



Embodied Self-Compassion

Re-connecting to Self-Worth After Trauma

Hawai'i State Department of Health's
Sex Assault Awareness Month
Roads to Reconnection
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In Memoriam

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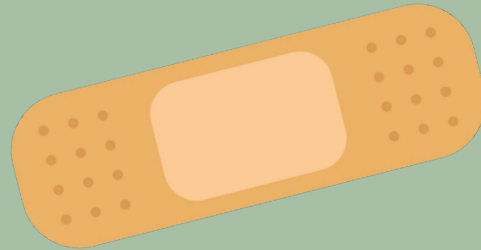




Self-worth is how you subconsciously value yourself. High self-worth is a deep feeling that you are acceptable, good, and worthy of love.

Self-confidence is an expression of your conscious beliefs related to your capacity, ability, or qualities.

Focusing on external validation is like putting a band-aid on the places where our self-worth is wounded.



Validation Archetypes

Archetype 1: The Nurturer

- “I am worthy because of my generosity.”
- Prioritizes other people’s needs above their own.
- Porous boundaries with friends, family, or clients.
- Negative self talk “I’m selfish.”





Archetype 2: The Achiever

- “I am worthy because of my accomplishments.”
- Overworks to receive tangible proof of worthiness (praise, financial compensation, awards, degrees, weight-loss, etc).
- Rigid time boundaries around work
- Negative self talk “I’m not good enough.”

Archetype 3: The Planner

- “I am worthy because my life is in order.”
- Plans, schedules, and organizes all areas of life to feel a sense of safety and self-worth.
- Rigid boundaries around commitments
- Negative self talk “I’m out of control.”





Archetype 4: The Martyr

- “I am worthy because of my suffering.”
- Over-identifies with trauma and seeks emotional response from others
- Porous emotional boundaries, overly rigid boundaries for tasks or helping others
- Negative self talk “I can’t do it on my own.”

Archetype 5: The Performer

- “I am worthy because of my image.”
- Projects an image of a perfect life
- Avoids serious conversations about anything unpleasant or vulnerable
- Rigid emotional boundaries
- Negative self talk “I might look bad.”



Poll: Which archetype do you relate to the most?



**Our triggers reveal where our
self-worth has been wounded.**

The Voice in Our Head

- Tells us we're not good enough
- Calls us names
- Repeats hurtful comments from others



“Trauma is any experience that made you feel unsafe in your fullest authentic expression and led to developing trauma adaptations to keep you safe”.

- Dr. Valerie Rein

Trauma Maladaptations

- Avoidance
- People Pleasing
- Overworking
- Need to Control
- Anxious Attachment
- Passive Aggression
- Substance misuse
- Self-Harm
- Anger
- Power over others





Archetype 6: The Bully

- “I am worthy because I’m better than you.”
- Puts other people down or controls them in order to feel that they are worthy in comparison.

Abuse and Self-Worth

A bully or abuser's put-downs mirror our own low self-worth feelings, making it difficult to identify abuse

Abusers or toxic friends, parents, or partners can create a micro-culture within a relationship where a person's value is based on external factors.



Self-compassion is treating yourself as a worthy being by offering yourself the same kindness and care you would give a good friend or young child.

**Embodiment is using the body
as a tool for healing through
self-awareness, mindfulness,
and self-regulation.**



Embodiment Practices

- Rest
- Body Scan
- Relaxing muscles
- Breathwork
- Posture
- Self massage
- Mindfulness
- Swimming underwater
- Focusing on physical sensations
- Walking
- Stretching
- Dance
- Yoga
- Qi Gong
- Tai Chi

**The mind impacts the body and
the body impacts the mind.**

Nervous System Response to Trauma

The nervous system is your body's command center. It controls movement, thought, and memory, as well as automatic processes like breathing.

Traumatic events trigger the nervous system into a rapid and involuntary alert state, shutting down non-essential parts of the brain to focus on increasing energy and alertness in the body.

