



## Reflective Notes for Building Educator Resilience Through Self-Compassion and Gratitude

Created by Renée K. Van Norman, PhD

*Reflective Notes* are designed for you to follow along and actively participate with the PowerPoint slides and webinar. You can make notes, write questions, expand your thinking on a topic, or doodle. These notes correspond directly to the content presented in the slides.

### Objectives

1. Learn the benefits and importance of a practice of self-compassion and gratitude.
2. Learn how to create a practice of self-compassion and gratitude to support your wellbeing.
3. Learn and experience 3 mindfulness/meditation exercises.

For the next hour I will extend loving kindness to myself by...

So, I can...

### Resilience (Aguilar, 2018)

- “A way of being that allows us to bounce back quickly from adversity, and stronger than before, so that we can fulfil our purpose in life.”
- “How we weather storms in our lives and rebound after something difficult.” (Aguilar, 2018)
- “What enables us to thrive, not just survive.”
- “...a set of adaptive behaviors

I feel most resilient when I...

## Organization

### What is the practice

- the definition

### Why we practice

- the benefits

### How we practice

- the mechanics

### How to support your practice

- habit building

Today I would like to learn...

about gratitude and self-compassion practices.

Guided meditation gratitude for a teacher in your life (<https://www.facebook.com/welleducator/>)

Who is that special teacher in your life? Who has inspired you?

How does it feel to express gratitude?

## Two Components of Gratitude (Robert Emmons)

“It’s an affirmation of goodness.

- We affirm that there are good things in the world, gifts and benefits we’ve received.”

“We recognize that the sources of this goodness are outside of ourselves.”

- Acknowledge that others gave us many gifts to help us achieve the goodness in our lives.

<https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/gratitude/definition>

## Why Practice Gratitude?

Physical	Psychological	Social
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stronger immune systems</li><li>• Less bothered by aches and pains</li><li>• Lower blood pressure</li><li>• Exercise more and take better care of their health</li><li>• Sleep longer and feel more refreshed upon waking</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Higher levels of positive emotions</li><li>• More<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alert, alive, and awake</li><li>• Joy and pleasure</li><li>• Optimism and happiness</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Feel less lonely and isolated</li><li>• More<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Helpful, generous, and compassionate</li><li>• Forgiving</li><li>• Outgoing</li></ul></li></ul>

### It feels good!

- Activates the **limbic system**
  - regulating our emotions, memory, and endocrine function (hormones).
- **Brain chemicals** associated with **positivity**,
  - “uplifting molecular boost”

### Video Reflection



Science of Gratitude Video <https://youtu.be/JMd1CcGZYwU>

## How to practice - Personal

- ♥ Journaling
  - Three things you're grateful for
  - Three things that went well before you go to sleep
- ♥ Letters & Texts
  - The Thank-You Project: Cultivating Happiness One Letter of Gratitude at a Time
    - by Nancy Davis Kho
- ♥ Remember difficult times of hardship be grateful to have moved on
- ♥ Guided meditations
  - Insight Timer App
- ♥ Collage
- ♥ Expressions on social media
- ♥ Complimenting someone
- ♥ Spreading kindness & appreciation

## Gratitude and Technology

<https://www.happierhuman.com/gratitude-app/>



# Gratitude

Simple Private Colorful Journal App



DAYONE

Your Journal for Life.

## 365 Gratitude



Daily Prompts

Games

Gratitude Jar

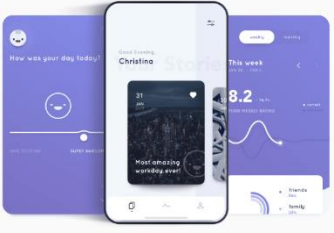
reflectly

### The World's First Intelligent Journal

Reflectly is a journal utilizing artificial intelligence to help you structure and reflect upon your daily thoughts and problems.

Your personal mental health companion.

Download on the App StoreGET IT ON Google Play



## Video Reflection



<https://youtu.be/8964envYh58>

*Robert Emmons Cultivating Gratitude Greater Good Science Center*

### How to practice - Schoolwide

- ♥ Staff awards – silly or formal
- ♥ Identification of strengths
- ♥ Gratitude statements before a staff meeting
- ♥ Gratitude vine or tree
- ♥ Offers to help, support, give a break
- ♥ Notes of encouragement with a favorite treat or inexpensive goodie

### Supporting New Gratitude Practices

- Be intentional
- Make it easy
  - Design your environment
- Make it fun
  - Use an App
  - Journal/pens/stickers
  - Thank you cards
  - Voice recordings

### Make a commitment to start a new habit!

I will (behavior) at (time) in (location).

I will write in a gratitude journal after breakfast on Monday's and Wednesday's in my office.

James Clear [Atomic Habits](#)

“Treating ourselves as we would treat a dear friend who is having a hard time.” (Neff, 2018)

**“Compassion for others must begin with self-compassion.”**

**(Aguilar, 2018)**

### ***Self-Compassion***

- ♥ “...refraining from judging yourself harshly and berating yourself” (Aguilar, 2018)
- ♥ “Extending kindness to yourself so that you can have the strength and energy to examine yourself and make changes.” – Aguilar, 2018

### **3 Elements of Self-Compassion (Neff, 2018)**

- Self-kindness vs. self-judgment
  - Treat ourselves as we would a good friend
- Common humanity vs. isolation
  - Not alone in our imperfections; suffering as part of the human experience
- Mindfulness vs. overidentification
  - We choose how we respond to negative thoughts, feelings, body sensations
  - We don’t get “stuck”

### **Video Reflection**



Self-Compassion Part 1 Kristin Neff (<https://youtu.be/TyI6YXp1Y6M>)

Why Self-Compassion Practices?

