

# May we be kind to ourselves: The role of self-compassion in judgments of showing vulnerability

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Zoom link:

<https://uni-mannheim.zoom.us/j/65793968577>

## Abstract

People tend to be more critical of their own displays of vulnerability than of others' (beautiful mess effect). We propose that self-compassion might buffer against such misperceptions of one's own vulnerabilities as self-compassionate people are mindful, kind to themselves, and see imperfections as inevitable. Three studies measured self-compassion either substantially before (Study 1) or after (Studies 2 and 3) asking the participants to evaluate showing vulnerability in three various situations. Moreover, Studies 2 and 3 addressed the discriminant validity of self-compassion's role in the reduction of the beautiful mess effect. Implications for research and practice are discussed.

## Showing Vulnerability

**Vulnerable situations:** admitting love/fear/mistake, asking for help... (Brown, 2012)

**Showing vulnerability:** (Bruk et al., 2018)

- "Authentic and intentional willingness to be open to uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure in social situations in spite of fears" (p. 192)

**"Beautiful mess effect"** (Bruk et al., 2018):

- Showing vulnerability is perceived more negatively in oneself than others

→ Can these differences be reduced?

## Self-Compassion (SC) & Showing Vulnerability

Facets of SC	Reduction of self-other differences
Self Kindness	"I, too, deserve kindness even if I am imperfect"
Common Humanity	"Imperfection is just part of the human experience"
Mindfulness	"I accept myself as I am, no need to magnify failures"

(Neff, 2003)

## Hypothesis: SC reduces the beautiful mess effect

\*\*\*Bruk, A., Scholl, S. G., & Bless, H. (2018). Beautiful mess effect: Self-other differences in evaluation of showing vulnerability. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 115(2), 192-205.

Brown, B. (2012). *Daring greatly: How the courage to be vulnerable transforms the way we live, love, parent, and lead*. Penguin.  
 Neff, K. (2003). Self-compassion: An alternative conceptualization of a healthy attitude toward oneself. *Self and identity*, 2(2), 85-101.

## Study 1 – Moderation by Self-Compassion ; n = 84

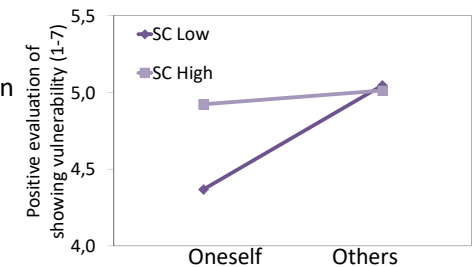
**Procedure:**

- separate measurement of SC (Neff, 2003)
- a month later: scenario of a vulnerable situation
  - imagine oneself vs. others (within-design)...
  - confessing romantic feelings

**DV:** Evaluation of showing vulnerability

**Results:** Role x SC:  $F(1, 78) = 10.56, p = .002$

→ Can correlated traits be driving the effect?



## Study 2 – Self-Compassion vs. Self-Esteem (SE); n = 97

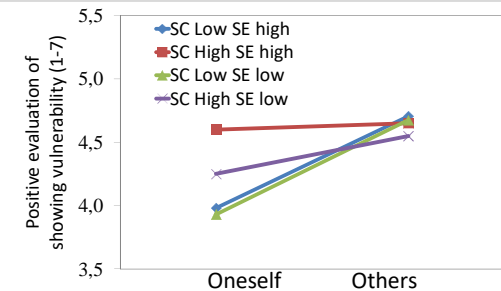
**Procedure:**

- scenario: revealing imperfections
- 2x role: oneself vs. others (within-design)
- SC & SE measurement afterwards

**DV:** Evaluation of showing vulnerability

**Results:** Role x SC:  $F(1, 89) = 8.84, p = .004$

Role x SE:  $F < 1$



## Study 3 – Self-Compassion vs. Neuroticism (N); n = 101

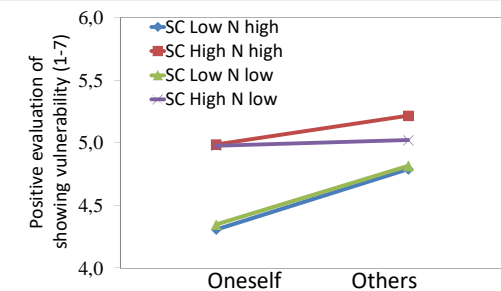
**Procedure:**

- scenario: admitting a mistake
- 2x role: oneself vs. others (within-design)
- SC & N measured afterwards

**DV:** Evaluation of showing vulnerability

**Results:** Role x SC:  $F(1, 93) = 10.54, p = .002$

Role x N:  $F < 1$



## Discussion

- Robust moderating effect of SC with three different scenarios that..
  - goes beyond SE or N and is independent of time of measurement
- Self-compassion may ease many everyday vulnerable situations