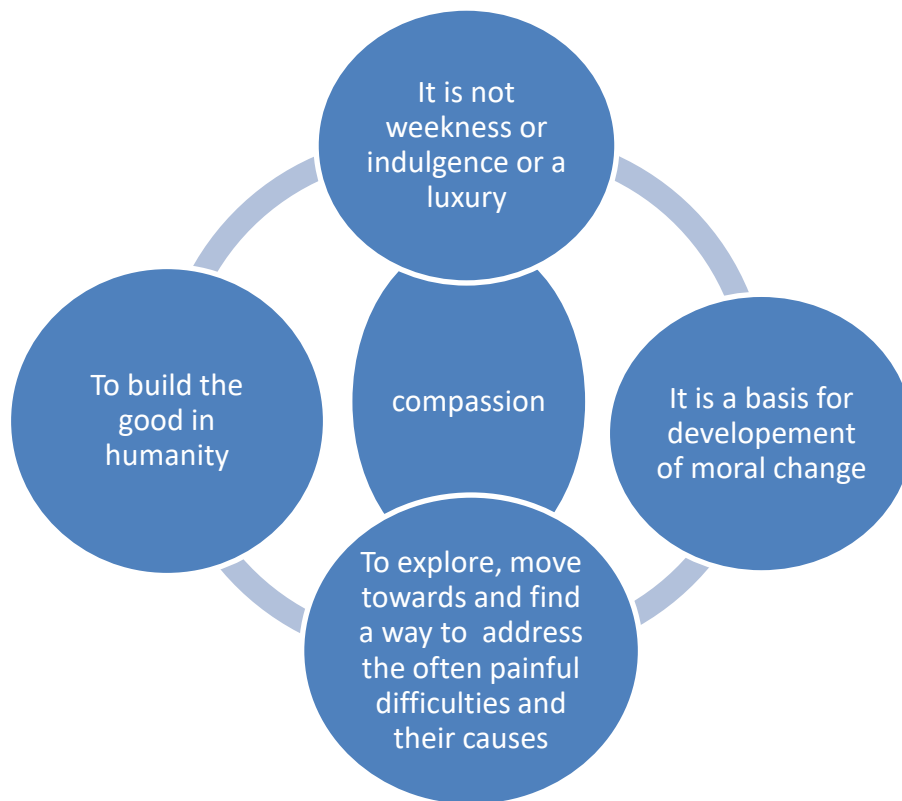


THE
best time
FOR NEW
beginnings
is
NOW

LIVING THROUGH LIFE EVENTS - SESSION 3

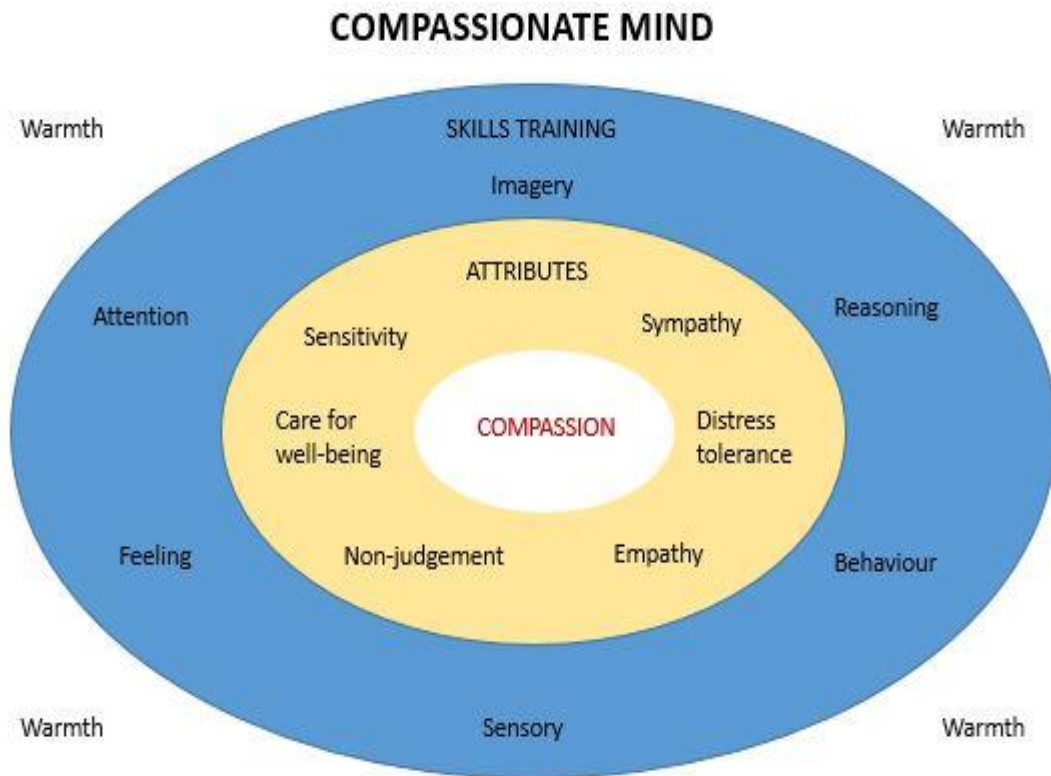
Let us be clear about compassion.



