults at the expense of noticing all that is right with us. Self-compassion teaches us that in order to truly become happy and fulfilled, we must learn to recognize the full picture. This means not only shining a light on our perceived flaws or problems, but also acknowledging and appreciating our positive attributes and accomplishments. Just as we often freely offer praise and encouragement to those around us, we too deserve this same recognition. This exercise helps start this process towards self-appreciation.

**Instructions:** In the space below, list five things about yourself that you appreciate and feel good about. These can be particular character traits that you view as strengths, accomplishments that you have worked towards, or any other aspect of yourself that you can recognize in a positive light. Remember that if discomfort arises, the aim of this practice isn't to put ourselves up on a pedestal and claim that we're perfect or even better than others; rather, it's to help us learn to appreciate the things we can like about ourselves. *Take a moment to brainstorm, and when you're ready, write them down:*

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2. \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. \_\_\_\_\_

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5. \_\_\_\_\_

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**How and why it works:** Many of us fall into patterns of self-criticism in which we're much harder on ourselves than we would ever be towards others. Although we may believe this will help spur us to greater heights, the research is now fairly conclusive that self-criticism is connected to decreased levels of well-being and lower achievement levels. Conversely, self-compassion has been linked to numerous positive mental and physical health outcomes, including lower rates of depression and anxiety, and higher rates of happiness and well-being.

One of the many costs associated with self-criticism is that it robs us of the opportunity to truly notice and appreciate our positive aspects. Like anyone else in the world, we are all human beings with strengths and weaknesses, insecurities and frailties, but also gifts and strong points. Part of self-compassion is learning to recognize these more positive elements. This exercise will help you to begin doing this.

**Notes/Impressions:**

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