



## 9 Paths to Self-Compassion

By Renée Siegel

*Valentine's Day is often thought of as a time we express and celebrate our love for others. We've all heard that we can only love others to the extent we have learned to love ourselves. If this is true, we are often unable to love others because we could all do better with loving ourselves.*

Is there a difference between self-compassion and self-love?

Perhaps there is a minor distinction in that self-love is a feeling of lovingkindness toward oneself. Self-compassion is the feeling of caring for oneself and the desire to take action on that feeling

### **Definition of Self-Compassion**

Extending the same loving kindness to one's self that you would extend to another when we feel imperfect, unlovable, like a failure, too dramatic or needy, separate from afraid, unable to focus, too aggressive or angry and perhaps too lazy as well as so many other self-deprecating thoughts and emotions and actions we have and take toward ourselves.

The Dalai Lama once said that "compassion is a necessity, not a luxury and that it is a question of human survival. Compassion is a process of connecting by identifying with another person.

This identification with others through compassion can lead to increased motivation to do something in an effort to relieve the suffering of others.

Therefore, self-compassion is a process of connecting with ourselves by identifying with ourselves.

This is where the enneagram is so helpful. Our ability to identify with ourselves is assisted by understanding the characteristics of our type, sometimes referred to as personality. Personality traits, however, are not really who we are they are just the way we have learned to move through life. Each of the 9 enneatypes has developed a strategy to blind us from our unique aspect of divine essence. Each type has both a



cognitive and an emotional method as well as unique defense mechanisms that keep us from self-compassion.

### **What's the difference between empathy, sympathy and self-compassion?**

Sympathy is feeling badly for another person.

Empathy is feeling some or many of the same emotions that another may have.

Compassion is feeling empathy and compelled to take action because of that empathy.

Compassion is motivated from the three instinctual drives: Seeking power and control

Seeking esteem and affirmation Seeking safety and security

Within each of these three instinctual triads each of the three types has a unique path to compassion. Each is motivated by embracing that which we avoid in an attempt, counter-intuitive as it is, to return to a state of wholeness.

Discuss the state of essence collapsing into a contraction in order to be in the human body and the personality development necessary to function in this world.