

# Tame Your Triggers

Five Essential Tools To Rewire Your Brain  
(and help you stay centered through  
emotional upset).



Welcome



# love after love

The time will come  
when, with elation,  
you will greet yourself arriving  
at your own door, in your own mirror,  
and each will smile at the others' welcome and say, sit here, eat.

You will love again this stranger who was your self.  
Give wine, give bread,  
give back your heart to itself,  
to the stranger who has loved you all your life,  
whom you ignored for another,  
who knows you by heart.

Take down the love letters from the bookshelf,  
the photographs, the desperate notes,  
peel your image from the mirror.  
Sit. Feast on your life.  
~ **derek walcot**



# Intentions

I am not an island.

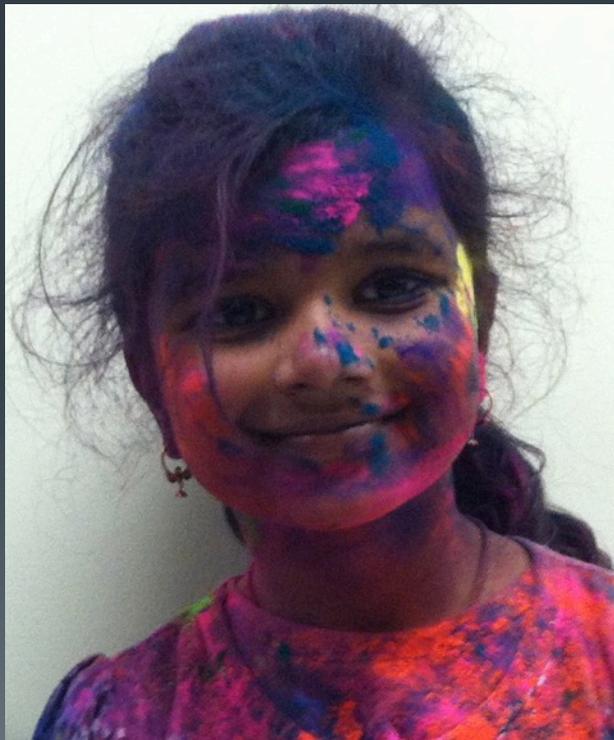
I am not alone.

I am my intentions

trapped here in this flesh and bone.

~ Melissa Etheridge

# Introductions





# Emotional Regulation

- Calm myself down when I'm upset.
- Stay centered when someone else is upset.
- Recognize when I'm getting upset and take care of myself.

# Emotional Resilience



- Is about our ability to adapt and respond to stressful situation and crises.
- Ability to roll with the punches more easily.
- Ability deal with diversity without long term difficulties.
- Ability to recover after stress.



# What are Triggers?

- Residue from the past.
- Formed when something big or overwhelming happened that we weren't able to fully recover from, process or make sense of.
- Excess energy of the event is stored in the body.
- Automatic response in the nervous system.
- Given the chance, the body and nervous system knows how to restore itself.



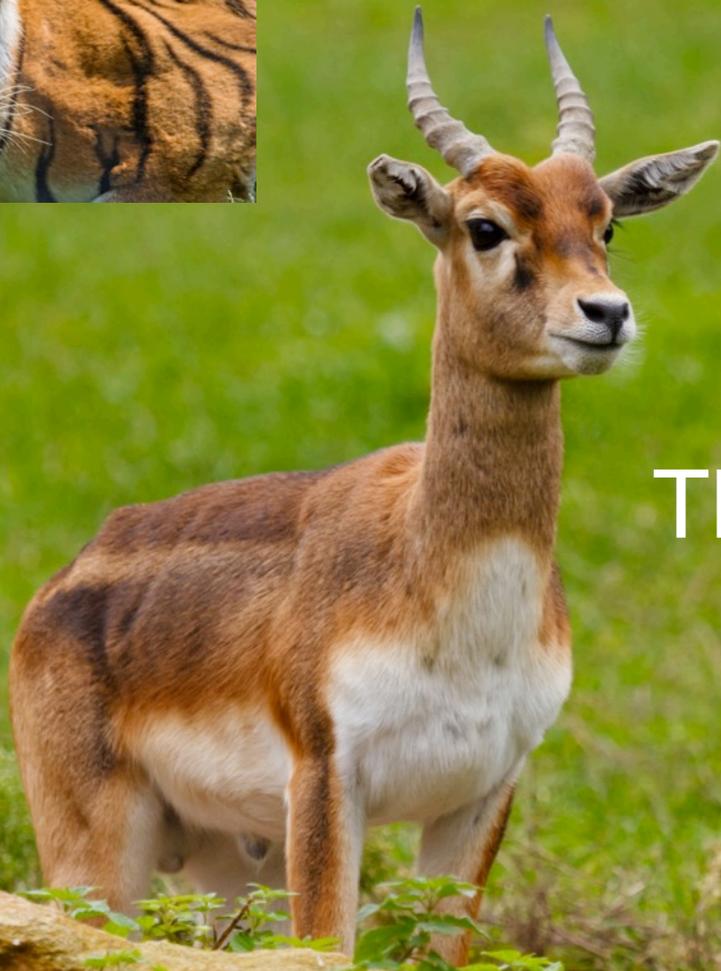
# What is Trauma?

