



# The Cost of Comparison

How to stop comparing and start connecting

## Objectives

- ▲ Identify areas where you are likely to compare yourself to others, understand the cost of that habit
- ▲ Understand the pitfalls of comparative suffering
- ▲ Cultivate self-compassion as a means to counteract comparison, using kindness toward oneself to deepen connection with others in both moments of struggle and joy

Many of us think that a relationship is a thing BETWEEN us and the other person and that their experience of the relationship must be the same as ours. But now that you've been doing this work for some time, you can see that this is not true! How often does it become apparent that our experiences of a relationship are quite different from the other persons? Of course, because we each have different thoughts, which drive different feelings, actions, and results.

In this program, we define a relationship as the sum of your thoughts about another person.

Great news:

**You are in control of this!**

This week, we will explore how comparison shows up in our relationships- **upward comparison** (we are worse off than others) and **downward comparison** (we are better off than others). Comparing ourselves to others is a natural part of human behavior, and our brains are hard-wired to do it, as explained by social comparison theory. While some individuals find motivation to improve by observing the success of others, this tendency can also lead to negative feelings such as inadequacy, dissatisfaction, or guilt.



BETTER TOGETHER



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In our digital age, we would likely compare ourselves more than ever. Social media connects us, but it can also exacerbate feelings of comparison and disconnection if you're constantly measuring yourself against others.

## So what can we do?

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We will practice how to apply mindful self compassion when you start comparing yourself with others using the three concepts of self compassion: mindfulness, common humanity, and self-kindness

**Write about someone you often compare yourself to. In what ways do you compare yourself?  
Write it ALL out here**

**Why does it make sense that your brain offers you this comparison?**



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Write one model about how this comparison habit shows up for you?

This is your **UNINTENTIONAL** model.

C	.....
T	.....
F	.....
A	.....
R	.....

Now look at your **UNINTENTIONAL** model above, What is the cost to you of lingering in comparison? Is there a **BENEFIT** to you? If so, what?

**COST**

**BENEFIT**

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Now, write out ALL the things you have in common with that person.

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**What do you want to think next time your brain suggests this comparison?**

**Write out your INTENTIONAL model here.**

C
T
F
A
R

As healthcare providers, we always strive to show compassion to our patients, peers, and everyone we encounter. However, when we compare ourselves to others, we often focus on our imperfections, inadequacies, and flaws, leading us to lose compassion for ourselves.

**Dr. Kristen Neff** defines self-compassion as

*...being kind to ourselves during times of suffering, failure, or feelings of inadequacy.*



It also involves recognizing that everyone experiences failure and imperfection at some point; *we are not alone in this*. Being mindful of our feelings and acknowledging when we are stressed or struggling without overreacting is also an essential element for self-compassion.

Let's practice self-compassion with the following exercise.



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Imagine you are sitting with your best friend/loved one  
and they told you the prompt below -

*How do you want to respond to them?*

## Prompt

## Your Response

1 I'm a failure

2 I will never be able to do it

3 I am underqualified for the job

4 Other parents seem to be able to  
know how to raise their kids

5 I am not as smart as they are

6 They have so much money to be  
on a nice vacation

7 My evaluation scores are lower  
than everyone else

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



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Now remind yourself about the response you have for others and imagine if those prompts are about yourself - *Would your response change?*

**Yes, why?**

**No, why not?**