- *Negativity bias*
  - focus on and be motivated by negative thought patterns like criticism, pain, and danger.
- Shift to motivate with *compassion* rather than self-criticism.
- Positive impact on educator well-being, resilience, and stress management.

<https://www.mindfulschools.org/training/self-compassion-for-educators>

### **How to Practice Self-Compassion - Personal**

1. Name emotion without judgement
  - “I’m not alone, many people are *feeling anxious* right now.”
2. Extend kindness to yourself as you would a friend

- **Say something**
    - “I am safe, I have what I need, I am strong and resilient!”
    - “This is difficult AND I can do this!”
    - “What do I need now?”
  - **Do something for yourself**
    - Accumulate positives just for you
    - Build mastery
      - Do something that brings you a sense of accomplishment
3. Loving Kindness Meditation
- [https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/loving\\_kindness\\_meditation](https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/loving_kindness_meditation)
4. Kristen Neff Self-Compassion Exercises
- <https://self-compassion.org/category/exercises/>

Places I want to visit on **Kristen Neff’s Website**:

5. Mindful Schools – Self-Compassion for Educators
- [https://www.mindfulschools.org/training/self-compassion-for-educators/?gclid=Cj0KCQiAqdP9BRDVARIsAGSZ8Ako9r1Aoq\\_iRBzwr1DzLC0n4q5m1iZl36yiUjxzglQOzZq-mmJ7vsaAo45EALw\\_wcB](https://www.mindfulschools.org/training/self-compassion-for-educators/?gclid=Cj0KCQiAqdP9BRDVARIsAGSZ8Ako9r1Aoq_iRBzwr1DzLC0n4q5m1iZl36yiUjxzglQOzZq-mmJ7vsaAo45EALw_wcB)

Places I want to visit on the **Mindful Schools Website**:

## How to practice – Schoolwide

- Agenda “Compassion Practice”
- Sharing stories
  - “Positive experience I had as a student in school was...”
  - “A teacher who positively impacted me was...”
  - “A student whom I’ve been thinking about is...”
  - “Three things I’d like to know about are...”
- Invite parents & students to meetings to share their experiences
- Hold space to talk about emotions
- Greater Good Science Center in Education Website
  - [https://ggie.berkeley.edu/?\\_ga=2.19401272.1826322875.1600117635-604797982.1596492804](https://ggie.berkeley.edu/?_ga=2.19401272.1826322875.1600117635-604797982.1596492804)

Places I want to visit on the **Greater Good Science Center in Education Website:**

## Supporting New Self-Compassion Practices

- Reminders/inspirational messages
- Phone alarms
  - “Am I in judgment?”
- Guided Meditations/Meditation Practice
  - Loving Kindness Meditation

### **Make a commitment to start a new habit!**

I will (behavior) at (time) in (location).

I will write in a gratitude journal after breakfast on Monday’s and Wednesday’s in my office.

James Clear [Atomic Habits](#)



## Resources

Aguilar, E. (2018). *Onward: Cultivating emotional resilience in educators*. Jossey-Bass.

Clear, J. (2018). *Atomic Habits: An easy proven way to build good habits and break bad ones*. Penguin Random House.

Neff, N. (2018). *The Mindful Self-Compassion Workbook: A Proven Way to Accept Yourself, Build Inner Strength, and Thrive*. The Guilford Press.

## Other Resources

Neff, N. (2015). *Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself*. William Morrow Paperbacks.

Hanson, R. (2018). *Resilient: How to grow and unshakable core of calm, strength, and happiness*. Harmony Books.

Greater Good Science Center White Paper on Gratitude

[https://ggsc.berkeley.edu/images/uploads/GGSC-JTF\\_White\\_Paper-Gratitude-FINAL.pdf](https://ggsc.berkeley.edu/images/uploads/GGSC-JTF_White_Paper-Gratitude-FINAL.pdf)

Getting Started on a Gratitude Journal

[https://www.moms.com/gratitude-journal-tips-to-get-started/?fbclid=IwAR0i\\_Nxj5RvKtzlZd1fQvAsrKjez kp1W8bL7\\_hZ6DAYsR2q2-qsH5dNxCMw](https://www.moms.com/gratitude-journal-tips-to-get-started/?fbclid=IwAR0i_Nxj5RvKtzlZd1fQvAsrKjez kp1W8bL7_hZ6DAYsR2q2-qsH5dNxCMw)

Why Gratitude is Good – Robert Emmons

[https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why\\_gratitude\\_is\\_good](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why_gratitude_is_good)

Layous, K., Sweeny, K., Armenta, S., Na., S., Choi, I., Lyubomirsky, S. (2017) “The Proximal Experience of Gratitude.” *PLOS ONE*, 12(7) e0179123.

Lee, Jon. Insight Timer <https://insighttimer.com/jklee>

Robbins, M. (2007) *Focus on the Good Stuff: The Power of Appreciation*. Jossey-Bass.

Sumsion, J. (2004) Early Childhood Teachers’ Construction of their Resilience and Thriving: A Continuing Investigation.” *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 12(3), 275-290.

<https://www.turnaroundusa.org/back-to-basics-gratitude/>

5 Minute Gratitude Meditation Happier TV <https://youtu.be/ZXRMZYV0qNo>

Emmons, R.

[https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/ten\\_ways\\_to\\_become\\_more\\_grateful1/](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/ten_ways_to_become_more_grateful1/)

Bartlett, M. Y., & DeStano, D. (2006) “Gratitude and Prosocial Behavior: Helping when it costs you.” *Psychological Science*, 17(4), 319-325.

Domet (2018) <https://www.mindful.org/a-simple-mindful-gratitude-exercise/>