- Trauma is a disorder in the ability to be in the here and now.
- Triggers come from big 'T' or little 't,' traumatic events.
- Two people can experience the same event but it may not be traumatic for both people.
- If we have enough resilience we can handle big events better.
- If we have proper support, someone to help us regulate, we may not be traumatized.

Traumatic symptoms are not caused by the event itself. They arise when residual energy from the experience is not discharged from the body. This energy remains trapped in the nervous system where it can wreak havoc on our bodies and minds.”

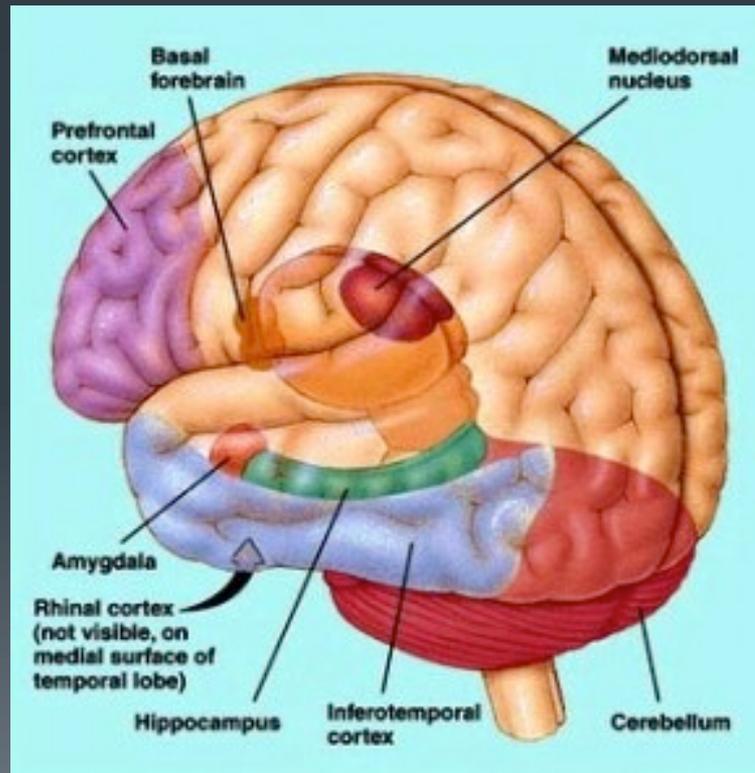
- Peter Levine, Founder of Somatic Experiencing Trauma Healing





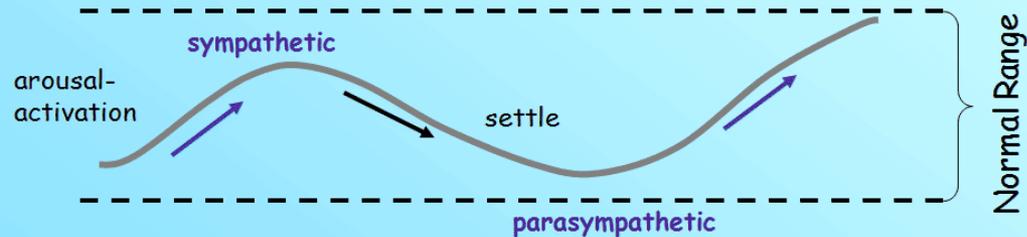
# The Story of the Tiger and the Antelope

# Your Brain: the Amygdala and Trauma



# Window of Tolerance

## A Healthy Nervous System



# An Anger Response or Emotionally Hijacked?

- I feel regret or remorse afterward.
- My response is larger than the situation warrants.
- Out of control.
- Childishly and inappropriate.



