

Gratitude and Self-Compassion Script

Take a moment to get comfortable in your seat. As you adjust your body, notice any physical sensations you are experiencing; notice where your body touches the chair, where your feet touch the floor. Notice your breath as it enters and leaves the body. Where is this sensation most obvious to you? Do you feel your breath in your nostrils? In your chest rising and falling? Take some time to notice your breath. Close your eyes if that feels comfortable as you continue to tune in to your body. Our bodies are our homes. The vessel through which we experience the world. Whether that is the sensations of our breath, the feelings of the chair or world beneath us, the sounds we hear, or the thoughts we have. Our thoughts come so quickly and naturally. You have likely already noticed some thoughts since beginning this exercise. Maybe thoughts like, *"Am I doing this right?"* or *"When will this be over?"* or *"There is nothing to look forward to."* or *"I am failing."* Thoughts, like breath, sound, and other sensations come and go. Thoughts are natural, and automatic. Although we cannot choose our automatic thoughts, we can choose to focus our attention on kind and compassionate thoughts.

One way to do this is to focus on gratitude. Take a moment to think of one thing for which you are grateful. This could be something big or small. Gratitude for a person who loves you, or something kind someone did for you, or just a moment where you got to laugh or make someone else laugh. Try thinking, *"I am feeling grateful for..."* See if you can relive that moment for a second. What do you see? What do you hear? What do you feel?

Now, try to turn that gratitude toward yourself. You can start with your body: what is something your body can do that you may take for granted, but for which you are grateful? Maybe this is a way your body can move or an ability you possess. Try thinking, *"I am feeling grateful that my body can..."*

Now can you extend this gratitude to another part of you, maybe a more subtle ability you have? Gratitude toward yourself for the way you handle difficult situations, or your kindness, or your dedication to justice, or for being hardworking, for caring for siblings, for dealing with a pandemic. Think about some of your abilities that you typically take for granted, and try thinking *"I am feeling grateful that I..."*

Now take a moment to refocus on your body. Notice your physical sensations again. How they come and go like the breath. Thoughts are like this. They are automatic, and sometimes they are uncomfortable or unkind. But we can also choose to focus on things for which we feel grateful, both outside ourselves and within ourselves. This gratitude builds our compassion, which can help us deal with challenging situations.

When you feel ready, open your eyes and take in your surroundings. How do you feel?