



*How to be Kind
- to Yourself!*
EBOOK & WORKBOOK

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Introduction

Do you find it easier to be kind to others than to yourself? If so, you're in good company!

Being kind and gentle with ourselves is something many of us find challenging. In fact, when I used to suggest my clients were kind/er to themselves, most people would stop, think for a few seconds and say, "How?" or look puzzled and ask, "What do you mean?"



Well, we're here to change that: welcome to your Self-Kindness eBook and Workbook.

Now this eBook is just the beginning. Self-Kindness is a surprisingly deep topic, so please consider this an *introduction* to being kind to yourself—and the start of your self-kindness journey!

We believe Fierce Kindness (kindness and courage combined) is what our world needs to create a better place for everyone. But we *also* believe that whatever change the world needs, we must start with ourselves—so that we help make those changes from a position of strength.

My own journey to self-kindness has been a long one, beginning in 2009. But it took emergency surgery 3 years later with 3 surgeons and a weeklong stay in hospital to make me slow down and *really* look at how I had been treating myself. Realising that *I could have died* is what helped me finally stand up to my critic (that kept pushing me to work harder, do more) and actually pay attention to my feelings and needs.

Even then it wasn't easy. Decades of conditioning to ignore my bodily signals, and dismiss inconvenient and awkward feelings, meant that it was really uncomfortable. Sometimes I needed a lot of courage to face my fears, take care of myself and listen to what I needed. But if I can do it, so can you!

And let's get something clear right now: You deserve rest. You deserve pleasure. You deserve love.

And you deserve your own kindness.

But in case that's not enough, there are countless benefits to being kind to ourselves including being happier, having less stress—and more energy and resilience, achieving more—and it also makes you a better person for others to be around! And we'll explore this more in a moment.

Part 1: Let's get started!

1. Create a space (block out some time) in your busy schedule.
2. Find a cosy spot (at home or a snug coffee shop—somewhere you can focus on you).
3. Now get reading, answering the questions along the way.



IMPORTANT: You can read this all in one go, or in chunks—one part at a time. What would be kind and enjoyable for you?

Your toolkit contents

There are 4 parts to this How to be Kind to Yourself Toolkit. Together, these resources give you the tools you need to begin your journey to be kind to yourself.

- 1) This *How to be Kind to Yourself eBook and Workbook*
- 2) **The Handout:** *35 Ways to be Kind to Yourself*
- 3) **The Handout:** *The Effects of Stress on Your Body Handout*
- 4) Your *PACT 4 Step Self-Kindness Worksheet*

As you work through this eBook and Workbook, each of the other 3 resources will be mentioned at a time where it is most helpful to you. Want to download the other 3 resources now? [Get them here >>](#)

So, why are you here?



Here are a few questions to help you get the most out of this eBook

Write out 3 reasons why you picked up this eBook:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

I hope to learn: _____

I want to be kinder to myself because: _____



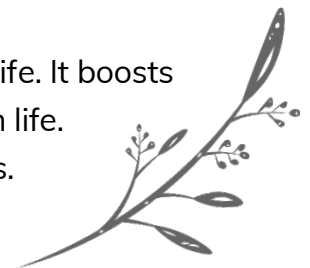
What are the benefits of being kind to yourself? Why bother?

Self-kindness is not just a 'touchy-feely' idea. There are countless reasons to be kind to yourself—and with modern neuroscience, many have also been scientifically proven.

Here are just a few benefits of self-kindness:

- **Better physical health.** When we're kind to ourselves it lowers the stress hormone cortisol, which is good for our bodies. We also make better lifestyle choices (eating/sleep/exercise etc.).
- **Better mental health.** Self-kindness helps us regulate our emotions, reduces mood swings, and can help reduce both anxiety and feelings of depression.
- **Increased confidence.** Self-kindness is literally an act of *valuing your self*. Being unkind to ourselves can make a habit of fault-finding. Whereas being kind leads us to be more accepting and forgiving of our flaws and mistakes—boosting our self-esteem.
- **Less self-judgement and perfectionism:** Self-kindness counteracts our negative self-talk and helps us accept ourselves *as we are* (not as we think we *should* be). The drive to perfect and judge ourselves is reduced. TIP: *Fierce* Self-Kindness helps us stand up to our critic in a positive, kind and healthy way.
- **Less stress, more resilience.** Treating ourselves with kindness helps us manage stress better. And when stressful situations do occur, self-kindness makes us stronger and gives us a more positive outlook, so we bounce back faster and with fewer self-recriminations.
- **We're nicer to others:** When we're kind to ourselves, we have more energy to regulate our *own* emotions. Self-kindness gives us the mental space to empathise and be kinder to others: we're more understanding—and less snippy and tense.
- **We're more creative:** Self-kindness promotes a less critical and more relaxed inner atmosphere, so it's easier to have ideas. We're also more likely to take creative risks because we're more supportive of ourselves—and less focused on what our inner critic thinks.
- **Increased productivity:** Being kind to ourselves helps us get more done by reducing self-doubt and procrastination. We have more motivation and energy for our goals and believe in ourselves more. Studies also show that self-kindness makes us better problem-solvers and even improves our memory!
- **We're happier:** Self-kindness helps us feel better about ourselves *and* our life. It boosts our relationships, goals and work which leads to a more positive outlook on life. Plus, we're also in a stronger place to set boundaries and meet our own needs.