# Self-Regulation

- Healing comes by being in the here and now, by being present with what is.
- Helps keep the thinking cortex on-line.
- Calms the nervous system.
- Is being present with the upset and tending to it.
- Is taking care of ourselves.
- Creates new patterns in the nervous system and brain.



# Pause      Calm      Recover

- Pause – Mindfulness, Noticing and Naming
- Calm - EFT, Mindfulness, Self-Compassion
- Recover - Relief (back in the Window of Tolerance)



Questions?

# EFT – Meridian Tapping

(Emotional Freedom Technique)

## EFT™ (Emotional Freedom Techniques) SHORTCUT TAPPING PROCEDURE

### THE SETUP

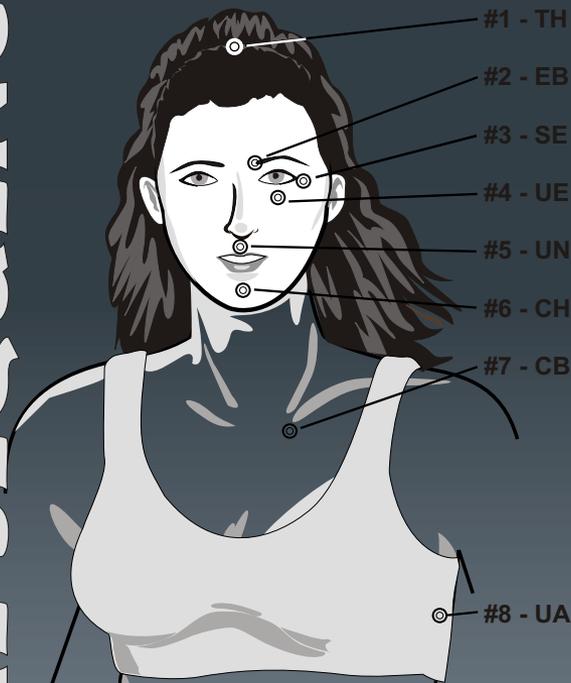
- 1) Focus on a SPECIFIC Issue, and rate the intensity on a 0-10 scale.
- 2) Repeat Three Times:  
*“Even though I have this problem, I deeply & completely accept myself.”*
- 3) While continuously tapping the “Karate Chop” point.



