

HANDOUT 7.5: SELF CRITICISM VS. COMPASSIONATE IMPROVEMENT

Self-Critic	Compassionate Improvement
Focused on the desire to condemn and punish	Focused on the desire to improve
Focused on punishing past mistakes	Focused on growth and expansion
Often focused on the past	Often focused on the future
Criticism moved by anger, frustration, contempt, disappointment	Criticism moved by encouragement, support and kindness
Focused on shortcomings and fear of exposure	Builds on the positives (e.g., remembering what you did well in the past and considering things to learn from)
Focused on global sense of self (if I make a mistake, I extend it to my entire sense of self)	Focused on specific attributes and qualities of the self (if I make a mistake, I put things in perspective)
Focused on the fear of failure	Focused on success and hope for success
Increases the likelihood of avoidance and abandonment	Increases the likelihood of engagement
Like a criticizing and judgmental teacher towards a struggling child	Like a compassionate teacher towards a struggling child
<i>In the face of mistakes and wrongdoings:</i>	<i>In the face of mistakes and wrongdoings:</i>
Shame, avoidance, fear "Heartbreak," mood deflection Aggression	Guilt, involvement regret, remorse Repair

Think about some of the most frequent remarks your self-critic makes; how might you transform these into Compassionate Improvement remarks?

Self-Critical remark	Compassionate Improvement remark
<p><i>Example: you are lazy! You're not as reliable as everyone thinks... you are an impostor!</i></p>	<p><i>Example: I know that not observing the deadlines is scary for you... that's why the Self Critic is so restless. But you are very tired these days and it is important that you respect yourself at this time. It is ok not being perfect – nobody is. Remember all the times you've completed your projects and duties. People can count on you. You can count on you.</i></p>