So, which of these benefits resonated with you?



It's good to identify *specific* reasons for being kind to yourself—this will help motivate you to do things differently!



So, what are *your* top benefits of being kind to yourself?

What benefits would you like to receive from self-kindness? What are the most important benefits of being kind to yourself? What matters most to you?

And don't worry if you can't think of 5 things—just find 2-3 reasons that resonate with you.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Optional Homework

Here is some super-simple homework to begin the change of valuing self-kindness:

- Can you think of any *disbenefits* to being kind to yourself? If so, how do they sound when you say them out loud?
- Whenever you notice you're pushing yourself too hard—or thinking about being kind to yourself—*simply remind yourself of the benefits* to self-kindness you listed above.

Next we're going to discover the real reason it's so hard to be kind to ourselves...

Part 2: Surprising Truths About Self-Kindness

We need a big shift in our thinking!

People often ask: “How can I be kind to myself?”, when what they're really asking is “What should I do?” or “What does self-kindness look like?”. And this is why we see so many articles with “XX ways to be kind to yourself”.

These lists can be helpful, so we've included the fun handout: *35 Fierce Ways to be Kind to Yourself* in this Toolkit. Not got yours yet? [Find it here >>](#)

However, a list of ways to be kind to yourself—while helpful for inspiration—is not the solution!

There are infinite ways (big and small) to be kind to yourself. In fact, contrary to what you might think, the *act* of being kind to yourself is usually pretty straightforward.

But *what to do* to be kind to yourself is not the issue people are really struggling with.

Instead, the real challenge is *recognizing* that you need self-care. And then *valuing* yourself—and how you feel—enough to act on it.

So here's what really matters. Before you can be kind to yourself, you must:

- First RECOGNIZE that you need it.
- BELIEVE you deserve it.
- Finally, you must VALUE yourself and RESPECT your needs *enough to take action*.

This is extremely important!



The huge misunderstanding we need to correct right now is this:

The challenge was never figuring out *how* to be kind to yourself.

The KEY to being kind to yourself is

VALUING and RESPECTING yourself *enough* to actually go and DO it!

So before I share a simple 4 Step process to be kind to yourself, there's a very important pre-step:

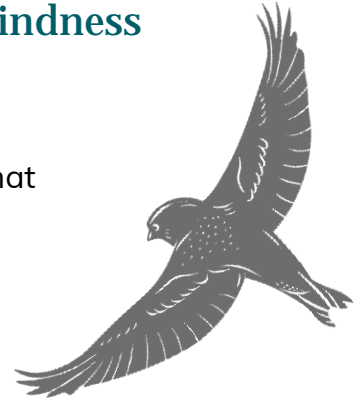
We all need to get better at recognizing *when* we need self-kindness

Of course, ideally, we should be kind to ourselves all the time.

And that's what we're working towards. But a good beginning is to ensure that we're kind to ourselves when we most need it! Let's start there.

How do you KNOW when to be kind to yourself?

Because you can't be kind to yourself if you don't know that you need it!



Well, consider that whenever we decide to do something, there is always *first* an awareness that something needs to happen. We just need to find that signal that lets us know we need some kindness.

And this is our first challenge! Because all too often we're:

- Tired.
- Super busy with a jam-packed schedule.
- Rushing from one thing to the next (and the next).

And because we live in a society that devalues self-care and tenderness—and rewards pushing through and achievement—this means we're really good at ignoring what we feel and soldiering on...

So, one of the easiest ways to get started is to use your stress signals.

