

(continued from page 11)

- Focus on your reactions to the situation, looking for how the situation affects your self-concept.
- If you identify any distortion in self-concept, hold it clearly in mind.

b) **Analyzing the self-concept:**

- Ask yourself whether this concept of you is of mental or physical nature.
- Mentally search for such a self within the various parts of your body and mind.
- Recognizing that this concept is just that, a concept, allow it to dissolve along with the reactions it has aroused.

c) **Defining self-concept using compassionate insight:**

- Within the clarity of your awareness, recall your compassionate goal.
- Imagine that compassionate goal takes the form of a healing, soothing ball of light in your chest.
- As you focus on your compassionate goal, imagine the light gets brighter, filling your body with light and melting away all of your internal obstacles to reaching your goal.
- Imagine that light going out from your pores, dispelling the problems of your loved-ones, friends, acquaintances, and eventually, everyone everywhere.

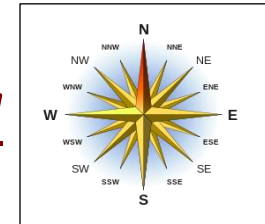
C. Hold that image single-pointedly while identifying with your compassion and insight.

Compassion &

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Analytical

Selective-Focus

Skills

Practice Booklet

(Wilson Hurley, LCSW)

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<https://www.facebook.com/people/Wilson-Hurley/100005294867246>

How to Use this Booklet for Daily Practice

For beginners, rather than trying to do all of these practices every day, it is suggested that you try to engage in a regular practice of mindfulness (see page 3) and then add one or two more practices per session. As you become familiarized with the different contemplations, you can review some briefly and spend more time with others as preferred. Eventually, the emotional logic of the practices in the sequence laid out below will become more evident, and you may want to incorporate all of the contemplations with each session.

COMPASS Practice List

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3. **Core Analytical Skills** *Purpose:* to turn back internal obstacles to compassion through analytical insight.

- **Cognitive schema:** patterns of concepts about reality that inform our judgments/reactions
- **Distortions** in personal schema can occur based on our reactions to and interpretations of our unique experiences, thus affecting self-concept

Overly negative/diminished sense of self can lead to feeling:	Overly positive/inflated sense of self can lead to feeling:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worthless • Helpless • Hopeless <p>This can sap motivation by exacerbating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depression • Anxiety • Avoidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superior • Entitled • Invulnerable <p>This can block compassion by exacerbating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsideration • Self-indulgence • Unrealistic expectations

- **Practicing the analytical core skills:**
 - A. After contemplating the rationale for the analytical core skills as described above and a brief practice of mindfulness, do a short review of the core compassion exercises.
 - B. When settled into goal-focused compassion, contemplate the following:
 - a) **Identifying a cognitive distortion:**
 - Within a calm and clear state of awareness, recall an incident that is troubling to you.

- g. **Goal-focused compassion** involves the formulation of goals that can sustain and develop our commitment to a compassionate direction
- Effects:
 - Counteracts sense that life lacks meaning
 - Fosters compassionate action and life style, empowers, re-directs mental focus towards helping self and others
 - **The practice of goal-focused compassion:**
 - A. Contemplate the benefit of goal-focused compassion and do a brief practice of mindfulness together with a brief review of the previous exercises.
 - B. When settled, contemplate the following:
 - In order to sustain compassionate efforts over time, it is important to develop my internal capacities.
 - Take a moment to consider what internal qualities you want to make stronger.
 - Set a goal to develop the qualities you identify as important in order to be of best help to yourself and others.
 - C. Hold your goals single-pointedly while thinking, “I will develop these capacities in order to benefit myself and others.”

1. **Foundational Mindfulness Practices:**

a. *The Four Foundations of Mindfulness Practice*

i. Mindfulness of body:

- Begin by noticing your breath as it leaves your nostrils and returns, noticing if it's a short breath or a long breath.
- Be aware of your whole body as you breathe.
- Breathe in calm and breathe out stress.
- Let your body start to calm and settle.

ii. Mindfulness of feelings:

- As you notice your breath, also notice your feelings.
- Be aware of the present moment as you breathe.
- Breathe in joy and breathe out sorrow.
- Let your feelings start to settle.

iii. Mindfulness of awareness:

- As you notice your breath, also notice your awareness.
- Focus your awareness on the present moment.
- Notice the clear nature of your awareness, freeing it from worries.
- Concentrate your awareness on your breath.

iv. Mindfulness of mental objects:

- As you focus on your breath, notice thoughts come and go.
- Notice the changing and impermanent nature of thoughts.
- Let disturbing thoughts and feelings fade away.
- Let go of thoughts and return your focus to your breath.

b. R.A.I.N. (Michelle McDonald):

- Recognize whatever mental events arise
- Accept it
- Investigate it
- Non-identify with it

c. Self-compassion exercise (Peggy DiVincenzo, LPC):

- Breathe in soothing light with self-compassion
- Breathe out soothing light with compassion for someone in distress, who you imagine being in front of you

2. Core Compassion Skills:

- a. **Equanimity** can be defined as an unbiased mind focused on our shared humanity and everyone's equal wish to find happiness and to avoid suffering.
- Effects:
 - Counteracts bias, intolerance, alienation
 - Fosters connectedness, expanded social focus
- **The practice of equanimity:**
 - A. Contemplate the benefit of equanimity and begin with a brief practice of mindfulness.
 - B. Once settled, consider the following points:
 - We are all equal in wanting to be happy and in wanting to avoid suffering.
 - Everyone wants to be loved, valued, and respected.
 - If people treated each other with equal friendship and respect, it would reduce conflict and strife. The world would be a more peaceful place.
 - C. Think "how wonderful it would be if everyone abided in equanimity. I will try to develop an equal sense of friendliness for everyone." Hold this thought for a while.

