Self-Compassion Writing Worksheet*Metacognitive writing exercises are increasingly being used to promote self-compassion and improve wellness in a variety of contexts. The following exercise is adapted from the* [Self Compassion](https://self-compassion.org/category/exercises/) *website by Dr. Kristin Neff.*

Step 1 – Identifying Our Self-Critical Voice

Take a few minutes to examine thoughts of self-judgement or criticism that you are having, reflecting on any feelings of inadequacy, shame, or guilt. Try to listen to your inner dialogue. What exactly are you saying to yourself when experiencing these types of emotions? What tone are you using with yourself? Are there key phrases that you find yourself repeating?

## Activity

**If you can, actually write out a brief transcript of your self-critical thoughts (from this moment or from recent events), being as accurate as possible to what you are telling yourself in your mind.**

Step 2 – Compassionate Revisions

Look at what you’ve written and imagine that this is feedback you have written to a friend, colleague, or family-member. Evaluate this criticism on that basis. Is it constructive, addressing a particular concern or opportunity for growth? Is it likely to be encouraging or discouraging? Is the tone appropriate to say to someone you care about?

## Activity

**Considering these questions, soften and revise your transcript. Transform it into the kind of feedback that you would feel comfortable sharing with a loved one or colleague. You don’t need to change or dismiss the fundamental criticism(s), but write out a more compassionate means of communicating these thoughts.**

Step 3 – Transcribing Our Inner Kindness

Imagine a friend of infinite compassion and understanding. Imagine that you have shared your feelings of inadequacy, shame, guilt, or frustration with them. This person loves you and sees you in all of your strengths and weaknesses. They know and accept you exactly as you are, aware of your imperfections or limitations but endlessly kind and forgiving. What would this friend say to you? How would they support you, encourage you?

## Activity

**Try to write a short letter to yourself, from the perspective of this infinitely compassionate friend. They know of your recent struggles and feelings, and their only goal is to help you, from a position of unconditional love, acceptance, and understanding. Write this out in as much depth and detail as you can.**

Step 4 – Believing it

Read through the letter, imagining that you have just received it from this imaginary friend. Try to believe what is written there, allowing yourself to feel the comfort, love, and acceptance that it expresses. Feel these things flowing into you. Understanding, support, compassion. Recognize that these things exist inside you, and that you can summon them for yourself whenever you need.

## Activity

**Return to this letter whenever you find yourself dwelling on self-critical thoughts. Hold it up as a contrast to the words and tone of that voice. Acknowledge that both voices are a part of you, but remind yourself that you can choose which to listen to at any given time.**