

Midweek Pause: Agenda-free



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“Some of us can accept others right where they are a lot more easily than we can accept ourselves. We feel that compassion is reserved for someone else, and it never occurs to us to feel it for ourselves.

My experience is that by practicing without “shoulds,” we gradually discover our wakefulness and our confidence. Gradually, without any agenda except to be honest and kind, we assume responsibility for being here in this unpredictable world, in this unique moment, in this precious human body.”

–Pema Chödrön

CONSIDER: whether you tend to fall into the trap Pema describes, holding yourself to a higher standard than others. I’d say that fits most of us most of the time unless we really are conscious about it. What if you went a full day without using the word “should” directed at yourself? Now that’s worth a try!

Practice this when you’ve impulsively ordered something you know you shouldn’t be eating or are simply too tired in the evening to exercise or lose it over something that really wasn’t important. Instead of saying the word “should” when the tapes begin to roll how about trying this one on, “next time I might consider...”

DO: start your day tomorrow talking to yourself as you would someone you adore and cherish—your partner, a best friend, your child, or an aging parent. Use the same gentleness, understanding, and forgiveness you would offer this loved individual throughout the day. Practice now for a moment by closing your eyes taking in a few cleansing breaths and

affirming you deserve your own kindness and compassion.