

## Audio File Transcript

### Self-Compassion Break for Childhood Shame

This practice is called the self-compassion break for childhood shame. It's the second of three self-compassion breaks in this program. And the self-compassion break, as you know, evokes the three components of self-compassion, namely mindfulness, common humanity, and self-kindness. So if you have been following the book and perhaps connecting with a trait or an aspect of your personality that you feel ashamed about and it seems to have some early childhood roots, this is a chance to respond to that experience of shame with self-compassion, especially with the three different components of self-compassion. So if you'd like to do this practice, please, as always, find a comfortable position and allow your eyes to close partially or fully. Perhaps taking a few deep breaths, feeling your breaths, as the air moves in and out of your body, as a way of coming into the present moment.

And then if it makes sense to you, perhaps calling to mind a personality trait that makes you feel ashamed. For example, maybe you feel you're insecure or restless or too needy, anxious, sensitive, disorganized. Some personality trait. Nobody's perfect. We all have traits we wish we didn't. So if there's one of those, that also seems to have been with you for a long time, maybe even has childhood roots, please bring it to mind. And take a moment to reflect on it, maybe even a memory or two associated with it. When you first got the message that something was wrong with you for being like that. And then beginning with the first component of self-compassion, mindfulness, dropping your awareness inside your body and seeing if you can notice any physical discomfort right now. Maybe there's tension or queasiness or pain. Bring some curiosity to the physical manifestation of shame? Especially, are you able to identify where in your body you feel it the most? And if you can, also allowing the experience of discomfort to be there. That's mindfulness, giving it a little space, letting it be there, knowing that's part of the human condition. We all feel like this for similar reasons, for different reasons. But this is shame and it has a bodily expression. And you can ask yourself, what is the strongest emotion that you're feeling right now? So it might be shame, but it could be a different emotion. You know, shame hides within other emotions. So see if you can name the strongest emotion in a kind and validating way as you might for a friend. So it could be, oh, shame, shame, or oh, fear, I'm feeling fear, or sadness, yes, this sadness. So see if you can name the emotion and also make a little more room for it than usual. This is mindfulness, mindful awareness. And if it's shame that you're feeling the most, is there a message going through your mind right now? Self-criticism is the language of shame. So is there any self-critical language such as, oh, that's stupid, or who do you think you are? You're

ridiculous. Maybe you're criticizing yourself saying things like, I'm useless or I'm bad. Can you identify a message associated with this trait? Either the message appears to be coming from outside you or it's from inside. And if there is such a message, please consider the possibility that these messages were learned from others and have nothing to do with who you really are. They were learned. You may believe it, but you weren't born believing it. You learned this. What are those messages? Seeing if you can name them in a compassionate way as you might for a friend who is struggling with this kind of inner language. And then please return your awareness to your body, again feeling the discomfort that your body has been holding inside, perhaps the discomfort associated with this message. And just breathe softly for a few breaths, allowing your body to feel whatever it's feeling without needing to change anything, at least for now. So this is the practice of mindfulness for childhood shame. Now let's explore common humanity. So if you're feeling shame, you probably feel isolated and alone even now. So that's the nature of shame. But you're not as alone as you actually feel. Everyone knows how shame feels. So please remember that whatever you're feeling is part of the human experience. Everyone gets shamed in childhood. Some people a lot, some not so much. And many people have had the same childhood experience as you've had. And those who did may feel exactly as you do right now. And also, remember that if you're feeling shame, it's because you, like everyone else, just want to be loved, to be valued, or to belong, even as a child. You probably wanted to be loved, to be valued, and to belong. That's the motivation behind shame.

The wish to be loved is the deepest part of our humanity. And it's because of this wish that we even feel shame. And if after this reflection you still feel alone, again, please know that Others also feel alone no matter how much they're reminded of common humanity. This just means that we're feeling shame. And then the final component is self-kindness. So now see if you can respond to shame in a new way. Can you give yourself some kindness simply because you feel shame. So if you like, you can place a hand on a part of your body that feels shame the most. Feeling that touch, the sense of touch, feeling perhaps warmth. Even giving yourself a little massage if you like. And if that feels good, you can also send kindness through your fingertips into that part of your body that's probably been holding shame for you for a long time. And then consider for a moment what you'd most like to hear in a moment like this when you reflect with a tinge of shame on some aspect of your personality. What would be really helpful to hear? Maybe you need to be reminded you're a good person, or don't be afraid, or I believe in you, I trust you, I'm here for you, I love you. Or maybe there's a stronger language that you would like somebody to support you with in response to a critical inner voice. Maybe if someone were to say, you know, that's not helpful to you. You don't deserve that. Be strong. So what words would allow your heart to rest even in the midst of shame? And if any words arise for you, giving yourself permission, giving yourself the gift of

allowing those words to roll through your mind and your heart over and over for a little while. You can even add compassionate touch if you're not still offering yourself this kind of compassionate expression. You can combine, listening to these words, sending some love into the part of your body that holds shame, receiving kindness, through touch and language for as long as you wish. And then at some point when you're ready, you can gently release this practice. Let your experience settle.

Let your experience of the practice be as it was. Let yourself feel right now, whatever you're feeling, and perhaps even allowing yourself to be, if only for this one moment, just as you are. Just like this, fully human. And when you're ready, you can slowly open your eyes. If you wish, you can reflect on the exercise. Was there any part of it that made special sense to you? Did you learn anything? In daily life, if you ever have this kind of self-doubt, especially old messages, you can practice self-compassion break, a compassionate response to shame. Thank you.