

EXERCISE : COMPASSION SHIELD

Draw/sketch or describe what your compassion shield looks like. It could be an actual shield you hold in front of you, a force field around your entire body, or something else completely. There is no right or wrong. You could do a little stick figure doodle, or get out some markers and really go for it. The importance of this exercise is not in your art skill or beautifully written descriptions. We are literally laying the foundation for some new neuropathways in your brain! (So even if it feels dumb, do it anyway!)

How will your compassion shield be activated? Is there an imaginary button? Do you need to call on it? Will it turn on anytime you look at your wristwatch? Be as fun, silly, creative, or practical as you like.

Next, remember a single instance when someone said something hurtful to or about you. How did it impact you? Did you question whether it was true, talk to other people about it, cry, get angry, or feel distressed?

What do you think could have been going on for the other person to have them saying hurtful things to or about you?

What are some true things about yourself (values, abilities, skills, traits, etc.) that you can remember if hurtful things are said to or about you in the future?

Now, re-remember the same situation as above, but this time see yourself raising your compassion shield. Play in your mind, in detail, how it could have gone instead.