Why your stress signals matter

Our stress signals are essentially "tells"—our own unique signs that let us know we're feeling under pressure. And this means they're also a fabulous early warning system, so you can take care of you.

In a moment we're going to identify your Top 5 Stress Signals, so you know when you need to be kind to yourself. But first a little help.

There are 4 key categories our stress signals fall into:

1. **PHYSICAL** changes like: headaches, tense neck/shoulders/jaw, increased heartrate, dizzy/nausea, stomach cramps, breakouts, a sinking feeling, flushing, feeling heavy, hyper, fidgety etc. *Longer term (ongoing) stress can contribute to mouth ulcers, skin issues, digestion issues and much more.*

2. **EMOTIONAL** changes like feeling: sad, tearful, on edge, grumpy, angry, easily frustrated, bad, shame, guilt, grief, wistful/nostalgia.
3. **THINKING** changes like: foggy or slow thinking, racing thoughts, increased self-judgement, thinking you're unlovable or unlikable, globalisation (*everything* is going wrong/bad/stupid).
4. **BEHAVIOURAL** changes like: making unhealthy choices, cravings eg. sugar or fatty foods, rushing, more indecisive than usual, withdrawal from others, being snippy or intolerant with others, over-sensitive/reactive, swearing more.

As an example, my top 5 stress signals are: 1) tense shoulders/jaw/neck, 2) I start swearing! 3) I rush things unnecessarily, 4) I snack (esp. sugary foods) and 5) bizarrely yet often helpful if I pay attention: I have this strong urge to tidy things and make lists to get back 'in control'!

This list is super-helpful, because now when I notice one or more of these signals, I know it's time to slow down, check-in and be kind to myself. And this is what I want for you too!

So, what are your Top 5 Stress Signals?



Now it's your turn. What are your *unique* signs of stress or 'tells'?

- The more specific you can be, the better!
- Imagine the last time you were stressed. Think about what you did as a result/how you behave, how you felt (both physically and emotionally), and what you said to yourself.
- If you're still struggling to come up with ideas, what might a loved one or colleague notice about you when you're stressed? What might a stress expert say?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

For more ideas see *The Effects of Stress on Your Body Handout*. Not got yours yet? [Find it here >>](#)



ACTION: If you can't think of the full 5 things, use this as an opportunity to pay attention over the next little while and begin to figure out your signs of stress!

Summary

There are lots of very good reasons to be kind to yourself. And deeply connecting to your own specific reasons helps motivate us to make change and be kinder to ourselves.

But it's not easy to be kind to yourself. Often, while the “what” of our self-kindness is easy or straightforward, our society and upbringing make the act of self-kindness extremely challenging. This is because many of us need to work on the *belief* that we've done enough to deserve rest, self-care or kindness.

Ultimately, your *feelings* are the key to knowing you need self-kindness. But one of the easiest ways to get started is to *use your stress signals* as the prompt that lets you know you need some self-kindness.

Finally, the key factor is respecting and valuing yourself enough to be *willing* to take care of your needs: you need to DECIDE to be kind to yourself.



Optional Homework

Here is some optional homework to go deeper, cement your self-learning and grow!

- Pick a couple of your stress signals, and simply start *noticing* when they come up.
- Then, when you notice, be curious—and gentle with yourself.
- Say something like, "Oh, I'm noticing _____. I must be feeling some stress. I wonder what that could be about?"
- To go one step further, add on, "What do I need right now?" And this will point to what you could *do* to be kind to yourself...

Next we're going to discover a 4 Step Process to be kind to ourselves.

Part 3: Your 4 Step Self-Kindness Process



How to Be Kind to Yourself in 4 Steps with PACT

Here's a simple acronym to help you with how to be kind to yourself: *Make a PACT with you!*

Once you recognize you need Self-Kindness:

1. **PAUSE.** Connect to yourself. Breathe. Notice *and* acknowledge what you're feeling.
2. **ASK.** What do I most want and *need* right now? What would self-kindness look like? Be open to hearing *whatever* your body/mind has to say.
3. **CHOOSE.** Decide *what* you will do for yourself.
4. **TIME.** Lastly, either do it *now* or make a commitment to yourself *exactly* WHEN you will do it.

Let's explore each of the 4 steps in a little more detail.

STEP 1) PAUSE and acknowledge

We're all busy. So it's easy to gloss over what we feel, and miss the crucial information our bodily feelings and emotions are sending us.

And that's why it's so important to STOP. PAUSE. And CHECK-IN.



