

Guided meditation: Self Compassion (10.5 minutes)

00:01: Allow yourself to call up some aspect of your being that feels fragmented, silenced, or pushed away. That part feels most unwelcome. You don't have to pick the most difficult part. You might start with something a little bit easier, just some part that you know is difficult to love. That might be a quality, "Oh, I'm so impatient." Or it might be a memory, something that caused pain to yourself or another person or another being. Or it could just be the physical pain in the body. It's like you feel the pain of the knee and you can feel yourself resisting it, pushing it away. So find some aspect of your being that feels like it's not welcome, it's not fully embraced. And then allow yourself to become aware of this part of your being. Bring it into the consciousness of your own awareness. Connect with it. And as you connect with this part of your being. Start by acknowledging this is painful. You might even feel the sting or the "ouch". And see if you can locate it in the body, "where is that felt?" So stay with the discomfort for a bit. It brings it more into the awareness. We don't want to move too quickly past the ouch.

[40 second pause]

02:43: And so now we'll bring in some support. This is the power of compassion. If you'd like to bring a hand to your own heart center. Make contact with your own heart. And as you feel the connection of your own hand with your heart center, allow yourself to consciously connect with this pain. So you might say something like, "This pain is part of being human. Everyone experiences pain, not just me." And allow the felt sense of your hand on your own heart center to allow you to connect with it, with the difficulty, discomfort, or the pain. This is what it means to be human. But notice the support of your own hand. There is support. There's a gesture of embracing, of contact, engagement. So from this place of engagement, you might try offering a phrase. As you connect with this painful part, this difficult part of your own being or your own experience, try offering a phrase. May I hold this with kindness? May I meet this with the strength of an open heart? May this, too, be known. With patience. With gentleness.

[1:23 minute pause]

05:17: And as you try dropping in whatever phrase works, whatever phrase connects for you. Notice how that changes the relationship. Notice how there can be a capacity to hold, to embrace, the difficult. To make it welcome, not to cure it or to fix it but simply to know it more deeply in its fullness. What does this have to teach at this moment?

[30 second pause]

06:06: So this is the fearlessness of compassion, standing in difficulty but not in a numb way. The feeling in its fullness. And you might breathe into space. You can bring in the breath as a support.

06:52: And then you can keep your hand at the heart center if you like, or you can bring it back down. And then you can open your awareness to this community. So extend your knowing, either to the felt sense of everybody sitting around, practicing together, or just the image. It's like the mental image of all of us sitting in a circle together. And sense into the capacity of the group, the capacity of the community to hold and to meet. There's courage and a strength of heart that collectively we can all feel. And so allow yourself to be nourished by this, that there is a collective holding, that whatever pain we may experience, whatever part of us that may feel most unwelcome, most difficult, it's part of larger humanity. We all have some pain, something that's difficult to accept, difficult to welcome. Allow yourself to rest and be nourished by the community that's able to hold, to offer support, to stand in the middle of. And in these last few moments, you might connect with the deepest aspiration, a wish that all beings know the strength of their own heart. It's fearless compassion, the ability to

embrace that which feels most unwelcome, most difficult, and most unlovable.

[40 second pause]

09:43: So take a few moments to just let any reflection go and stay with your own body, your own breath, just feeling the fullness of your own body, feeling the aliveness of your own breath and your own beating heart.

[13 second pause]

10:23: And when you're ready, you can open your eyes if they are closed.