- f. **Activation** takes compassion from a passive potential into an engaged expression
- Effects:
 - Counteracts passivity
 - Fosters engagement in meaningful activities
- **The practice of activation:**
 - A. Contemplate the benefit of activating your compassion and do a brief practice of mindfulness and the other above exercises.
 - B. When settled, contemplate the following:
 - Though I've imagined taking away the sufferings of myself and others, and then imagined us all filled with well-being, in reality the world is still full of suffering.
 - If I don't accept any responsibility for making this world a better place, then whose job is it?
 - If I want this world to improve, it is important that I do my part.
 - C. Generate and hold the thought "it is my responsibility to improve the conditions of myself and others."

- e. **“Giving and taking”** is a practice of imagining taking on hardships and giving away well-being.
- Effects:
 - Counteracts excessive self-focus and fears
 - Fosters exposure, empowerment in role as helper
 - **The practice of giving and taking:**
- A. Contemplate the benefit of giving and taking and do a brief practice of mindfulness, equanimity, gratitude, loving-kindness, and compassion.
- B. When settled, contemplate the following:
- Imagine a future situation you face that is troubling you and picture your fears about it as being like a dark cloud in your chest.
 - Now, with compassion, imagine inhaling the future situation in the form of light. As it enters your chest, it dispels the dark cloud of your fear and fills you with confidence, courage and a sense of well-being.
 - With loving kindness, exhale that sense of well-being and confidence in the form of light to yourself in the future, imagining that it gives you confidence and the ability to overcome the troubling situation.
 - Do the same visualization for someone you care about who is going through hardship.
 - Do the same visualization for loved ones and friends.
 - Do the same visualization, extending it to everyone, everywhere.
- C. Rest in the visualization of everyone being freed from their suffering and filled with well-being, thinking how wonderful it would be for if you could actually help others find happiness and freedom from suffering.

- b. **Gratitude** is a recognition and appreciation of the help we have received that engenders thankfulness and a wish to repay kindness.
- Effects:
 - Counteracts self-preoccupation, low self-esteem, poverty mentality
 - Fosters hope, meaningful direction of wishing to help others & thus confidence, fortitude
 - **The practice of gratitude:**
- A. Contemplate the benefit of gratitude and begin with brief practice of mindfulness and equanimity.
- B. When settled, bring to mind someone for whom you feel grateful and imagine him or her in front of you.
- Think of ways that this person has helped you.
 - Surrounding you, imagine others in your life who have been helpful to you. For example, consider the following:
 - How many people helped construct the building you are now using?
 - Now ask yourself the same questions about how many people have contributed to:
 - The food you’ve eaten?
 - The clothing you’ve worn?
 - Your health care?
 - Your education?
 - The technology you've used?
 - How many have been a friend, a parent, an ally, a protector?
- C. If you feel a sense of gratitude, focus on it for a while and sustain it. Then, think of ways you might be able to repay some of the kindness you’ve been shown.

- c. **Loving-kindness** is the wish for all beings, including ourselves, to have happiness in all of its many forms.
- Effects:
 - Counteracts anger, resentment, bias, intolerance
 - Fosters openness to relationships, tolerance, sense of belonging, shared humanity
 - **The practice of kindness:**
 - A. Contemplate the benefit of kindness and do a brief practice of mindfulness followed by a short review of equanimity and gratitude.
 - B. When settled, contemplate the following:
 - May I be happy, healthy, and peaceful; may I have joy, contentment, and security; may I have strength, determination, and success in overcoming the difficulties in my life.
 - Make the same wishes for loved ones.
 - Make the same wishes for friends.
 - Make the same wishes for those who upset you (if they were calmer, happier people, they might be better company).
 - Make the same wishes for everyone, everywhere.
 - C. If you feel a sense of loving-kindness, focus on it for a while and sustain it, thinking how wonderful it would be if everyone could have happiness and its causes.

- d. **Compassion** is the wish that others be free from suffering and its causes
- Effects:
 - Counteracts self-centered focus
 - Fosters universality, empowerment, humility
 - **The practice of compassion:**
 - A. Contemplate the benefit of compassion and do a brief practice of mindfulness, equanimity, gratitude, and loving-kindness.
 - B. When settled, contemplate the following:
 - Though I want only happiness and not to suffer, life is filled with difficulties and hardships.
 - Others, just like me, want only happiness and not to suffer. Yet many face daily hunger, poverty, and homelessness.
 - Many encounter conflicts, disrespect, living in fear, imprisonment, torture, abuse, or violence.
 - Many experience sickness, frailties of body, and mental distress.
 - Life is full of uncertainty and unpleasantness for all of us as we struggle to survive and thrive.
 - C. If you feel a sense of compassion for yourself and others, focus on it for a while and sustain it. Think about how everyone is equal to you in not wanting to suffer, and about how wonderful it would be if everyone, everywhere could be free from suffering and its causes.