

Dear Class,

As you know resilience is the ability to overcome adversity. When we are resilient we are able to handle what we can, be comfortable with what we can't handle and move forward with aplomb. As I've said before there really isn't much we can do about what life has sent our way, but there is a WHOLE lot we can do about how we choose to move forward.

As most of you know, I'm a big believer in the importance of having a growth mindset<<https://www.brainpickings.org/2014/01/29/carol-dweck-mindset/>>. I'm also a big believer in the importance of self-compassion. <<https://hbr.org/2018/09/give-yourself-a-break-the-power-of-self-compassion>> As Kristin Neff says we are harder on ourselves than we are on anyone else. I believe we all could use a little more self-compassion nowadays. So how does a growth mindset and self-compassion relate? Well, I just read this article<<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/articles/201903/silencing-your-inner-critic>> on how to silence your inner critic and learned how they relate.

The voice of our inner critic can be so loud that it makes it hard to hear our voice of self-compassion. Besides we really aren't as well versed in self-compassion as we are in self criticizing and now is NOT the time to be criticizing ourselves (much less anyone else). One of the motivators for self criticism is when we feel we aren't or haven't been good enough - we fell short of a standard we held for ourselves. We yelled at the kids, didn't help with schoolwork, had to cancel something, the list can be endless. During this difficult time, it's very easy to not feel good enough.

I find the idea of holding ourselves and our loved ones to the standard of goodish, as opposed to good or the best, a wonderful idea! Goodish gives us room to grow, to learn, to improve, it cuts us some slack. Goodish rolls a growth mindset and self-compassion into one idea and makes us more resilient. Goodish implies we are on a learning curve, kind of like when we use yet in a growth mindset conversation. To me goodish means we have the desire to do our best and the self-acceptance to allow that stuff can happen along the way. When we expect ourselves to be goodish we hold ourselves to a high standard knowing that there is always room to grow and that we can be kind to ourselves. And the beauty of goodish is it's easier to improve when we are kind to ourselves.

So...what does the world of goodish look like? Well, let's say you're on a business call and despite the fact that you threatened your kids with their lives, your son comes running in yelling mommy, mommy. And of course you get very upset. Well that reaction would be from your old world of good or best. In your new world of goodish your reaction is different. Here are a few options:

If you are using self-compassion you could say to yourself, "Well that didn't go the way I wanted it to go! I wish it had gone as I had expected it to go. The times are difficult, I did the best I could, I bet most parents have a story to tell about their kids disturbing their calls." You might take a few breaths, treat yourself to something special (self-compassion) and share the story with a friend (social support).

You could deploy your character strengths<<https://posproject.org/character-strengths/>> in a multitude of ways in this situation. If you were creative, zesty, had humor, or maybe socially intelligent you could incorporate the interruption into the call, saying something like, "I think my son has an opinion on the topic at hand." You could use your character strengths of love, fairness, forgiveness to overlook the uncomfortable situation. Remember when you use your signature strengths you feel energized and you do things better.

You could take a moment to access your thoughts. Are you saying to yourself, "Well, that was awful, I'm so embarrassed. I don't understand why it's so hard for the kids to ever listen." You could then challenge your thoughts. You could ask yourself, "Am I thinking in all or nothing terms (awful). Am I using "exaggerating" words, such as never, always, forever, need should, or must (ever listen)." You could try replacing "awful" with something like "not how I wanted it" and you could replace "hard for the kids to ever listen" with "they didn't listen this time."

Please note that in the three examples you are using your ability to be flexible, a growth mindset, and self-compassion among other skills. You are still trying to do the best you can, the difference is on that road to doing the best you can you are leaving room for kindness and humanity and doing better next time. The irony here is that according to Barry Schwartz<https://characterlab.org/tips-of-the-week/hard-choices/?utm_source=Character+Lab+-+Email+List&utm_campaign=11f5b2664c-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_08_31_06_47&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4810b42811-11f5b2664c-253612893> people who look for good enough, as opposed to the best, are happier with their choices and their lives in general.

Wishing you goodishness,
Susan