

Kids with 
Cancer Society

BrainWorks Newsletter

April 23, 2020



“Childhood is not a race to see how quickly a child can read, write, and count. Its a small window of time to learn and develop at the pace that is right for the child.

Earlier does not equal better.”

-Hessuna Academy



These are hard days and times... During our conversations with families, we've quickly seen how there isn't one person who hasn't been impacted financially, emotionally, socially and/or academically. Usually, it's all four. Its happening to all of us. --And none of this is anyone's fault.

Compassion and kindness are essential. Hard times are even more difficult when we beat ourselves up over them, judging our struggles as a sign that we're less capable or worthy than others. In fact, we often criticize ourselves more harshly than we would anyone else in our shoes, especially when we make a mistake or feel stressed out. Those unkind voices in our heads hurt, making us feel isolated and even more stressed. **Never before has it been wiser to treat yourself as you would a good friend, with compassion, kindness, and understanding.**

Research shows that people who treat themselves with compassion rather than criticism experience greater physical and mental health. Over and over again, studies show that kids (- and adults too!) will try longer and cope better with stress when they can turn off critical self talk. It becomes easier to stick with hard jobs and struggle with a complicated math or language arts problem. Self compassion stops us from beating ourselves up for having trouble. We stop blaming or even hurting ourselves for mistakes. Instead, we develop the habit to treat ourselves as kindly as we would a friend who is hurting. And then our children learn that habit from us. This small habit saves them from life-long struggles.

According to psychologist Kristin Neff, this "self-compassion" has three main components:

- Mindfulness or paying attention to ourselves and really listening to how we're doing,
- A feeling of common humanity: remembering we are all struggling, we aren't the only one,
- Self-kindness, treating ourselves as a good friend or a small child that needs a hand right now.

Weekly BrainWorks **Zoom Drop In**

Wednesdays at 10AM
Meeting ID: 418 195 127
Password: 589020

Come join us in the community Zoom drop in if you would like to connect with other parents, talk more about these ideas, and learn other ways to help your child with homechooling!

A few resources to help with practicing self-compassion:

- Days are busy and we are all juggling many things. Here's a quick two minute strategy becomes more effective each time we do it.
[2-Minute Tips: How to Practice Self-Compassion](#)
- On those days where there is more time.... This site goes over a few 10- 15 minute strategies...
The School of Life - [A Self Compassion Exercise](#)
- This 12 minute talk by Kristine Neff convinced us! She talks as a parent.
[Overcoming Objections to Self-Compassion](#)

An Activity For The Whole Family: **Fill Your Bucket!**

This activity is a great way to help kids and -adults too, steadily increase kindness and compassion towards one another. Over time, daily kindness, good feelings and appreciation grow. In her book, Have You Filled a Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids, McCloud explains that being happy isn't just a feeling; it's something that you carry with you all day. You can make yourself happy by making other people happy, and by accepting kindness from others. 'You feel very happy and good when your bucket is full, and you feel very sad and lonely when your bucket is empty.'

Materials:

- buckets/cups/name tags/labels
- warm fuzzy pompoms and google eyes
- Tupperware or storage container
- Have You Filled a Bucket Today? [Here is a video of the book!](#)

Activity:

- Kids make between 3 to 5 warm fuzzies.
- Put a warm fuzzie in someone's bucket when you do something kind for someone, or when they are kind to you.
- Have a storage container with extra warm fuzzies for the whole family to use and get involved!



Useful Links:

1. Find more Kristen Neff at self-compassion.org
2. [Find Meaning From Your Photos](#)
3. [What Is COVID-19? And How Does It Relate to Child Development?](#)
4. ["Is It Selfish, Shallow, or Frivolous to Worry About Your Own State of Mind During a Pandemic?"](#)

Perseverance, Growth Mindset, and Power of Yet

One good way to help kids develop grit and the ability to stick with difficult things is to help them turn the critical "I'm no good at this....I can't and never will..." to a phrase that reminds them of the power of the word "yet."

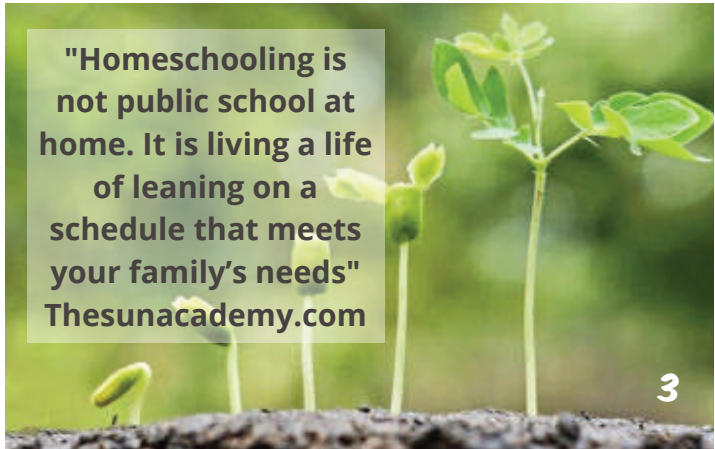
"I can't do this, yet."

"Yet" is a small word that, over time, builds persistence and resilience. This is called "Growth Mindset" - the idea that we can grow our brain's ability to learn and solve problems. It's something that is taught, we aren't born knowing this. Students learn to believe they can grow with effort and hard work. They use challenges and failures as opportunities to learn, and are ready to take on new or difficult tasks.

- Here's a song to help introduce it to younger children, [Sesame Street - The Power of Yet](#), and a five best tips list for older kids:
[5 Tips to Build a Growth Mindset](#)
- Last, here is a short article and a 15 minute Ted Talk that explains growth mindset in much more detail:
[The Growth Mindset - The Power of Yet](#)
[Ted Talk from Carol Dweck](#)

A Note for Parents:

We are all used to working on our self-esteem by asking ourselves, "Am I being a good parent or a bad parent?" One problem with that question is that our standards are constantly increasing. If we don't meet our own standards, we might feel too terrible to keep trying that day. Self-compassion, in contrast, sees that we are constantly growing and full of possibilities. It is a way of relating to ourselves kindly and embracing ourselves as we are, flaws and all.



"Homeschooling is not public school at home. It is living a life of leaning on a schedule that meets your family's needs"
TheSunAcademy.com