- Rapid heartbeat
- Quick or shallow breathing
- Dilated pupils
- Increased blood flow to muscles, legs, and arms

The two basic ingredients of emotions are the feelings inside your body and your mind's interpretation of those feelings.

A woman, Kelly McGonigal, is standing on a TED stage. She is wearing a dark blue blazer and bright red pants. Behind her is a large screen displaying a presentation slide. The slide features a smaller image of her and a network diagram with green nodes and yellow lines. The background of the stage is blue and yellow, with the word "TED" in red on the left. The name "KELLY MCGONIGAL" is written in large white letters at the bottom of the screen. To the right, there is a decorative structure of thin metal rods and spheres.

TED

KELLY MCGONIGAL

Positive & Adverse Childhood Experiences (PCEs and ACEs)

- A CDC Study revealed a link between childhood trauma and chronic diseases developed in adulthood, including heart disease, lung cancer, diabetes and many autoimmune diseases.
- Additional studies have shown that positive childhood experiences, including family connection and safety, improved mental health and provided a buffer against health risks.

**Our beliefs and experiences can
affect our health.**

AND

**Our physical practices can affect
our well being.**



The Power of Posture

Low Power Pose

- Make yourself smaller
- Feel less powerful and more stressed



High Power Pose

- Make yourself bigger
- Feel more powerful and less stressed



The Power of Breath

Breathing for energy

- Rapid breaths
- Longer inhales
- Activates sympathetic nervous system



Breathing for Relaxation

- Slower breaths
- Longer exhales
- Activates parasympathetic nervous system



Smiling Impacts Mood

A recent study showed that facial expressions have an effect on feelings: Smiling makes people feel happier, scowling makes them feel angrier, and frowning makes them feel sadder.

“We don't think that people can smile their way to happiness, but these findings are exciting because they provide a clue about how the mind and the body interact to shape our conscious experience of emotion.”



When we engage in embodied self-compassion practices, we are using both our body and our mind to identify and heal our subconscious feelings of unworthiness.

Elements of Embodied Self-Compassion

- Self acceptance
- Mindfulness
- Self-Soothing
- Doing your best
- Asking for support
- Creating healthy boundaries





Self Acceptance

Understanding that it is okay (and inevitable!) to be imperfect, to fail, or to experience difficulties.

Feeling your emotions.

Remaining gentle with yourself.

Embodied Practices

Cry.
Yell. Punch a pillow. Punch the air.
Dance.

Mindfulness

Observing your thoughts and feelings as they are without trying to deny them.

Taking a balanced approach to negative emotions so that feelings are neither suppressed nor exaggerated.

Embodied Practices

Focus on your breath.

Neutrally observe physical sensations in your body.





Doing Your Best

Find the balance between encouraging yourself to do what you can and knowing that you cannot do everything.

Understanding that your “best” will look different under different circumstances.

Embodied Practices

Superhero pose.
Rest.

Self Soothing

Soothing touch releases oxytocin, provides a sense of security, soothes distressing emotions, and calms cardiovascular stress.

Embodied Practice

Give yourself a gentle hug.





Asking for Support

Suffering is part of the shared human experience. You are never alone.

Asking for help is an act of self-compassion.

Embodied Practice

Ask a family member, friend, or loved one for a hug or a helping hand.

Spend time with animals.

Creating Healthy Boundaries

Boundaries include: physical, emotional, time, sexual, intellectual, and material

Relaxing overly rigid boundaries to become more open – Learning when to say YES!

Strengthening overly porous boundaries to show self worth - Learning how to say NO!

Embodied Practices

Use posture to facilitate feelings of openness. Say YES with your body.

Use posture to facilitate feelings of strength and empowerment. Say NO with your body.



**As we practice self-compassion, we are
building new neural pathways, and
teaching our body and our brain new
ways to respond to stress.**



Mahalo!

