

# 5 STEPS TO CULTIVATING COMPASSION FOR THOSE WHO ANNOY US

Compassion for others who may annoy us can ultimately lead us to compassion for ourselves - and self-compassion dissolves the need for making others the enemy. Simply learning to see the suffering they are going through underneath their behaviors can allow us to see parts of ourselves in them.

1. **Take a mindful pause.** Ask yourself who are you experiencing as annoying and why? Accept the fact that you are feeling annoyed, some other unpleasant emotion, or simply notice that you feel triggered when you are around that person.
2. **Notice what you are feeling.** Write down some words that describe how you are feeling. Remember that all feelings are okay and can't hurt you, even if they are uncomfortable.
3. **Feelings are our internal GPS.** We want to explore the feelings we have past being annoyed. All feelings begin with our thoughts. Our brains are trying to anticipate or predict what to expect in order to feel more prepared for a potentially difficult interaction. Our brains do this as a reflective action that we think protects us from additional pain and suffering. For example, anger and sadness may be a result of thinking that the other person doesn't hear, respect, or value who we are or what we value. Ask yourself what these feelings may be trying to teach you.

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4. **Meet challenging situations and people with kindness.** Remind yourself that we have all had difficult moments and behaviors. Think about a time you have made poor choices or behaved in ways that may have annoyed others. Being honest about these times can enable us to accept our own suffering and troublesome moments in our lives with self-compassion. Noticing what is present within yourself allows you to recognize it in others. What did you do and how could that have affected others? Investigate that behavior with kindness. Think back to the annoying or challenging person you know. Can you investigate their behavior with kindness? Did you notice any similarities between yourself and them? Be honest!
5. **Remain open and curious.** Remember, an experience with a challenging person may have more to do with you than them. Oftentimes internal reflection and deeper exploration is needed in order to make a shift in your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors towards challenging people. Maybe our feelings are telling us that we need to create better boundaries, or the way we are communicating is disconnecting us. Your thoughts and your internal dialogue create the story you tell yourself about the challenging person. What else might be another explanation for a challenging person's behavior that you may not be able to understand yet? Ultimately, uncovering our reactions to others can be a conduit to deepening our compassion for ourselves and others in our world. How can you use this awareness to feel compassion in this situation for others?