

BECOMING A FRIEND TO YOURSELF

Your Mistakes

Think of a time you made a mistake, failed, or did something you considered to be wrong. Briefly state what the mistake was here:

Now get in touch with how you responded to the mistake and answer these questions:

Did your advisor criticize you?

Yes _____ Somewhat _____ No _____

Did you call yourself names like stupid, lazy, or weak?

Yes _____ Somewhat _____ No _____

Did you blame yourself?

Yes _____ Somewhat _____ No _____

Were you hard on yourself for a long time, like more than a day or two?

Yes _____ Somewhat _____ No _____

A Friend's Mistakes

Now think of a time when a close friend made a mistake, failed, or did something you considered to be wrong. Choose a mistake that didn't hurt you or impact you negatively. (You might choose something like failing a test or being fired from a job.) Briefly state what the mistake was here:

Now get in touch with how you responded to your friend's mistake—what you said or thought about your friend.

Did you criticize your friend?

Yes _____ Somewhat _____ No _____

Did you call your friend names like stupid, lazy, or weak?

Yes _____ Somewhat _____ No _____

Did you blame your friend?

Yes _____ Somewhat _____ No _____

Did you stay angry at your friend for a long time, like more than a day or two?

Yes _____ Somewhat _____ No _____

Comparing Your Ratings

How did you do? If you answered yes to three or more questions about yourself, you're being hard on yourself and may want to give kindness a try. How did you rate your friend? When you compare your ratings, is there a difference? Is it easier for you to be kind to a friend than it is to yourself?

One way to practice self-kindness is by taking the perspective of a friend. In other words, treat yourself as you'd treat a friend who made a similar mistake. Can you be a friend to yourself? Try stepping into discoverer space and giving self-kindness a try, just to see what happens. You can always go back to self-criticism.

Also, bear in mind that self-kindness isn't self-indulgence. It works to the extent that it helps you overcome setbacks and recommit to your valued path.