

***Learning Sustainable Well-Being (Psych 88):
“Compassion for Self and Others”
Fall Quarter, 2023***

Professor: Dr. Karen Dobkins, Ph.D.
e-mail: kdobkins@ucsd.edu

Class Meetings: Tuesdays, 9:30 – 10:50 am. McGill Hall, Rm 1350
My Office Hours: Wednesdays, 11 am – noon. In Person. McGill Hall 5117

Purpose: The principles taught in this class are based on Mindfulness, Positive Psychology and Cognitive Therapy (as well as Buddhism and Neuroscience). The focus is on how to live a life where our actions are aligned with our core values, get straight to the heart of a matter, identify the issues, discriminate between real threats vs. the “stories” we tell ourselves, move away from “shoulds”, take responsibility for our choices, not go into “victim mentality”, communicate needs effectively, bring love, mindfulness and compassion to all situations, and live wholeheartedly, without apology. *The goal is to give you the tools you need to feel empowered and to live a life you love, with purpose and clarity.*

Format: Each week, there is a short lecture on a given topic, combined with workshop style exercises. The exercises include: 1) private reflection, 2) group discussion, 3) didactic discourse between the instructor and students, 4) partnering up, students taking turns facilitating each other on an exercise. After each class, I usually send a follow-up email with some videos, readings, etc., if you are interested. **Please have a small notebook and writing utensil ready for class for different exercises and your own note-taking.**

Topics by Week

1) Oct 3rd: **Practicing Psychological Well-Being: Insights from Eastern and Western Philosophies**

SELF-COMPASSION: YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOURSELF

2) Oct 10th: **Exploration of the Self, and How to Live a Life with Heart**

3) Oct 17th: **Accepting All of Your Personality Traits: the Good, the Bad and the Ugly**

4) Oct 24th: **Building Emotional Resilience by Challenging Your Thoughts and Changing Behaviors**

5) Oct 31st: **Building Emotional Resilience by Accepting All of Your Emotions**

COMPASSION FOR OTHERS: YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

6) Nov 7th: **Compassion for Others alongside Healthy Boundaries**

7) Nov 14th: **Putting Compassion for Others into Practice**

8) Nov 21st: **Approaching Conflict with Others from a “Needs” Perspective**

9) Nov 28th: **Taking Responsibility for Conflict with Others**

10) Dec 5th: **Summary, Tips for Practicing**

NOTE about your emotions: This class is, in part, about learning how to be open and truthful. It can therefore get emotional sometimes, with people sharing stories and/or issues. Please know that you are *never required* to share anything in this class, but you should be prepared that others will. All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. There are many helpful resources available on campus and an important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is often helpful. Please also know that if you have

experienced traumatic events or have mental health concerns, a course like this will not fix mental health concerns that require a therapeutic approach.

Note about mental health concerns: This course is not designed to address mental health disorders or acute concerns. As such, some discussions are never permitted in this course in discussions with your peers, including details of traumatic events, means of self-harm, and an intent to hurt yourself or others. If you would benefit from talking to a mental health professional, please go to the counseling center ([CAPS](#)) on the UCSD campus. If you are thinking about harming yourself or others, please go to [Urgent Care at CAPS](#) immediately (they are open from 8AM to 4PM and can be reached at 858-534-3755; if afterhours, please call the suicide hotline at 800-273-TALK [8255]).

NOTE about the teachings: Everything taught in this class is just *suggestions* for ways to live life openly and wholeheartedly, while mitigating stress, depression and loneliness. You are free to adopt which of these teachings work for you, as everyone is different ☐