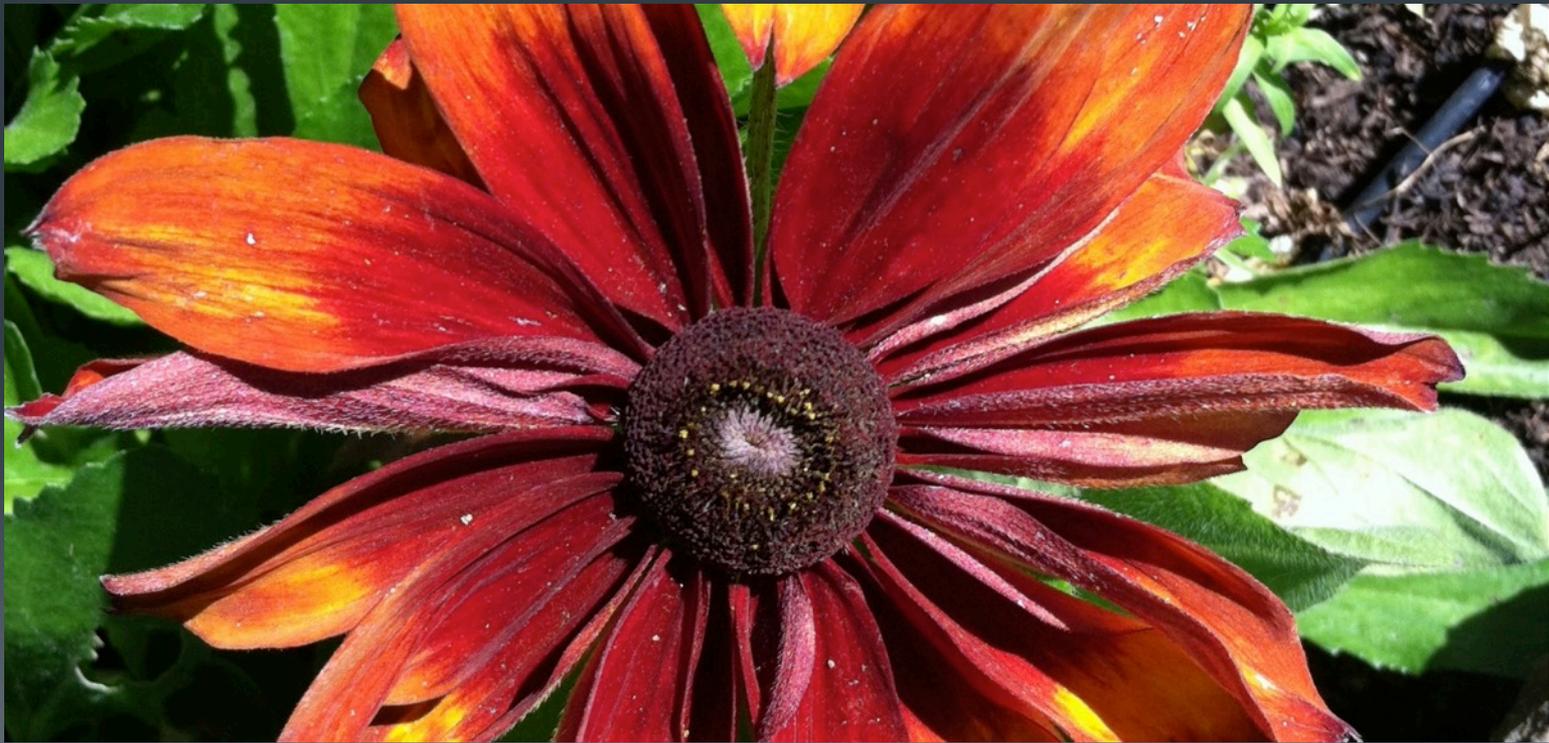
KARATE  
CHOP  
POINT

### THE SEQUENCE

- 4) Tap about 5X on each point while repeating “This Problem.”



Let's Practice!





# Homework

- 1. Every day you do at least one round of tapping.

One round means:

- a. Doing one set-up statement and saying it three times, then
  - b. Tapping on the eight points, two times around.
- Use the tapping sheet in the appendix to help you remember.
  - You don't have to do it perfectly. Just do it.
  - Be curious. Experiment!

# Tame Your Triggers

Five Essential Tools To Rewire Your Brain for Peace and Resiliency.

Week Two:  
Mindfulness



# Grounding Practice



# Guest House by Rumi

This being human is a guest house.  
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
some momentary awareness comes  
As an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!  
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,  
who violently sweep your house  
empty of its furniture,  
still treat each guest honorably.  
He may be clearing you out  
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,  
meet them at the door laughing,  
and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,  
because each has been sent  
as a guide from beyond.



How was your practice this week?





# Pause      Calm      Recover

- Pause – Mindfulness, Noticing and Naming
- Calm - EFT, Mindfulness, Self-Compassion
- Recover - Relief (back in the Window of Tolerance)

