

Silencing Your Inner Critic While You Grieve

Objective

To replace your self-critical thoughts with self-compassion.

You Should Know

If you have lost a loved one, you might feel that you should have said something differently or done something differently before your loved one died. You might focus on all the things you think you should have done, forgetting about all of the positive experiences you shared with your loved one.

It is common to feel some regret about things that could have been done differently after a loss, but some people are so tormented by guilt that they cannot experience the normal grieving process and get on with their lives. This is surely not what your loved one would have wanted for you.

If you are constantly thinking about all of the things you wish you had done differently, you can replace this self-criticism with self-compassion.

Self-compassion means being as kind and forgiving toward yourself as you would toward someone else who is going through a difficult time.

This worksheet will ask you to write down self-critical statements that you make to yourself and replace them with statements that reflect your self-compassion.

What to Do

Fill in the first column each time you are aware of your critical thoughts. Then, immediately write in something you would say to a friend who is having those thoughts. Your response should reflect a compassionate and supportive attitude.

Critical Thought	Compassionate Response
Example: <i>I wish I had told him how much I love him.</i>	<i>You showed him you loved him in many ways.</i>

Reflections on This Exercise

What are some other ways you can show self-compassion?

What are some positive ways you can remember your loved one?

What are some other areas of your life where you are critical of yourself?

How will self-compassion affect these areas?

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

Is there anything in particular you learned from this exercise?
