

# Compassionate Letter Writing



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# Exercise: Compassionate Letter Writing

We could take a few steps to engage our compassionate mind to write a letter to express care and support to ourselves in face of difficulties, to acknowledge our struggles and efforts to cope, and to explore compassionate thoughts and actions to help:

1. Give *attention* and *recognition* of something that has been difficult for you recently.
2. Offer *acknowledgement* for the motivation and attempts you have made to cope.
3. Show *empathy* and *understanding* of the struggles you're having/may be thinking about in future.
4. Move to focus on thoughts or actions that *your compassionate self/other would suggest* to help you cope with the difficulty.
5. Finish the letter by considering *what would be helpful for you* in the coming days with your struggle – thoughts or acts that your compassionate self/other can take to support you given the difficulty.

# Example

Dear Jason,

I know that this past few days has been very difficult for you because of the unexpected examination results despite the efforts you have put into your revision. I know you've also felt disheartened by how the practice you've been doing over the past week hasn't made you feel better. I want you to know that it's understandable that you feel disappointed by this – it's horrible for us when our hopes and efforts don't seem to come to fruition straight away.

I know that this can make you feel that there is something wrong with you and feel like a failure – but it might be helpful here to remember that other people also struggle with such things. Try to remember when you feel like this that this could be an opportunity to apply your skills as well – mindfully noticing the 'loops in your mind' and to try and step back from self-criticism and worries that things won't change. It might also be helpful to see what your compassionate other would say to you at this time... "You have made your best effort, and it would help to find out what could be done differently."

In the coming days, you may consider talking with your buddies and teacher to understand the topics of the study. If you wish to boost up your energy, you may go hiking and cycling with Anne and Tom as you used to be. You know that they are always there for you, to care and to support you.



# Thank you!



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