The brain is scanning for danger *four times every second*.
- Sensing danger (internally or externally, real or perceived) activates the amygdala and puts us into a state of reactivity (red brain).
- Our brain has a negativity bias - this has kept us alive.
- Being chronically in the red zone makes us more likely to inaccurately perceive danger.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Red Brain</th>
<th>Green Brain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keeps us alive</td>
<td>“Shock absorption” to loss, fear, rejection, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumes urgent need - not concerned with long term needs</td>
<td>Meets challenges without them becoming stressors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is supposed to happen quickly - in a burst- and then end quickly</td>
<td>Feels at ease, relaxed, and relatively calm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the stress/danger doesn’t go away, we get stuck in the red zone</td>
<td>Attachment and connection is possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard on our physical health</td>
<td>Contagious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feels bad, physically and emotionally</td>
<td>Can be strengthened by purposefully and intentionally turning toward the good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shifts our perspective to the negative</td>
<td>When exercised, the underlying neurobiological causes of fear, stress, and frustration are gradually extinguished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engages in problematic self-soothing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Velcro for bad experiences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rick Hanson, PhD *Hardwiring Happiness*
Self-Compassion

Based on the work of Kristin Neff, PhD

Compassion

The recognition and clear seeing of suffering. Compassion involves feelings of kindness toward people who are suffering so that the desire to help - to ameliorate suffering - emerges. Compassion involves recognizing our shared human condition, flawed and fragile as it is. (Neff, 2015)

Self-Compassion

The recognition and clear seeing of suffering...in ourselves. Compassion involves feelings of kindness toward ourselves so that the desire to help - to ameliorate suffering - emerges. Compassion involves recognizing our shared human condition, flawed and fragile as it is. (Neff, 2015)

What feels hard about self-compassion? What are the risks?

The distance between the expectation that we had for our parenting journey and the REALITY of our parenting journey is directly related to the amount of suffering we are experiencing.

JUDGMENT TOWARD OURSELVES IS A MOMENT OF SUFFERING!!!

Benefits of Self-Compassion

- Leads to proactive behavior to better one’s situation, rather than passivity.
- Helps us work toward emotional well-being and contentment in our lives.
- By recognizing and embracing our shared humanity, we avoid destructive patterns of fear, negativity, and isolation. (Neff, 2015)
- Puts us into the GREEN brain
You are imperfect. You are wired for struggle, but you are worthy of love and belonging. Imperfections are not inadequacies, they are reminders that we are in this together.

~Brene’ Brown

You are intrinsically valuable and worthy of care. We don’t earn compassion- it is our birthright.

~Kristin Neff

CORE components of Self Compassion (and three ways in) (Neff, 2015)

- **Self-Kindness**: That we be gentle and understanding with ourselves, rather than harshly critical and judgmental.

- **Recognition of our common humanity**: Feeling connected with others in the experience of life rather than feeling isolated and alienated by the suffering.

**Self Pity vs. Self Compassion**

- **Mindfulness**: Holding our experience in mindful awareness, rather than ignoring or exaggerating our pain.

Moving toward the pain. Suffering = pain X resistance

Mindful awareness means we are OBSERVING the pain rather than being CONSUMED by the pain

**Self-Compassion Mantra**

This is a moment of suffering
Suffering is a part of life
May I be kind to myself in this moment
May I give myself the compassion it needs

(Neff, 2015)
Have a positive experience. Notice a positive experience that’s already present in the foreground or background of your awareness, such as a physical pleasure, a sense of determination, or feeling close to someone. Or create a positive experience for yourself. For example, you could think about things for which you’re grateful, bring to mind a friend, or recognize a task you’ve completed. As much as you can, help ideas like these become emotionally rewarding experiences; otherwise, it’s merely positive thinking.

Enrich it. Stay with the positive experience for five to ten seconds or longer. Open to the feelings in it and try to sense it in your body; let it fill your mind. Enjoy it. Gently encourage the experience to be more intense. Find something fresh or novel about it. Recognize how it’s personally relevant, how it could nourish or help you, or make a difference in your life. Get those neurons really firing together, so they’ll really wire together.

Absorb it. Intend and sense that the experience is sinking into you as you sink into it. Let it really land in your mind. Perhaps visualize it sifting down into you like golden dust, or feel it easing you like a soothing balm. Or place it like a jewel in the treasure chest of your heart. Know that the experience is becoming part of you, a resource inside that you can take with you wherever you go.

Link positive and negative material (optional) While having a vivid and stable sense of a positive experience in the foreground of awareness, also be aware of something negative in the background. For example, when you feel included and liked these days, you could sense this experience making contact with feelings of loneliness from your past. If the negative material hijacks your attention, drop it and focus only on the positive; when you feel recentered in the positive, you can let the negative also be present in awareness if you like. Whenever you want, let go of all negative material and rest only in the positive. Then, to continue uprooting the negative material, a few times over the next hour be aware of only neutral or positive material while also bringing to mind neutral things (e.g., people, situations, ideas) that have become associated with the negative material.

Taken directly from Rick Hanson, PhD Hardwiring Happiness