

Be kind to yourself!

by David Robson

- 1 Think back to the last time you failed or made an important mistake. Do you still blush with shame, and scold yourself for having been so stupid or selfish? Do you tend to feel alone in that failure, as if you were the only person to have erred? Or do you accept that error is a part of being human, and try to talk to yourself with care and tenderness?
- 2 For many people, the most harshly judgemental responses are the most natural. Indeed, 2-1 as a sign of our ambition and resolution to be our best possible self. But 2-2 – badly. Besides increasing our unhappiness and stress levels, it can increase procrastination, and makes us even less able to achieve our goals in the future.
- 3 Instead of chastising ourselves, 2-3: greater forgiveness of our mistakes, and a deliberate effort to take care of ourselves throughout times of disappointment or embarrassment. “Most of us have a good friend in our lives, who is kind of unconditionally supportive,” says Kristin Neff, an associate professor of educational psychology at the University of Texas at Austin, who has pioneered this research. “But you also need to learn to be that same warm, supportive friend to yourself.”
- 4 If you are a cynic, you may initially baulk at the idea. Yet the scientific evidence suggests it can increase our emotional resilience and improve our health, wellbeing and productivity. Importantly, 2-4 that caused our upset in the first place.

♡
BE KIND
— to —
YOURSELF

bbc.com, 2021