



MindfulLiving™ Module 7

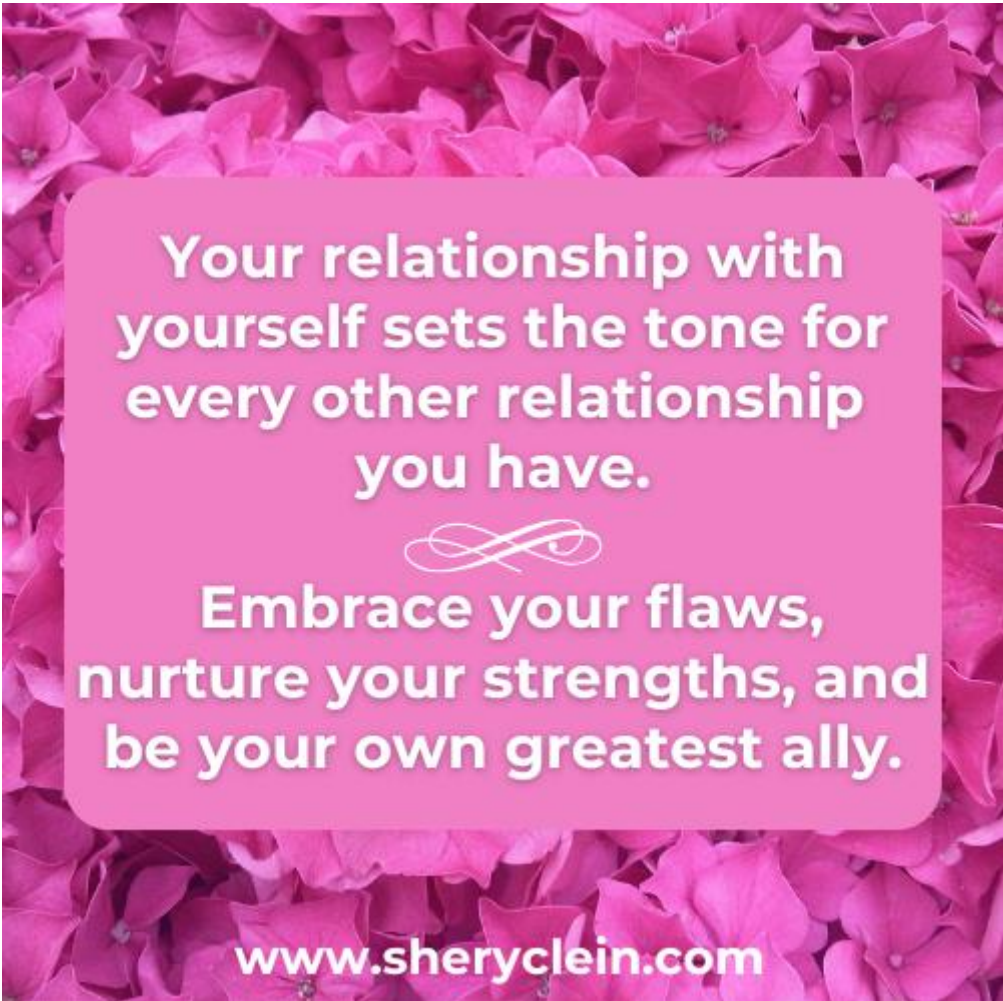
Self-Compassion Mastery

Chapter 11 Resources: Reading

Making Friends with Yourself

By Andrea Miller

Pema Chödrön often talks about gentleness in her teachings, but one of her students once admitted, "You talk about gentleness all the time, but secretly, I always thought gentleness was for girls." When Ani Pema shared this story with a retreat group—mostly women—it elicited laughter. The student eventually tried being gentle with himself, realising it takes courage, especially in embarrassing or humiliating moments.



**Your relationship with
yourself sets the tone for
every other relationship
you have.**



**Embrace your flaws,
nurture your strengths, and
be your own greatest ally.**

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❖ The Role of Self-Compassion

Ani Pema explains that practising meditation can intensify our habitual self-criticism. As we stabilise the mind, we become more aware of traits we dislike, such as cruelty, cynicism, or selfishness. This awareness requires us to look deeper, with even greater clarity. For instance, when examining our addictions, we must see the sadness behind reaching for another drink or the loneliness behind smoking another joint.

❖ Unconditional Friendship with Ourselves

This is where *unconditional friendship* with ourselves comes in—a concept Ani Pema teaches as crucial for waking up. She compares this friendship to a deep bond between two people. "When you have a true friend, you stick together year after year, without putting your friend on a pedestal or thinking they're perfect. You've had fights, you've seen them at their worst, and they've seen you in all states of mind. Yet, you remain friends. Knowing each other fully, flaws and all, strengthen the friendship."

Unconditional friendship with yourself is much like this. You know your flaws, but you're kind to yourself, even when you feel you've messed up again. According to Ani Pema, this is the only way fundamental transformation occurs. Repressing your tendencies, shaming yourself, or labelling yourself as "bad" will never lead to lasting change.

❖ Embracing Transformation

Notably, the transformation Ani Pema refers to is not about changing from a "bad" person to a "good" one. It's about becoming wiser—learning what helps and what hurts, what lessens suffering and what increases it, what enhances happiness and what diminishes it. It's about loving yourself so much that you no longer want to make yourself suffer.

❖ A Conversation on the Path

At the end of her Saturday morning talk, Ani Pema opens the floor to ask questions. One woman steps up to the microphone and says that although she's been on a spiritual path for some time, it doesn't seem to be helping.

As always, Ani Pema fully engages.

"Do you have a regular meditation practice?" she asks.

"Yes," the woman replies.

"And how does it feel these days?"

"It feels hurried."

"Hurried?"

"I have a child with disabilities, so I have to fit in meditation when I can. I can't just sit down whenever I want. It has to be set up."

Ani Pema nods slowly, "I get it. That's how it is right now—uncomfortable, hurried. Things as they are." She then returns to the morning's theme: unconditional friendship. Her advice is simple yet profound: don't reject what you see in yourself—embrace it. Whether it's the "Hurried Buddha," the "Cut Off from Nature Buddha," or the "Feeling No Compassion Buddha," recognise the inherent goodness in each feeling.

❖ Closing & Encouragement

As you navigate Self-Compassion Mastery, remember that embracing all aspects of yourself is a decisive step towards healing and growth.

❖ Disclaimer:

This program is designed for educational purposes and is not a substitute for professional psychological advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.

❖ Thank You!

Thank you for your valuable participation and dedication. We aim to help you navigate complex challenges while encouraging you to relax, enjoy, and have fun. If you have any questions or need assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Blessings, stay healthy & safe ❤️

Love, Shery Clein, MindfulLiving™ Coach Nurturing Awareness Intelligence.