Compassion Focused Therapy (CFT) is used to treat problems associated with shame, self-criticism and self-hate, which can be features of anxiety, depression, psychosis and strongly associated with childhood trauma. Find out more about Paul Gilbert's Compassion Focused Therapy at www.compassionatemind.co.uk

Paul Gilbert (2011) says "compassionate mind training helps people develop and work with experiences of inner warmth, safeness and soothing, via compassion and self-compassion."

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The Human Brain

Over time, the human brain has evolved in a way that serves primitive life well. Its primary function is to keep us alive. It has not evolved to maintain a healthy or positive mindset. Humans have developed the capacity to think about and mull over the past (ruminate) and the future (worry).

Humans have a "threat mindset" which helps us survive and keeps us safe. Unfortunately, the way it has developed means that it works TOO hard and sees danger where there isn't any. These factors mean we are prone to have mental health problems. CFT is particularly helpful when we KNOW what we need to do or think, but we don't really believe or FEEL it. There is a mis-match between our heads (thinking) and hearts (emotions).

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The brain is amazing, very complex, and well-designed for primitive life. However, because of our ability to over-think things and, because of our threat mindset, it is not best-suited for the way we live our lives now.

Compassion Focused Therapy calls this "Tricky Brain". It is helpful to remind ourselves about Tricky Brain when we get caught up in self-criticism, self-hate and feel shame. The brain and neurobiology, human nature, and our life experiences all influence the way our mind works. It is not our fault we think this way! We are simply doing the best we can. It's just the way the brain works.

CFT says there are 3 types of regulator systems that affect our state of mind:

1. Drive System - achievement, motivation
2. Soothing System - safeness, soothed
3. Threat System - seeks to protect us and keep us safe

When we've experienced repeated trauma, particularly early in life, then we spend a lot of time in our threat focused system, so our focus of attention, thoughts, feelings and behaviour are taken up with fear, danger and trying to keep ourselves safe.

Our Developing Mind In addition to how the human brain has developed, the genetics we are given by our biological parents and our environment and early experiences affect how our mind develops. In spite of our genes, it is our environment and early experiences which mostly affects our brain development. The same genes but a different early life will result in a different version of me.

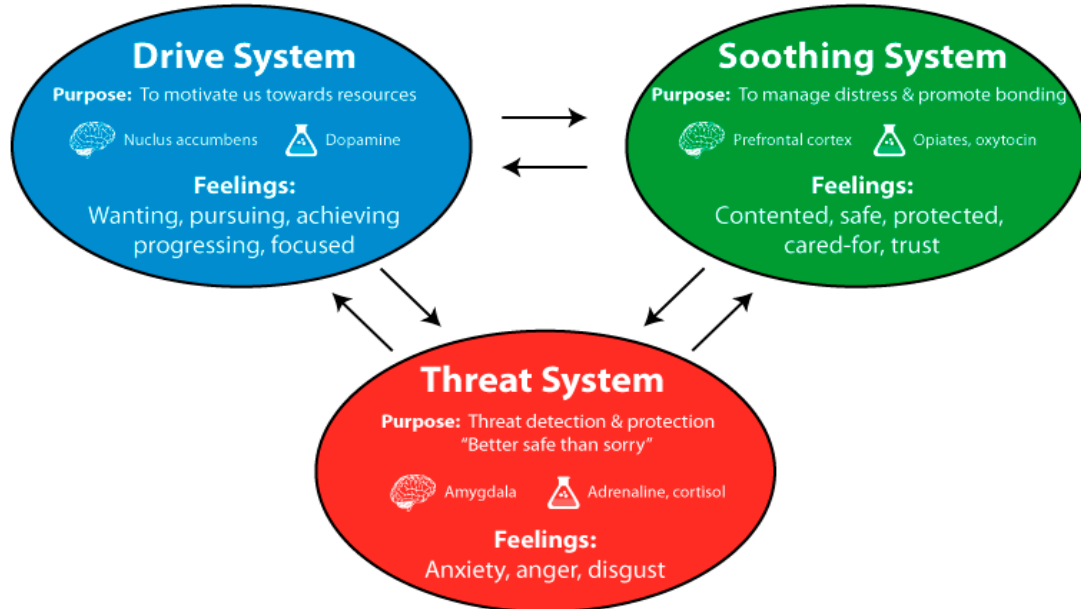
So once more, it is not our fault we think or react this way. We do the best we can, given those circumstances. It is not our fault, but it is our responsibility to change things now.

