



Why Self-Compassion Beats Self-Confidence

Sometimes, we struggle with self-confidence. Both in social situations and in workplace situations, it is easy to feel awkward and therefore want increased confidence. While confidence gives us a sense of control and feels good, it may be overrated. Our culture rewards self-confidence and self-assuredness, but there is a better approach for your success and personal development: self-compassion. Self-compassion encourages you to acknowledge your flaws and limitations, allowing you to look at yourself from a more objective and realistic point of view. Self-confidence has merits too but allows you to overestimate your abilities while self-compassion has all the same benefits without the drawbacks.

What Sets Self-Compassion Apart from Self-Confidence?

- Dr. Kristen Neff states that “Self-compassion is treating yourself with the same kindness, care and concern you show a loved one.” Unlike self-confidence, self-compassion allows you to acknowledge that you are an imperfect human being.
- Self-compassion is the opposite of overconfidence. Admitting we have flaws allows us to stay connected to others and keeps us from exaggerating our flaws and strengths.
- Self-compassion accepts self-doubt and other pessimistic shortcomings while overconfidence tries to hide these traits.
- Self-compassion gives you the benefits of confidence without the downside of delusion.

Some people think self-compassion is weak, but it is the opposite. Confidence is aimed at feeling adequate and powerful despite how adequate and powerful you are: it makes you accept a more objective reality.

How Does Self-Compassion Affect Us Personally?

A study published in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology asked people to describe themselves while being recorded on video. The subjects were told they would be rated on how likable, intelligent, and friendly they seemed in the video.

- Subjects who had high levels of self-compassion had generally the same emotional reaction no matter how they were rated.
- On the other hand, people with high levels of self-esteem had negative emotional reactions if the feedback was simply neutral and not exceptional. They also blamed unexceptional ratings on outside factors.
- Self-compassion attenuates people’s reactions to negative events in ways that are distinct from and more beneficial than self-esteem.

- Without the pressure to be superhuman, it is easier to accept criticism and feedback. It also allows us to acknowledge when we need to improve as people since we are not pretending that we know everything.

What is the Most Remarkable Benefit of Self Compassion?

- Dr. Neff says that resilience is the most remarkable benefit of self-compassion.
- She and her colleagues worked with veterans returning from war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Nearly half of them had Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, but the ones who scored higher in self-compassion based on their self-assessment had less severe symptoms.
- Self-compassionate people ruminate less because they can break the cycle of negativity by accepting their own imperfections.

There are still benefits to self-confidence. A study published in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology found that simply appearing more confident makes people believe you deserve more respect and admiration. Another study published in Plos One found that when people are overconfident, they are overrated as smarter and more skilled, creating a fake it until you make it phenomenon.

However, there are many more benefits to self-compassion including:

- The ability to improve on mistakes, failures, and shortcomings because they view them more objectively. This makes self-compassion an effective motivator.
- Self-compassion makes you better at owning up to mistakes.
- Self-compassion helps you to be more empathetic.

How to Embrace Self-Compassion:

- Accept you are human.
- Recognize your failures and frustrations.
- Avoid dwelling on mistakes.
- Notice the voice in your head being critical over every little mistake you make and make an effort to correct this from impacting you negatively. Learn to make friends with your inner critic.

For more resources check out our Website <http://speakingcenter.uncg.edu>