5 SELF-KINDNESS PRACTICES TO TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE

Marlène Rose Shaw
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to Transform *Your* Life!

We all know that kindness is a good thing. In fact, when we're kind, we tune into a magical power that brings great happiness into our life. That's the power of love; it's a truly miraculous state of being that can change lives in an instant. I know. I've seen it happen again and again in over 25 years of helping people transform their lives. However, often when we think about kindness, we think in terms of how kind we are towards others, and we forget that it's just as important to be kind to ourselves.

Over the years I've found that whenever I ask someone, 'Are you kind?' they most often say, 'Yes, of course!'

And when I follow that with, 'And are you kind to yourself?' most people have to pause for a moment to think about it. Quite often, their response is that they're not so sure. What does self-kindness look like? they wonder. “How would I do that?” they ask me.

There are very many ways we can learn to be kinder to ourselves. When we begin the habit of doing so, life improves for the better – and often very quickly indeed.

In this guide, I've put together five simple self-kindness practices to help you get started. They are tools, techniques and suggestions that come straight from the therapy room. Just for you.
The First Self-Kindness Practice:
Monitor What You're Putting Into Your Subconscious

The first self-kindness practice is to start monitoring what you are putting into your subconscious. Your subconscious dictates around 95% of what you think, feel and do every day of your life. Think of your subconscious as like a hard drive on a computer. It doesn't have the opportunity to make choices and decisions about what is helpful or unhelpful for you; it just plays the same old programs based on the information it's been given. In the same way that it’s unhealthy to put too much junk food into your body, it’s equally unhelpful to put too much negative ‘data’ into your subconscious.

Have you ever felt low or depressed for no particular reason and then wondered why? Chances are that something in your subconscious was triggered by an inconsequential thought, that linked to a whole load of negativity simmering away below the level of your awareness.
But you can absolutely do something about this. One of the kindest things you can do for yourself is to start monitoring what you are putting into your subconscious in the form of external information. Many of us have grown up with the news as part of our daily routine. However, the majority of news items are negative – filled with reports of trauma and fear-based experiences. So it's a really good idea to refrain from watching, listening to, or reading too much news. If you want to keep up with current events, limit yourself to scanning headlines or reading only for a short period of time each day.

But news items are not the only culprit. Likewise, you can be kind to yourself by becoming aware of the books, films, and music you are putting into your subconscious. Try to avoid those that contain messages of violence, anger, and fear.

So begin the daily practice of giving your subconscious mind some love. Instead of feeding it negative information which is based in fear, feed it with information based positivity, inspiration, and joy.
The Second Self-Kindness Practice: Choose to 'For-give'

The second kindness practice on our list is forgiveness. Forgive yourself for any indiscretions and thoughtless acts. You’re only human, and actually, these mistakes are how you learn about life and grow as a person. So ask yourself – “What can I learn from that situation?” and then let it go.

Forgiving other’s too is an act of self-kindness. People sometimes think that forgiving another means condoning something that was wrong, but that’s not really the case. To condone something means to disregard it as though it never happened or to deny that it was ever a painful experience. To forgive on the other hand is to acknowledge the event but to detach from the emotional baggage it has left you with.

Ask yourself the following question, ‘What would my life be like if I forgave and let it go?’

Of course, it’s easy to say “just let it go” – but how do you actually do that? Well, there’s a fantastic technique called Emotional Freedom Techniques, EFT. With EFT you release the emotional blocks that have become trapped in your system when the event occurred. Think of it like this. Something happens, or someone upsets you. You tense up and you feel a negative emotion such as anger, hurt or fear. That emotion gets locked into your system. You’ll know the emotion is trapped in
there because when you think of that bad experience you’ll feel it: perhaps your heart pounds, or your stomach churns, or your shoulders tense up. EFT is a technique that helps you shift that trapped emotion. And in that way, you can forgive, yourself, or another. Of course, you’ll still remember the event, but with EFT the emotional block in your system—resentment, anger, hurt, and so forth—will clear away. After that, you’ll find that the event just won’t bother you so much.

I always think of forgiving in these terms: To ‘for-give’ is to ‘give-for’: to give away negativity for the sake of your own good. Is there something you’ve been holding on to? It would be very kind to yourself to make the decision today to forgive it. You can learn how to use EFT from books, online videos or from a therapist such as myself. It’s a technique I teach my clients in sessions, then they practice it at home on all sorts of issues they want to clear.

If you want to find out more about EFT, please visit my website at https://marleneroseshaw.com/eft-costa-del-sol/
The Third Self-Kindness Practice: Stop and Review Your Cool List

In these busy days, many of us rush from one thing to another, putting a great deal of pressure on ourselves to *get the next task done*. We can be so busy looking at the next thing that we have to do and stressing about 'not being good enough' that we forget to look back and review all that we've already achieved in life. Life is supposed to be about inspiration and creativity, feeling fulfilled and confident to follow your dreams.

When you rush through the days and weeks in a blur, you take yourself for granted and that's not being kind to you at all. After all you are pretty cool you know! So instead of ignoring all your amazing achievements, bring them back to your awareness. Commend yourself instead of berating yourself. Stop and review your cool list.