STEP 1 Action: PAUSE

Here's how to do this next time you recognize you're stressed or need kindness:

- **Place your hand on your heart** and breathe.
- **Give yourself a few moments** to check-in and notice what's going on.
- Once you've noticed what you're feeling, **acknowledge it.**
 - This would look like: *I notice I'm feeling anxious, disappointed, mad, bad or sad. Or I notice I'm feeling tired/hungry/thirsty.*
- Unsure what you're feeling? Use the physical signs your body is sending you instead.
 - This would look like: *I notice my throat is tight, my jaw is tense, my eyes are pricking, I'm feeling dizzy or lightheaded, my hip is aching, my heart is racing.*

STEP 2) ASK yourself what you need—and listen

Next it's time to find out what you need. And it's easy: just ask!

The key thing for now is simply to *hear* what you want or need.

You may have become used to ignoring your needs—but this is being *unkind* to you!

The *only* person who can truly give you what you need is YOU. You deserve kindness. And you deserve your *own* kindness. And if you don't take care of yourself, who will?



STEP 2 Action: ASK

Look within and ask yourself:

- What do I most **want or need** right now? What self kindness do I most need?

Be open to hearing *whatever* your body/mind has to say.

IMPORTANT: Don't dismiss or ignore what you say because it's challenging and you don't want to hear it... Because when you do this you're dismissing your self!

So whatever you're tell yourself, just LISTEN.

You'll make a decision in Step 3, so what you tell yourself here is simply a *starting point*.

But it's really important to know what you *truly* want and need—what your ideal self-kind act would look like *before* you go making compromises!

Because when we're busy, it's all too easy to cut corners with our self-care.

So know that in Step 3, we explore other ideas where you might come up with something different—something smaller, easier, faster or perhaps something bigger or better—that you could do to be kind to yourself.

But in this step, we want to know your DEEPEST need for self-kindness.

STEP 3) CHOOSE what you'll do

OK, so you've PAUSED. You've ASKED what you truly need—and listened. Now you'll CHOOSE *what* you'll do for yourself. But it's not always straightforward.



If your need is easy:

Your self-kind act may be something straightforward like "Stop for an early lunch" or "Go outside and sit in the sun for 5 minutes". Or it might be fun or relaxing like having a bath or book a massage.

And you don't really have a good excuse not to do these...

But sometimes what you need is inconvenient:

Perhaps you really need a nap, but you have a meeting in 10 minutes. Or you really need to clear your head and go for a walk—but you're waiting for a delivery etc.

And sometimes what you need or want is challenging:

Perhaps it involves a lot of effort or time like finding a new job, moving house or city. Or maybe you need to do something really uncomfortable like saying "no" to someone and pushing yourself out of your comfort zone. Or it may involve something painful or scary like ending a relationship.

Whatever you told yourself in Step 2) ASK, the key here is that *being kind to ourselves means we figure out a way to meet that need and take care of ourselves.*



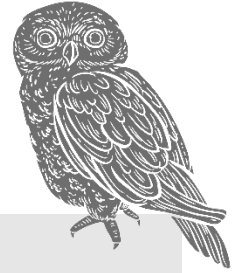
STEP 3 Action: CHOOSE

Thinking about the self-kindness action you told yourself about in Step 2) ASK:

- **Is it easy** to do? If so, great!
- And **if your self-kindness action is *not* easy** or straightforward to do, ask yourself questions like these to figure out something you *can* do:
 - How *else* could I meet this need in a smaller/faster/easier way?
 - What is a small step—or the very first step—towards this bigger need that I have?
 - Or what could I do to *temporarily* tide me over?
- **Finally, choose what you will do** to be kind to yourself.
 - This action may fully, partially or temporarily meet your need. You decide.

STEP 4) TIME (when you'll do it!)

So you've PAUSED and ASKED what you want. You listened, and you CHOSE something to do to be kind to yourself. This last step is simply to decide the TIME (when) you'll do it.



But first, a quick example:

- Imagine a young child tells you it wants an ice cream. And you say: "Yes, but not now."
- The first question that child will ask is: "But when?"
- If we just say: "Later", it's only going to make the child upset *and* frustrated. It will whine: "But whennnnnn???"
- To be kind (and not have a whining child bothering you!) you need to give a *specific* time to the child when it will get that ice cream.
- And yes, you need to do the same for your own needs!



This is EXTREMELY important

The obvious answer is to do it now. But of course that won't always be possible—or appropriate. And it's absolutely fine *not* to take action now.

