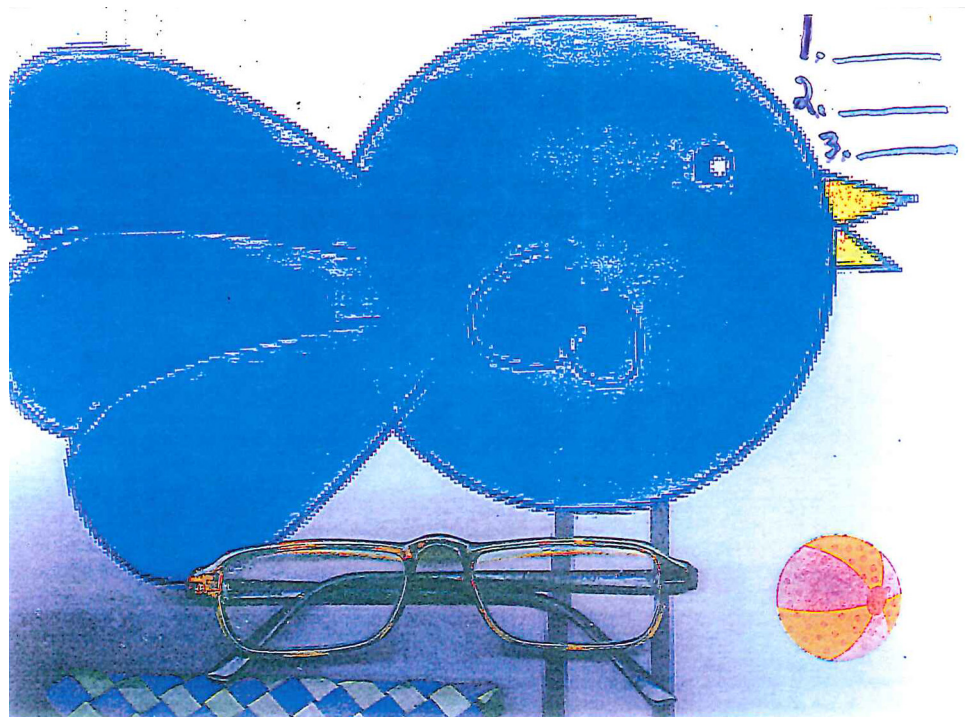


Live Better Series: "I can live a vital and meaningful life."

"Attitude of gratitude and self-compassion"

Tom Lavin MFT, LCADC, ACATA



Bluebird: I can live a vital, meaningful life. And, I accept I will sometimes have pain, and other times have joy, in my life.

New Pair of Glasses: to change my life, and grow in wisdom, I need to look at things differently.

Beach ball: I need to stop avoiding my life by pushing thoughts and feeling underwater. By being mindful, I will let my thoughts and feelings come up and accept them for what they are.

Finger trap: It is healthy for me to "accept what is as it is". When I struggle against "what is", I trap myself and cause suffering for myself. Accepting does not necessarily mean I like it.

1, 2, 3: I can live a vital and meaningful life by choosing and committing to values that are important to me—NIKE Therapy "Just do it!", make a plan, don't procrastinate, take action. Letting go and letting be is also a way of taking positive action.

1. It has been said that gratitude is a feeling, but it is also an attitude. Gratitude as an attitude is a choice to look at the glass as half full, rather than half empty. How can an "attitude of gratitude" be helpful on difficult days, when we don't feel grateful? _____.
2. Can you list 5 people/things/situations that you are grateful for and why?
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____

3. How can you share your gratitude, to help someone else, to make a difference, to “pay it forward”? _____.
4. Have you had/Are you having problems with self-pity? Describe what you have felt self-pity about, and what you can do to positively address your self-pity _____.

“No one is meaner than the person who is mean to herself.”

“Love heals. It heals those who receive it and those who give it.” Dr. Karl Menninger

“Love your neighbor as you love yourself.” Jesus

“I used to carry a butt-kicking machine around with me. When I made a mistake, I would kick my own butt for hours and hours.....and hours.” Old Timer in recovery, skid row, Detroit

5. Self-compassion is an important, healthy characteristic. It allows us to be kind to ourselves, and encouraging of ourselves. Many of us, though, have deficits in self-compassion. How do you behave toward yourself? Take a few minutes to evaluate how you often behave, on a scale of 1-3 (adopted from the Self-compassion evaluation scale of Dr. Kristen Neff; www.self-compassion.org)

6.

1. Almost never 2. Sometimes 3. Almost always

1. I disapprove and am judgmental of my flaws and inadequacies. _____
2. When I'm feeling down, I tend to obsess on all that's wrong. _____
3. I try to be loving toward myself when I am feeling pain. _____
4. I am intolerant towards those aspects of my personality that I dislike. _____
5. When I fail at something, I try to keep things in perspective. _____
6. When something upsets me, I get carried away with my feelings. _____
7. I frequently feel ashamed of myself. _____
8. When I make a mistake, I pick myself up, see what I've learned, and go right back at it _____
9. Overall, I am accepting of myself, as I am. _____
10. I have compassion for others who are hurting. _____
11. I have a practice of accepting others and forgiving them if they make a mistake. _____

7. What I can do to become more compassionate toward myself:

_____be mindful of when I judging myself, beating myself up, and then be willing to let it go

_____share with my counselor my history of putting myself down and where did I get ideas like I had to be perfect, I'm inferior to others

_____act in kind way toward myself, even if I don't feel like it (act with compassion and understanding and support toward myself, as I would a friend who was hurting