

# Mindfulness Exercise: Exploring "I Don't Deserve Compassion"



## Introduction

This mindfulness practice invites you to explore the belief "I don't deserve compassion" with curiosity and openness. Through this practice, we'll examine this thought as a judgment rather than a fact, recognize our shared humanity, and take small steps toward self-kindness.

## Practice Guide (15-20 minutes)

### 1. Setting the Foundation (3 minutes)

Find a comfortable seated position where you feel supported and stable. If you're sitting in a chair, place your feet flat on the floor, or settle into a cross-legged position if you're on a cushion.

Take three deep breaths, inhaling fully and exhaling completely.

Allow your breath to return to its natural rhythm. Feel the gentle rise and fall of your chest and belly with each breath.

### 2. Noticing Judgments vs. Facts (5 minutes)

Bring to mind the thought: "I don't deserve compassion."

Notice this as a thought arising in your awareness—a judgment your mind has created, not an objective truth about you or reality.

Ask yourself gently:

- Where did I learn this belief?
- How long have I been carrying it?
- What evidence does my mind offer to support this belief?

Notice that regardless of what answers arise, these are all thoughts—mental constructs rather than facts about your inherent worth.

Say to yourself: "I notice I'm having the thought that I don't deserve compassion."

Feel the difference between being caught in the thought versus observing it.

### **3. Recognizing Common Humanity (5 minutes)**

Place a hand over your heart and feel the warmth of your palm against your chest.

Consider that every human being experiences suffering—this is part of our shared humanity.

Reflect on these truths:

- Every person deserves compassion simply because they suffer
- Worthiness is not earned; it is inherent in being human
- You are a member of the human family, no exceptions

Say to yourself gently: "Like all humans, I experience difficulties. Like all humans, I deserve kindness."

### **4. Small Acts of Self-Compassion (5 minutes)**

Now, consider one small act of kindness you can offer yourself today—something simple and accessible.

It might be:

- A moment of rest
- A kind word to yourself when you make a mistake
- A brief pause to appreciate something beautiful
- A comforting stretch for tight shoulders
- A cup of tea prepared with care

Imagine yourself receiving this small kindness. Notice any resistance that arises without judgment.

Say to yourself: "I allow myself to receive this small kindness, regardless of whether I feel I deserve it."

### **5. Closing Reflection (2 minutes)**

As you prepare to end this practice, reflect on the possibility that deserving compassion is not something you need to earn or prove.

Consider that compassion might be like air—something all living beings need and have a right to, simply by existing.

Set an intention to notice the thought "I don't deserve compassion" when it arises in your daily life, and to meet it with gentle awareness rather than believing it automatically.

Take three deep breaths to close the practice.

## Extended Practice

Throughout your day:

1. **Notice the judgment:** When you catch yourself thinking "I don't deserve compassion," simply label it: "Ah, there's that judgment again."
2. **Offer a counterpoint:** Gently remind yourself, "This is a familiar thought pattern, not a fact about me."
3. **Take micro-actions:** Practice tiny acts of self-kindness, especially when the "undeserving" feeling is strong.
4. **Expand your perspective:** When you see others struggling, notice that you don't question whether they deserve compassion. Extend that same perspective to yourself.

Remember that this practice is not about forcing yourself to feel worthy, but about creating space to question limiting beliefs and allow for new possibilities.