Session 15: Self-Compassion Is a Skill, Not a Surrender

Phase 2 — Healing: Mind, Heart, and Past (Weeks 2–4) · Week 3 — Shame, Guilt, and Grace

Date: _____ My craving today (0–10): _____ One word for my week: _____

Handout for this session: the Session 15 handout (The Self-Compassion Rewrite) — in the Handouts Packet.

What we're learning

Beating yourself up is not motivation. Contempt feels strong, but it works like a trigger — it makes the despair that use promises to fix. People who meet their own failure with steadiness get back up faster. Self-compassion is a skill with steps: name the struggle honestly, remember struggle is part of being human, own the real behavior without excuses, name the next right step, and hold on to a true statement about who you are.

- Firm and warm, both The voice we are building says: 'That was wrong, it mattered, here is the repair — and you are still mine, still in this, still getting up.' Either half alone fails.
- Compare the fruits Ask the empirical question without flinching: has self-hatred ever once produced lasting change in your life? The record usually answers the session by itself.
- Compassion is contagious in a house How participants speak to themselves becomes how they speak to each other at 11 p.m. This skill is community infrastructure.
- Tone is a skill we borrow We practice speaking to ourselves the way a fair, steady person would — the pattern is set by practice and by the people around us, not by self-attack.

Goals for this session

☐ I can define self-compassion in three parts — self-kindness, common humanity, honest awareness

☐ I can catch and rewrite one self-attacking statement using the session's frame

☐ I can explain why self-compassion protects recovery better than self-contempt

Check-in

Say out loud the tone your inner voice uses after a failure. Would you speak to a friend in recovery that way? To a child?

Discussion — write your answers

Write what you would say out loud — and more, if it comes. There is no right-length answer; there is only an honest one.

1. When has someone's compassion toward you — when you expected contempt — changed what you did next?

2. Which of the three parts is hardest for you: kindness, common humanity, or honest awareness? Why?

3. What do you fear would happen if you stopped beating yourself up — do you secretly believe the contempt is what keeps you sober?

4. Rewrite aloud: take 'I ruined everything again' and give it the firm-and-warm treatment.

Session 15 — Skill Practice

In trios, the Self-Compassion Rewrite: each person writes their most common self-attack, then rewrites it using the frame — 'This is a moment of struggle. Struggle is part of being human and in recovery. I did _____ (honest behavior). The next right step is _____. And I am still _____ (true identity statement).' Partners read each other's rewrites back to them, so each person hears their own compassion in another voice.

My most common self-attack, in the words I actually say to myself:

My rewrite: This is a moment of struggle. Struggle is part of being human and in recovery. I did _____ (honest behavior). The next right step is _____. And I am still _____ (true identity statement).

My takeaway

The one thing from this session I most need to remember — in my own words:

Homework — this week's application

☐ This week, catch one self-attack per day and write the rewrite. Bring the rewrite that was hardest to believe to Session 16.

Space to do the homework and note how it went:

An optional Scripture handout for this session is available from your facilitator on request.