BUT. If you say you'll do it later and don't follow-through, you're letting your *self* down. And the part of you that told you what it needed will only learn to distrust you...

So if you don't take action right away, make a *commitment* to yourself for exactly *when* you'll do it.



STEP 4 Action: TIME

So, it's time to firm up the TIME when you will do this self-kindness act!

- **Are you going to do it now?** If so, great!
- If it's **not now**, *when* will you do it?
 - Perhaps you'll do it when you get home, at lunch, before bed, in 30 mins.
 - Perhaps you'll do it tomorrow. Or on Sunday.
 - All of these are perfectly acceptable, as long as it meets your need!
- **Finally, how will you remember?**
 - Some examples include: *set a reminder on your phone, send yourself a message, ask a partner or friend to remind you.*

Summary

And that's it. The 4 Step PACT Process for how to be kind to yourself.

Are you ready to make a Kindness PACT with you?

To help you learn this process off by heart and make it an easy to remember habit, we've created a *4 Step PACT Self-Kindness Worksheet* for you, and included it in this How to Be Kind to Yourself Toolkit. Not got yours yet? [Find it here >>](#)



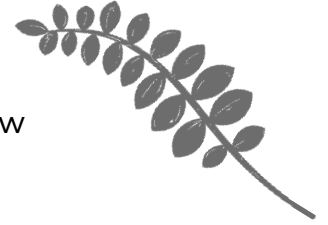
Here's a final reminder of the 4 Step PACT Process

Once you recognize you need Self-Kindness:

1. **PAUSE.** Check-in and acknowledge what you're feeling.
2. **ASK.** What do I most want and *need* right now? What would self-kindness look like?
3. **CHOOSE.** Decide *what* you will do for yourself.
4. **TIME.** Lastly, either do it *now* or commit to *exactly* WHEN you will do it.

So, just before we wrap-up we're going to take a quick look at why Fierce Kindness is needed when we start being kind to ourselves

Where Fierce Kindness Comes In...



It takes *courage* to be kind to ourselves. Because for most of us, it's simply not how we were raised: healthy self-kindness and self-care were not modelled for us.

In fact you were likely discouraged from, or made to feel bad for, expressing your wants and needs—except at times that suited our caregivers. And now you're an adult, society constantly reinforces the idea that being kind to yourself is selfish or a weakness.

No wonder it's so hard to be kind to yourself! And I know firsthand that it can feel extremely uncomfortable, scary and even shameful to recognize your needs and act on them.

But: YOU. DO. NOT. NEED. TO. EARN. KINDNESS! When you need Kindness, you need it. Period.

It starts with a [compassionate approach toward ourselves](#) and how we feel. And then self-kindness takes this one step further. Self-Kindness is *the act* of doing whatever is needed to take care of ourselves—so others don't have to (or don't have to put up with us when we don't!).

But to be kind to yourself, you will likely need to be FIERCE sometimes. You will need courage and inner strength to do things like:

- Go against society's norms and DECIDE to care for yourself.
- Face your limiting beliefs or your inner critic/judge that says: "Keep going! Finish it!", "You should have worked harder!" or "Stop being so lazy/weak/irrational!".
- Set a boundary with another person.
- Say "no" or (horror of horrors!) change our mind when we need to.
- Avoid the "quick fix" and give ourselves what we truly need—not just what is easiest.

Self-Kindness isn't easy, but the benefits are *huge*. Not just to us, but to the people we spend time with and even benefitting the larger world as we role model a much-needed behaviour for others.

Every one of us would feel better, be a better human being—and perform better and if we were just kind to ourselves kindness when we needed it.

Lastly, remember that the KEY to knowing when you need self-care is paying attention to—and *respecting*—your feelings.

Our feelings tell us everything we need to know—
and what to do to be kind to ourselves—if we would only listen...

Part 4: So What Will You Commit To?



Choose one action to be kind to yourself for 3 common situations in your life.

1. Write out 3 situations where you would like to be kind/er to yourself and ONE action for each that you will do the next time the situation arises.
2. Make sure your action idea is easily doable, yet enticing enough that you're excited to do it.

NOTE: You don't have to do any of these. In fact you may find that when the situation arises you have a different—or better—idea. But by noting your ideas ahead of time, it's more likely you will follow through and do something kind for yourself when you need it.

Situation 1 _____ Action _____

Situation 2 _____ Action _____

Situation 3 _____ Action _____

Commit to You!

