

BY MICHAEL LUCKETT

# Healing Starts with You



A TRAUMA SURVIVOR'S SELF-COMPASSION GUIDE

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# Introduction

If you're reading this, you've already taken a powerful step: you want to heal. Not just survive, but *heal*. I wrote this short guide for trauma survivors who are ready to begin the journey back to themselves. You may not be able to change the past, but you can change how you treat yourself moving forward.

Let this book serve as a gentle reminder: **healing begins with how you speak to yourself.**

# What is Self-Compassion?

Self-compassion means extending the same care, warmth, and understanding to yourself that you'd offer a loved one in pain. According to Dr. Kristin Neff, one of the leading researchers on the subject, self-compassion is **not self-pity**, **not self-indulgence**, and **not a weakness**. It is courage.

At its heart, self-compassion is:

- **Being kind to yourself** instead of harshly judging.
- **Recognizing that suffering is part of the human experience.**
- **Allowing yourself to feel pain without getting lost in it.**

# Why Trauma Makes It Hard to Be Kind to Yourself

Trauma rewires your brain to survive and not to thrive. When you've lived through betrayal, abuse, abandonment, or deep emotional wounds, your internal voice can become critical or even cruel. It's the voice that tells you it was your fault, you should have known better, and you're not worthy of love or safety.

But here's the truth:

**You did the best you could with what you had.**

Your pain is valid.

Your healing is your right.

# The Three Pillars of Self-Compassion (Kristin Neff's Model)

## **1. Self-Kindness vs. Self-Judgment**

Instead of berating yourself for mistakes or imperfections, self-kindness asks:

*"What would I say to a friend in this moment?"*

Say it to yourself.

## **2. Common Humanity vs. Isolation**

Trauma can make you feel alone in your pain. But you are not broken or abnormal — you are human. Suffering is part of life.

You're not struggling alone.

## **3. Mindfulness vs. Over-Identification**

Mindfulness helps you acknowledge your pain *without drowning yourself*. Notice the emotion. Name it. Breathe through it.

# DBT Skills for Self-Kindness

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) is a trauma-informed therapy that teaches powerful life skills.

Here are a few that support self-compassion:



## Wise Mind

We all have an “Emotion Mind” (driven by feelings) and a “Reasonable Mind” (logic-driven). DBT teaches us to balance both and act from our Wise Mind — the calm, centered self that knows what we need.

*Exercise:* Close your eyes, breathe deeply, and ask, “What does my Wise Mind say I need right now?”



## Self-Soothing Techniques (TIPP)

When emotions are overwhelming, use your senses to self-soothe:

- **Touch:** Wrap yourself in a blanket
- **Sight:** Light a candle, look at calming images
- **Sound:** Listen to calming music or white noise
- **Smell:** Use essential oils or a comforting scent





## **Radical Acceptance**

It is the art of letting go of “should.”

Instead of thinking, “This *shouldn’t* have happened,” DBT invites us to say, “It *did* happen. Now what can I do to care for myself?”

# Forgiving Yourself: Releasing Shame & Blame

Many trauma survivors carry a heavy backpack full of guilt that was never theirs.

Forgiving yourself isn't about denying responsibility. It's about **releasing shame that was never yours.**

“You are not to blame for what hurt you. But you are responsible for how you heal from it.”

Write this down and say it often.

# Rewriting the Inner Dialogue

Start by noticing how you speak to yourself.

Is your voice cold? Harsh? Sarcastic?

Would you ever speak to a child that way?




You can rewire that voice with practice.

Try these reframes:

- Instead of: *"I'm so stupid."*
- Say: *"I made a mistake, but I can learn from it."*
- Instead of: *"No one will ever love me."*
- Say: *"I am worthy of love, and I am learning to love myself first."*
- Instead of: *"I'll never heal."*
- Say: *"Healing is hard, but I'm showing up — and that matters."*

# Daily Practices for Healing

Here are simple daily rituals to nurture self-compassion:

-  **Morning Mantra:**
- “Today, I treat myself like someone worth loving.”
-  **Nightly Journal Prompt:**
- “What did I do today that helped me heal, even a little?”
-  **Mirror Talk:**
- Look in the mirror and say something nice. Out loud.  
Even if it feels awkward.
- Try: “You’ve been through a lot – and you’re still standing.”
-  **The 5-Minute Rule:**
- When feeling overwhelmed, give yourself 5 minutes to breathe, cry, stretch, or step outside.

# *Final Words: You Deserve Peace*

Healing is not a straight line. Some days you'll feel powerful.

Others, not so much. That's okay. Keep going anyway.

You don't need to have it all figured out.

You don't need to be fully "healed."

You only need to believe this:

**You are worthy of the same love, grace, and compassion you  
give to others.**

And the more you practice it with yourself,

The more your life starts to reflect it.



## *About the Author*

Michael Lockett is a lifelong writer from Detroit, Michigan, dedicated to telling stories that inspire healing, strength, and truth. Whether through fiction, poetry, or personal development, his mission is to help others embrace their voice, their story, and their future.

Visit his website for more empowering content, free resources, and upcoming books.