

So much of our lives require us to be evaluative, cognitive, critical thinkers, all of which are important and helpful capacities. But this lens can take us away from curiosity and, often, curiosity is an important way that we can access self-compassion. Self-compassion is a critical building block to holistic wellness.

Curiosity has three important components – let's Take 3 for curiosity!

With great admiration and respect,

Darby

Take Notice Embrace your inner two-year-old.

In the practice of noticing, we can let go of judging, fixing, and doing. The practice of noticing is a non-judgemental, non-evaluative, non-doing practice of just paying attention: to ourselves, to what is around us, and our experiences or interpretations. In mindfulness practices, we sometimes call it 'mental noting' where we will simply mentally note things that are happening. When I notice I am thinking, I simply note 'thinking', or if I am judging, I note 'judging.' When we engage in a practice of noticing, we are removing any element of judging or responding. There is nothing to do, just to notice. The best examples of this are in two-year-olds who are actively noticing everything around them: "look there's a horse, look there's a leaf, I am hungry, I am sad." Embrace your inner two-year-old and practice noticing.

Acknowledge Name it to tame it.

Our practice of noticing might bring our awareness to some patterns. Of particular interest are our emotional patterns. We are generally very good at analyzing, explaining, justifying, and thinking about our feelings, but we're not always so good at simply acknowledging and experiencing our emotions. When we take the time to acknowledge or name an emotion (without doing anything about it, or hyper-analyzing it), the simple act of acknowledgement of how we feel, and not what we think about how we feel, can achieve two things. It can bring us in-the-moment relief, and it can build our capacity to stay with big emotions when they come up for us, without getting swept away in all the analyzing and thinking we do about our emotions. Simply acknowledge it: "I feel sad," and then notice what happens. *Dr. Dan Siegel offers much more insight into this practice in his work, if you're interested!

Embrace Wonder Imagine the (self-compassionate) possibilities.

In the final component of curiosity, we can bring our imaginations to the table. Again, we're moving away from evaluation and starting to imagine possibility. The way this can be explored is, "I notice I feel sad. I wonder what might happen if I acknowledge that sadness and offer myself self-compassion." Or, "I notice I am tired. I wonder if I can prioritize my needs and rest." Or, "I wonder what might happen if I self-compassionately explore these feelings of anger and resentment." When we approach our wellness with a sense of curious wonder and self-compassion, possibilities start to emerge.

by
Darby Barnes
Rehabilitation Consultant
humanworks



@humanworksCA

Darby is a registered clinical counsellor who describes her work calling as "caring for people who care for people" and has worked supporting leaders and workers in complex human serving systems for over a decade.