Signed _____

Date _____

I am committed to learn to be kind to myself!



Final Thoughts & Questions



So, the challenge was never about figuring out how to be kind to yourself.

Instead the challenge is deciding to be kind in a world that devalues and infantilises tenderness and self-care. And who has the time to be kind to ourselves anyway?

Well, it only takes a minute or two to (P)ause, (A)sk, (C)hoose what you'll do—and a (T)ime.

Are you worth that minute?

Because self-kindness is just a decision away. A decision to RESPECT and VALUE yourself enough to take care of *you*.

Then gradually, with practice—and as you experience the many benefits of self-kindness—you'll find that being kind to you becomes a powerful habit: your life will feel easier and more enjoyable.

So remember this simple process:

1. **PAUSE.** Place your hand on your heart. Breathe. Notice *and* acknowledge what you're feeling.
2. **ASK.** What do I most want and *need* right now? What would self-kindness look like?
3. **CHOOSE.** Reflect, consider and decide *what* you will do for yourself.
4. **TIME.** Lastly, either do it *now* or make a commitment to yourself *exactly* WHEN you will do it.



Final Questions for You:

So, what was your *biggest* learning from this eBook? _____

What will you do differently? _____

What action/s are you 100% committed to taking? _____

Follow-on Reading and Journaling Prompts

Here are some follow-on articles you might enjoy or find helpful:

1. [Unconditional Love, Self-Kindness and a 4 Step Practice to Get You Started!](#)
2. INFOGRAPHIC: [12 Ways to Be Fiercely Kind with Yourself!](#)
3. [33 Inspirational Kindness Quotes](#)



Final questions to ponder or journal around

Here are some optional journaling prompts to go deeper, cement your self-learning and grow!

1. HOW LONG does it usually take you to notice you're stressed? Whether you're quick or slow to notice, why is this? What are you doing (or not doing)?
2. How do you CURRENTLY react when you notice you're stressed?
3. How would you LIKE to react when you notice you're stressed?
4. What do you USUALLY do when you're stressed or feeling overwhelmed? And how is this working for you?
5. What do you SECRETLY want to do to take better care of yourself?
6. What are your THOUGHTS on being kind to yourself? What do you think of people who are kind to themselves?
7. So, what SCARES you most about being kind to yourself?
8. And what EXCITES you most about being kind to yourself?
9. What would you like to be different?
10. What will you do with these learnings?

Wrap-up

I hope this Self-Kindness Workbook helps you decide to be more kind to yourself! Because not only do *you* deserve it, but self-kindness makes us happier, more relaxed, better at our jobs—and nicer to the people that matter too...

I would also like to acknowledge 3 wonderful people who helped make this eBook and toolkit such a powerful resource: Natasha Kong, Fiona Walsh and Sara Jane Radin. Thank-you!

“

Kindness is more important than wisdom, and the recognition of this is the beginning of wisdom.

Theodore Isaac Rubin

About Fierce Kindness.com

At Fierce Kindness we believe that courage and kindness is what we, and our world, need. We need courage to do the right thing, to go after what we *deeply* want and become all of who we are. And we need kindness, *fierce* kindness, to set boundaries, learn to love ALL of ourselves and BE in our world in a new and exciting way.

We plan to spread the word about the necessity of Fierce Kindness toward ourselves, others and our world through resources, stories, articles, inspiring and beautiful quotes and much more.

We want to change the world! But to change our world, we must start with ourselves. And so, here at Fierce Kindness, we love to help people get to know themselves deeply through worksheets and workbooks like this one!



Our goal is that you can come to Fierce Kindness any time to:

- Get inspiration and ideas for your life!
- Get kindness tips, and learn techniques to deeply connect with yourself & others.
- Get inspired to get out there and make a difference, making the world a better place.

If you haven't already, we'd love you to [Sign up for our Fierce Kindness newsletter here >>](#)

About the author: Emma-Louise Elsey fell in love with personal development in 2003. She'd created a life that had everything she *thought* she wanted, but wasn't happy on the inside. Thinking it would help, she quit her successful career to become a life coach and moved to a new country - but she still struggled to be truly happy. Slowly she learned that self-kindness IS the answer to finding peace within - along with great courage. She realised we are ALL much braver and more capable than we realise, and believes that with Fierce Kindness, *everyone* can create a life and self they love. And she has dedicated herself to helping people do just that.

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Emma-Louise

Cover image of happy person making heart shape by [Cast of Thousands](#) via [Shutterstock](#)