Exercises to Cultivate Self-Compassion and Self-Love

*Metta Meditation*

Metta (lovingkindness) meditation is a great way to cultivate lovingkindness towards ourselves. Here is our own modified version of this meditation, focused only on the cultivation of self-compassion.

You can do this at any time during the day, but it is good to carve out 10-15 minutes at some point (perhaps in the morning) to spend doing this meditation.

Say these phrases, either aloud or to yourself:

*May I be happy.*

*May I know my true worth.*

*May I know that I am lovable.*

*May I love myself with ease.*

Notice how it feels to say these words. You might feel a lot of resistance at some points. Saying these might feel dumb, or you might get bored. Maybe you get a little queasy. Any of these reactions are OK! Don't worry about it, don't judge it, just keep going. Noticing the resistance is useful.

After a while, you might notice it getting easier. You might notice it sinking in, and calming you down.

If you want to listen to this prayer/meditation in a guided fashion, follow this link: [http://consciousgirlfriend.com/?attachment_id=1443](http://consciousgirlfriend.com/?attachment_id=1443)

*Directing love toward ourselves*

Sit comfortably and close your eyes. Take deep breaths, settle into your seat. Relax.

Think of someone or some place or thing that you absolutely know that you love. It could be a person, but it could be a place – the ocean, a river or mountain, a tree. It could be a favored teddy bear. Whatever it is, feel your love for this. Feel it in your body. Notice what this love feels like. Where do you feel it in your body? What are the sensations? Does it have a shape? A color or temperature? A sound? Just notice how you experience the feeling of this love.

When you have a clear feeling of love in your mind and body, direct that feeling of love toward yourself. Instead of feeling it toward that person, place or thing, shift it toward yourself. Love yourself just like you love that person, place or thing you absolutely know that you love. If you lose the sensation, go back to thinking of that person, place or thing you love until you feel it again. Then direct that feeling back to yourself. Feel it all over your body. Relax your mind, and keep feeling the love suffusing you.

*How was that? Could you sustain it when directed toward yourself? What happened? Notice all of your feelings without judgment.*
Loving ourselves: a visualization

Sit comfortably and close your eyes. Take deep breaths, settle into your seat. Relax.

Picture yourself as if seeing yourself from a distance. Notice the angle from which you are viewing yourself. Are you looking from above, or some other direction. Do you have clothes on? If so, what are you wearing? With this image in mind, focus more closely on parts of yourself that don't feel lovable. These parts might be aspects of your body, mind, or feelings.

Pick one of those unlovable aspects to look at closely. Zero in on it, and observe it as closely as you can. Then, bathe it in your love. Thing of someone or something that you love, and love that aspect of yourself with the same love. Surround that part of yourself with love.

Pick another aspect of yourself that feels unlovable. Look at it closely. Now surround it with love. Bathe it in the light of your love.

Do this with as many other aspects as you'd like. Remember you can return to this anytime.

Rest for a moment, then return your attention to what's around you, and open your eyes.