Life is an ongoing journey into wisdom, it’s not a race. Wherever you are at this point in your life, and whatever you’ve achieved so far, it's all wonderful. Take a pause to look back at all you have accomplished in the past day, past week, month, year, ten years! Think about all the minor and major achievements of your life. Look back at the challenges you’ve had and the lessons you’ve learnt from them. Think about the people you’ve helped, the small hills and the large mountains you’ve climbed. Take a really good – and loving – look at yourself! It’s a really kind act to you to make a list of these - and tune in to how you feel as you do so. Keep the list and add to it as you remember your
wonderful triumphs, big, and small. You'll find that your confidence soars, you feel inspired and happy, and you look forward self-assuredly to the next chapter in your life. Instead of it being stressful, it will seem like an exciting step on your journey into wisdom because you are being kind to yourself.

The Fourth Self-Kindness Practice: Remove Your Superhero Cape

One of the kindest things you can do for yourself is to remove your superhero cape. Just as many of us rush through life without stopping to review our cool list, it's also easy to think we have to keep proving ourselves.

In the course of my work as a therapist, I've met many people who have thought success meant doing everything by themselves. Unfortunately, this often leads to becoming overwhelmed and burnt out. It stems from a limiting belief about not being good enough and having to prove your worth. The problem with doing everything by yourself is that it gives people the message that – well – you can do everything by yourself. So
you end up overwhelmed and with no support from others. This just reinforces the idea that “you have to do everything by yourself” and so it goes on and on.

If you consider the people you think of as successful, you'll see that they've actually had a lot of help along the way. No one person can be good at everything. Each of us has a natural flair for certain things, while we're not so good at other things. That’s okay because all of life is about sharing, teaching and reciprocity. The evolution of humankind; our communities, our technology, our progress has all happened because of the interchange of people’s unique talents and abilities.

If you're like the rest of us, some things in your life probably come easier for you, and there are other areas where you could use a little help. It’s a great act of self-kindness to acknowledge those less able areas, ask for help from someone else, and then accept that help in good grace.

The majority of people are intrinsically good at heart – they want to share that goodness and they like to help others. Very often, by asking someone for help, you’re paying them a great compliment. That's because you're giving the message that you trust that person and that you admire his or her skills and abilities to help you. So if you've been metaphorically going through life wearing a cape with a big 'S' on it, it's time to hang up that cape now! Be kind to yourself.
The Fifth Self-Kindness Practice: Question Your Unhelpful Beliefs

Paying attention to your unhelpful beliefs is one of the kindest things you can ever do for yourself. As I’ve said, much of your life is dictated by the information in your subconscious mind. How you feel, the thoughts that come into your mind, the decisions you make and the actions you take – all of this is based on the beliefs you hold, often deeply below your conscious awareness.

You formed most of your beliefs – helpful and unhelpful – in the earliest years of your life, when you were too young to understand how life really works. Small children's brains work differently from adults, their brainwaves are set up to absorb information and store it away so that they can learn and develop in just a few short years of early childhood.

The thing is though that life can be busy and stressful. There is no such thing as a perfect parent. It’s likely that some of your early experiences may have led you to mistaken conclusions. You may well have come up
with the idea that you're powerless, undeserving, or not good enough in some way. All children get some of these mistaken ideas and these form the limiting beliefs that are the frame of reference through which they view life as they grow up.

Just like so many people, you may well have some limiting beliefs from those earliest years which are still impacting on your relationships, your work, your confidence, your health even

Until you question those beliefs, your life will carry on being affected by them. This is why so many people keep coming back round to the same problems in their lives because they are living through mistaken ideas and have the wrong expectations of themselves and others.

So it’s a great idea to stop and question what are the beliefs that you are running your life through? Once you recognise those beliefs that are unhelpful to you, you can break unwanted patterns and your life will become better. Your relationships, your work, your health: all areas of your life will improve!

The best way to discover and clear your limiting beliefs is by working with a qualified therapist. But you can be kind to yourself even by beginning to think about them. Here's a link to a core belief worksheet. I use this in my therapy practice. It’s a quick start checklist to get you thinking. Go through the list and see which ones apply to you. Think about how they impact different areas of your life, and consider what changes you would like to make.
I hope you’ve found this self-kindness guide helpful. There’s also a wealth of personal development resources at the: Into Love Community. It’s free to join and you’ll receive special benefits as a member.

If you want to have some one-to-one sessions, you can get in touch with me through my therapy website at http://marleneroseshaw.com

I offer sessions at my private practice in North Somerset, UK and via Skype, helping people in many countries.

Here's a handy list of the links I've mentioned in this guide:

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In loving Kindness

*Marlène Rose Shaw*
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This PDF is NOT a substitute for formal therapy or counselling. If you have a psychological condition, mental health issues, or problems that you need to address, it is highly recommended that you seek professional help either by contacting the author or another mental health professional for formalised therapy.

This guide is written for adults of reasonably sound mental states who wish to learn more about their psychological self-awareness and considerations of how this may apply to life choices.

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