**Noticing Exercise:** When we are hooked by our thoughts, it can sometimes be helpful to observe ourselves from the perspective of a caring friend. Taking an external view on our problems can help us to find a kinder and more compassionate way to be with ourselves. If you would like to practice being kinder to yourself this week, do the following exercise:

It starts with pausing to notice whether you are struggling with suffering or moving toward a value. If you notice you are struggling with suffering, then ask yourself the following two questions (it’s important to say them in this strange manner. Repeat these things silently to yourself, inserting your first name into the blank):

* What does \_\_[your name]\_\_\_\_\_ need right now?
* If I could be a friend to \_\_\_[your name]\_\_\_\_ right now, what would I do?

Pause for a bit with these questions and see what comes up. Try to answer these questions from the perspective of being caring friend. What shows up when you do this? Feel free to make notes below on what you notice.

5 senses experience

Mental Experience

Values

Suffering

**This week’s exercise:** Listen to the observer self exercise

Below is a website link to a recording of a classic ACT observer self exercise. This exercise is fairly long-- about 22 minutes –so pick a time of day when you are not tired and are likely to remain alert throughout. ACT draws a distinction between two senses of self - self as content and self as context. *Self as content*, or our *conceptualized sel*f, refers to who we ordinarily think we are. Our self concept includes all the identities we take on, such as friend, student, son or daughter, and spouse. It also includes our self evaluations, such as "smart" or "dumb", "friendly" or "mean," "useless" or "productive." Whenever we hold our identities too tightly, we cause difficulties for ourselves. However, contact with the other sense of self, *self as context*, or the *observing self*, helps to free us from the labels we and others place upon us. Even though our experiences are constantly changing, there is always a "you" that is able to notice these changes. When we are able to contact that sense of "pure awareness," we are able to observe our experiences without getting caught up in the content. We are freed from the evaluations, beliefs, ideas, and judgments that we place on ourselves.

The purpose of the exercise below is to help you contact the observer self, a self that is free of the labels you place on it.

<http://www.portlandpsychotherapyclinic.com/counseling/self_as_context_exercises>

**After you complete the exercise, take a few minutes to write about your experience with the exercise.**

What did you feel during the exercise?

Is there anything you would want to do differently after experiencing this exercise?

Is there anything else you noticed while doing the exercise?

**This week’s daily reflection: Noticing compassion**

Before you go to bed in the evening or when you first wake up, take a few minutes to complete this form to increase awareness of how you treated yourself today when you were suffering.

Please read each statement carefully before answering. For each day, rate how often you behaved in the stated manner over the previous 24 hours:

**Almost Almost**

**never always**

**1 2 3 4 5**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thur | Fri | Sat | Sun |
| 1. When things went badly for me today, I saw the difficulties as a part of life that everyone experiences. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. I tried to be loving towards myself when I was feeling emotional pain. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. When I was feeling down or upset today, I reminded myself that there are lots of other people in the world feeling like I am. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. When things were difficult today, I was tough on myself. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. I was intolerant and impatient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. I was caring and tender toward myself today. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. I saw my failings as part of the human condition. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. When I was suffering, I was kind to myself. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. I was a bit cold-hearted towards myself when I suffered today. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. When I felt painful things today, I tried to approach my feelings with curiosity and openness. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. I was disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Items adapted from the “Self-Compassion Scale.” If you’d like to test yourself, go to: http://self-compassion.org/test-your-self-compassion-level.html