# What is Mindfulness

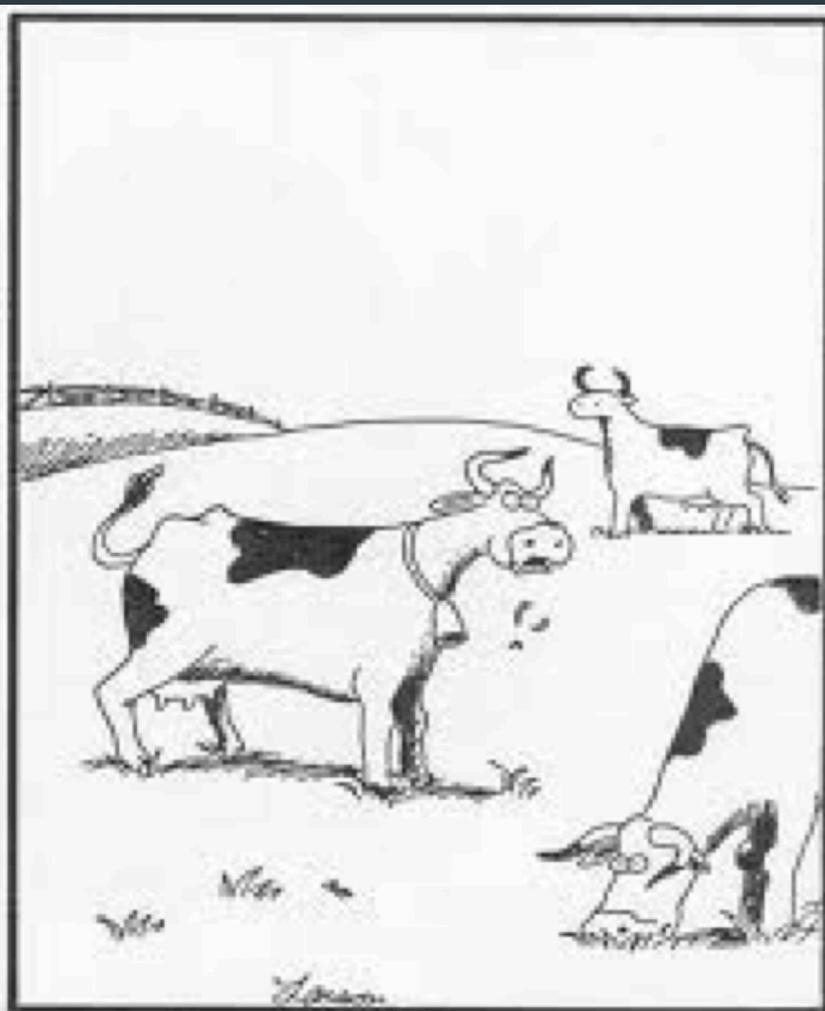
- nonjudgmental, receptive state of mind
- I notice my experience just as it is (my thoughts, feelings and body sensations).
- without trying to suppress or deny my experience.



*To pay attention,  
this is our  
endless and  
proper work.*

*~ Mary Oliver*





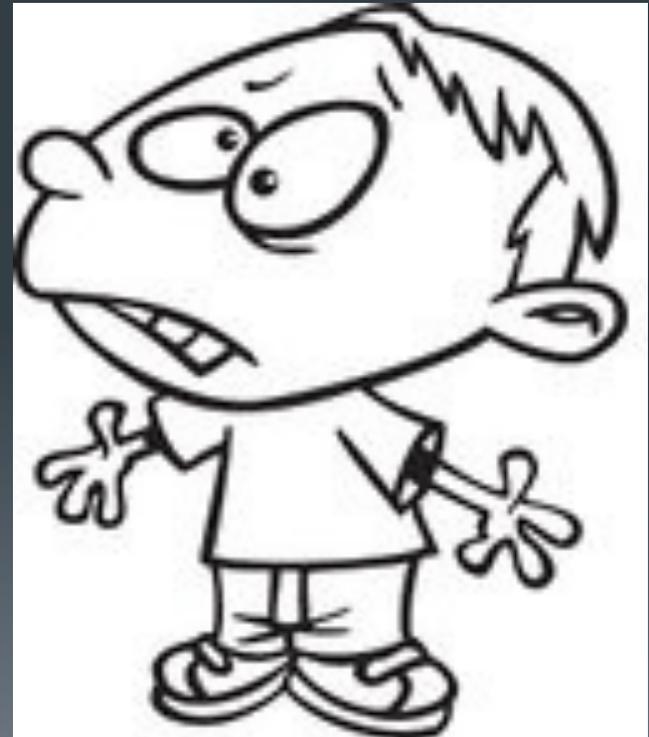
"Hey, wait a minute! This is grass! We've been eating grass!"



# Pause: Notice and Name It

- The first step to self-regulation.
- When I notice, I create a gap between the stimulus and my response.
- It is a gap of consciousness.
- I can choose what I do next.

# How Do You Know When You Are Being Triggered?





# Noticing It

What do you notice first?

