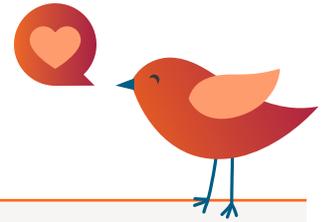


Converting negative self-talk to self-compassion



This document was developed in partnership with the PNH community and Dr. Guy Winch, psychologist and renowned expert in the science of emotional health.

The PNH effect

Having PNH can sometimes make it easy to fall into a habit of negative self-talk. When you're not feeling well, it can be challenging to cope with mistakes or disappointments. It's also human nature to be self-critical when we make mistakes, get rejected, or feel like we aren't living up to expectations. Over time, negative self-talk can impair your self-esteem, confidence, and motivation.

So how can you better identify when you're being self-critical? More importantly, how can you convert it to self-compassion and enhance your emotional well-being?

Three steps to make a change

1

Spotting common self-talk

Review the 5 common justifications for negative self-talk below. Think about how often you may use them, and learn about how they can impact your self-esteem.

JUSTIFICATION	I SAY THIS:	REALITY
● "I'm just being honest with myself"	<input type="checkbox"/> A lot <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Never	Being honest can help you understand and be accountable for mistakes. However, putting yourself down limits your ability to learn from experiences.
● "It will prevent me from having an inflated ego"	<input type="checkbox"/> A lot <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Never	People with inflated egos believe they deserve more than they actually do. Self-critical people believe they deserve less than they actually do. The goal is to find a realistic middle.
● "It will prepare me for future hurt or disappointment"	<input type="checkbox"/> A lot <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Never	It will set you up for potentially more mistakes, because you're undercutting your confidence and impairing your determination.
● "It's an accurate reflection of who I am as a person"	<input type="checkbox"/> A lot <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Never	The event causing your self-criticism reflects what you did (your actions), not who you are (your essence). So, it's an accurate reflection of a situation/event, not you as a person.
● "I deserve it"	<input type="checkbox"/> A lot <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Never	If a friend was in the same circumstance, would you say the exact same critical things to him or her? Of course not, as it would be cruel. It's just as cruel when you say it to yourself — be kind to yourself.

2

Building self-compassion

Now, let's explore how we can convert negative self-talk to self-compassion. Self-compassion is based on 3 important factors:

- SELF-KINDNESS** Everyone deserves to be treated with kindness
- HUMANITY** We're human; we make mistakes
- MINDFULNESS** We need to be mindful of negative emotions, viewing them without judgment

To cultivate self-compassion, remember these 3 points when you examine events. It can be helpful to approach it in a "just the facts" manner, without negative commentary/self-criticism.

3

Put it to work!

For one week, be on the lookout for negative self-talk. Each time you do, imagine what you would say to a friend in the same situation. Write those thoughts down and read them to yourself. Do they reflect the 3 factors for self-compassion? If not, re-write your thoughts from a compassionate viewpoint. Here's an example to help guide you.

- **Example:**

Your energy levels are low mid-day due to PNH, and you aren't able to complete an important project at work. You're frustrated with yourself for not gauging your energy more accurately and prioritizing the project.

- **Your negative self-talk:**

I should have known I would give up mid-day. Why am I so lazy?

- **What you would say to a friend:**

Knowing how you'll feel each day with PNH is not an exact science. The best you can do is make an educated guess, which is what you did. Would it have been smarter to not try? No, because then you'd be upset with yourself for not pushing more.

REMEMBER!

Self-compassion takes practice. EVERY time you hear yourself become self-critical, consider what you would say to a friend in the same situation to help change your perspective and be self-compassionate. Remember that mistakes and disappointments are a natural part of life. So be kind to yourself — you deserve it!



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