(From - <https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/compassion.htm>)z

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Emotional Regulation Systems

Paul Gilbert's evolutionary model proposes that human beings switch between three systems to manage their emotions. Each system is associated with different brain regions and different brain chemistry. Distress is caused by imbalance between the systems, often associated with under-development of the soothing system.



Adapted from: Gilbert, P. (ed) (2005). *Compassion: Conceptualisations, Research and Use in Psychotherapy*. Routledge.

Video on Self-Compassion

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/compassion.htm>

LIVING THROUGH LIFE EVENTS - SESSION 3

A ROLE CHANGE EXAMPE: FROM BEING – a **Healthy, fit builder who could work**
TO BEING – a **builder with a broken thumb who cannot work**

OLD ROLE	
<p>(1) POSITIVES: <i>What do you miss about your old role?</i></p> <p>Used to feel useful I had mates/comrades to banter with I had my independence I used to have a good self-esteem and felt good about myself. Enjoyed giving the Wolf-whistles & having a laugh I was appreciated by others Loved seeing what I'd done at the end of the day or at the ned of a job. I took pride in my work. I was the bread winner.</p>	<p>(2) NEGATIVES: <i>What do you not miss about your old role?</i></p> <p>Don't miss being out in the cold weather! Don't miss the exhaustion at the end of the day – or the aches and pains of the physical job! Don't miss the contract variation and/or seasonal work and travel to jobs that are far away. Don't miss being dirty and the Mrs nagging me about getting in the bath!</p>
THE CHANGE	
NEW ROLE	
<p>(3) POSITIVES: <i>What is going well now?</i></p> <p>I'm alive – at least! (Depends on your perspective though!) I can still put 2 fingers up! I could possibly retrain – my right hand is good. I could use my other skills – e.g. my memory's good. I can make people laugh – got a sense of humour</p>	<p>(4) NEGATIVES: <i>What are the difficulties you are facing now?</i></p> <p>Feel useless Loss of esteem – in my own eyes and in other peoples My kids don't look up to me anymore Get under my Mrs's feet Getting fat -doing nothing. Don't see myself as a man any more. I have to ask the Mrs if we can afford things. I've got no money now – on Universal credit. Keep arguing with the Mrs don't see things the same, like we used to. Who am I?</p>

From the above – it can be seen that this person is trying to come to terms with a lot of loss linked to his old role as a builder. (1) He needs to process the feelings associated with these losses so that he can begin to move towards a stage of acceptance i.e. "This is how it is now". Whilst he is still fighting his losses and yearning for the old role he will feel stuck – and won't have the energy or inclination to improve things now (1 &4). Once the losses have been processed he will begin to move towards 'accepting this change' not just in his head (intellectually) but in his heart (emotionally). His view of how things were (Old Role) will become more balanced (2). At this point he will be ready to start making improvements in life as it is now (3). This may happen naturally, but he might have to work at it – by seeking out opportunities to improve the New Role, making it more bearable – maybe even a little bit enjoyable?

LIVING THROUGH LIFE EVENTS - SESSION 3

MY ROLE CHANGED - FROM BEING

- TO BEING

OLD ROLE	

THE CHANGE	
NEW ROLE	

Living through Life Events

My thoughts and feelings - Session 3.