- Thoughts
- Feelings
- Sensations

**Recognize your experience as it is happening.**



# Naming It

**Name** the feeling if you can, i.e. fear, anger, sadness. (Or thought, or sensation, which ever you notice first).

If you can name it, you can tame it.



## Allow it

- **Do not push it away.**
- Accept that it is here and **take good care of it.**
- Use your breath as an anchor for calming.
  - “Breathing In, I calm my body and mind.”
  - “Breathing Out, I calm my fear.”



# Body Sensations

- Why are body sensations so important?

|                    |             |                    |
|--------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| achy               | frozen      | rolling            |
| airy               | full        | shaky              |
| alive              | furry       | sharp              |
| bloated            | goose bumpy | shimmering         |
| blocked            | gurgling    | shivery            |
| breathless         | hard        | shudder            |
| brittle            | heavy       | silky              |
| bubbly             | hot         | smooth             |
| burning            | icy         | soft               |
| buzzy              | intense     | spacious           |
| chilled            | itchy       | spacious breathing |
| clammy             | jagged      | spasming           |
| closed             | jittery     | spinning           |
| cold               | jumbly      | sticky             |
| congested          | jumpy       | still              |
| constricted        | knotted     | stretchy           |
| constricted breath | light       | stringy            |
| contracted         | loose       | strong             |
| cool               | moist       | suffocating        |
| cozy               | moving      | sweaty             |
| crampy             | nauseous    | tender             |
| damp               | numb        | tense              |
| dense              | open        | thick              |
| dizzy              | paralyzed   | throbbing          |
| dull               | pounding    | tickly             |
| elastic            | pressure    | tight              |
| electric           | prickly     | tightness of skin  |
| empty              | puffy       | tingling           |
| energized          | pulled      | trembly            |
| expanding          | pulsing     | tremulous          |
| faint              | quaking     | twitchy            |
| flaccid            | quiet       | vibration          |
| fluid              | quivering   | warm               |



# 45 Minute Rule

- After an emotional hijacking, don't make any important decisions.
- Your body is still under the influence.
- If you are with someone who has just been hijacked, it is important to use active listening skills and empathy.
- Anger builds on anger - it is easy to ignite another hijacking after one has already occurred.

# Calm Yourself

- Takes the amygdala off of high alert
- Brings the thinking brain back on line
- Gives a chance for the fight-flight chemicals to dissipate
- Rewires the brain because I am doing something different

If you begin to understand what you are  
without trying to change it, then what you  
are undergoes a transformation.

~ Jiddu Krishnamurti



Let's Practice!





# Tapping in the Good



# Homework



- 1. Every day you do at least one round of tapping.

One round means:

- a. Doing one set-up statement and saying it three times, then
  - b. Tapping on the eight points, two times around.
- Use the tapping sheet in the appendix to help you remember.
  - You don't have to do it perfectly. Just do it.
  - Be curious. Experiment!

## Part 2

### Practice Pause and Calm Pause:

- Notice either your activation or a positive feeling like joy or gratitude. Pause.
- Name it: fear, anxiety, grateful...

### Calm: Choose what works for you.

- **Allow it** to be there. Be with it. Stay with it with a kind attitude. Stay open and curious.
  - “Breathing In, I calm my body and mind.”
  - “Breathing Out, I calm my fear.”
- Or **use tapping** to address the upset and calm yourself.





## Part 3

3. Once this week:

- **Sit for 30 seconds with a positive thought or feeling and *notice what it feels like in your body.***

- You can ask yourself:

What does this gratitude feel like in my body? Where do I notice it the most? Is it heavy or light? Does it have a color? Texture? Does it have movement or is it still?

- Pause and enjoy the feeling. Take it in.

# Tame Your Triggers:

## Five Essential Tools to Rewire Your Brain

Week Three:  
Self Compassion and  
Acceptance



Arriving



How was your  
practice this  
week?

- Tapping Practice
- Pause and Calm



# What is Compassion?

- an opening of the heart in direct response to suffering.
- arises when we meet pain or suffering with love.
- arises through empathy.
- often followed by a desire to alleviate the suffering.

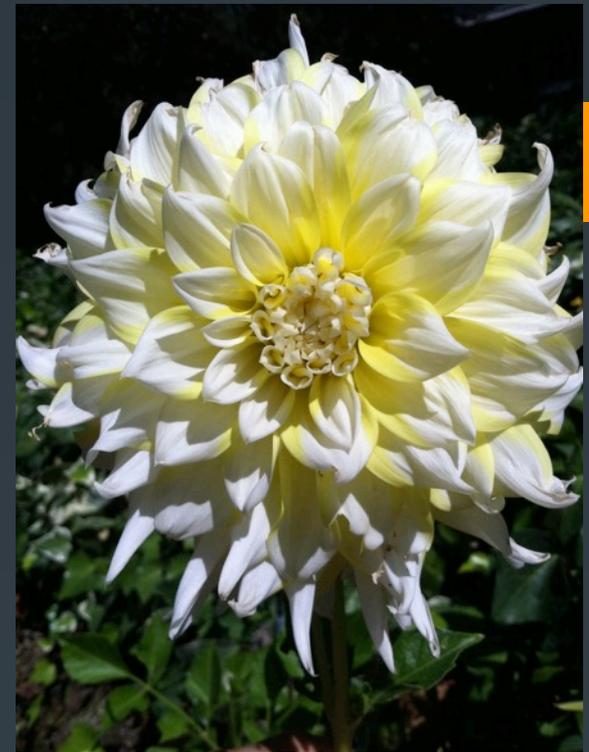
# Power of Empathy



# What is Self-Compassion?

Comes from  
the willingness to  
observe our negative thoughts and emotions  
with openness and clarity.

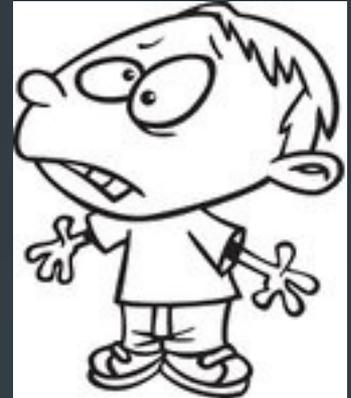
With self-compassion we befriend ourselves.



# Self-Compassion

"I grew up to have my father's looks,  
my father's speech patterns,  
my father's posture,  
my father's opinions,  
and my mother's contempt of my father."

~ Jules Pfeiffer



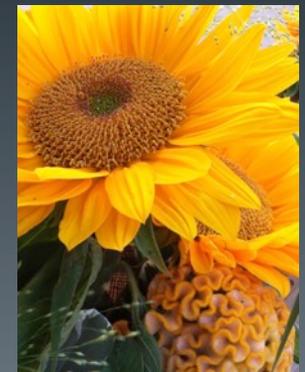
# Three Components to Befriending Yourself

- 1. Self-Kindness
- 2. Common Humanity
- 3. Mindfulness



# Benefits of Self-Compassion

- Provides the emotional safety needed to mindfully open to our pain.
- By soothing our own pain, we are tapping into our biological care-giving system, which:
  - Releases oxytocin.
  - Decreases our cortisol levels.
  - Increases heart rate variability.





# Obstacles to Self-Compassion

- I think it is self-indulgence.  
Self-pity is not self-compassion.
- I'm afraid to be too easy on myself.



Self-criticism is the "tragic  
expression of an unmet need."

Marshal Rosenberg, author of *Non-Violent  
Communication*

# Self-Criticism and Compassion





We cannot ignore our pain and feel  
compassion for it at the same time.

- Kristy Nuff



## Self-healing through *physical sensations*.

- Calm and comfort yourself through *soothing touch*.
- Make a clear gesture that conveys feelings of love, care and tenderness.
- Notice how your body feels after soothing.



# Other Ways to Self-Soothe

- Focus in the present, right here and now.
- Finger tapping
- Comforting statements
- Nature or animals
- Safe, comforting person
- Remember our Resourcing exercise

# Reflection – Writing Exercise



- What are your blocks to Self-Compassion?
- Knowing what you know now, what can you do to soften those blocks?
- Name one thing you are willing to do this week to support befriending yourself.



“This is my simple religion. There is no need for temples; no need for complicated philosophy. Our own brain, our own heart is our temple; the philosophy is kindness.”

~ Dali Lama

# Homework

As best you can, incorporate self-compassion into your homework this week.

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