

## *What Is Facilitated Self Compassion?*

Facilitated Self Compassion is a unique one-on-one facilitation, which builds friendly connections with the many voices in your head—the critics, the judges, the naysayers, the doom mongers and the fear sowers. When we befriend these voices (and we really can), we develop robust, new allies looking out for our best interests. We gain access to that [essential and elusive pause](#) between thought and action, which enables us to make stronger choices. We can forge stronger connections with others. And we have the courage to offer our gifts to the world.

FSC combines methods drawn from some of the deepest and most effective practices to create a fresh, holistic and powerful experience. Its wellsprings include: mindfulness and meditation practices, theatre, Internal Family Systems and Non-Violent Communication.

From the first session, you will feel more ease and the enticing potential of richer dialogue with your inner voices. Those voices inside your head will begin to transform from roadblocks into powerful supporters. You will start to develop new skills to continue the work on your own.

**What can you expect from our FSC session together?** Here's a sample of what our work might include (of course, sessions are organic and evolve according to what arises). We begin with our bodies, movement and voice. Following a short grounding practice, we will get on our feet with a physical practice of exploring the emotions present in the moment. This *embodied* portion of the session opens up and expands on the traditional, meditative body scan done in stillness. We flow, surfacing and cleansing the emotional debris that blocks our ability to tune in.

Then we use a structured self-compassion practice to engage with one of the particularly challenging inner voices alive that day. This opens space and receptivity in our nervous system, from which we may move to a role-play dialogue between you and this challenging inner voice. This is the heart of the adventure and may not happen in the first session. We do not know how our conversation will go. We are curious and open to discovery.

Every FSC session ends with a practice to alchemize some gratitude and create space for integration. FSC introduces you to new allies and new sources of energy, happiness, understanding and

compassion. As [Christina Chwyl writes about self-compassion](#), “With you by your own side, you will be unstoppable.”

**Each of the FSC sources is powerful in its own right.** Together, they fuel connection and generativity in a whole new way:

*From mindfulness and meditation practices*, we nourish the FSC intention to deepen our self-understanding and help us access the elusive pause between thought and action, which enables us to make better choices in life. Mindfulness reminds us, too, of our responsibility to look outward, to share our internal strength with others.

*From the theatre*, we feed the physical, embodied work that enables us to expand and sharpen our emotional intelligence, which is so critical to our wellbeing. We play with the full range of our feeling capacity. I don’t use the word *play* lightly. Play is how we access our imaginations. Our imagination is our engine for curiosity, insight and growth. Theatre also models the powerful structure of role-playing. Neuroscience tells us our brains often don’t distinguish between reality and role play.\* In [Performance Breakthrough: A Radical Approach to Success at Work](#), Cathy Salit writes about how role-play and improvisation are a form of developmental play for adults. We can rewire our brains, by playing a role. Want to be a leader? Act as if you are. No, it’s not guaranteed you will become the boss. This is not a hollow promise like think-and-grow-rich. But if you can imagine yourself in a role and play with that possibility in a safe environment, the likelihood is much (much) higher. We will play in our bodies and in roles in FSC.

*From Internal Family Systems*, we source an understanding and process of tuning into, naming and getting to know the inner voices in our heads. IFS calls these voices our *parts*. Of course, our heads are not always and only filled with negative voices. There are also positive and supportive voices. These are *parts*, too. But we may not be able to hear those parts without intentional work.

In FSC, we use IFS’s parts to understand how every negative voice has its own positive, balancing voice. Just as the destroyer deities are simultaneously the creator deities in many world religions, the voices inside our head have this wholeness, too. I say *wholeness*, because this destroyer-creator nature

may seem at first glance to present a duality. It does not. In every creation, in every creative act, there is also destruction. The earth teaches us this truth. From rot comes life. From winter's stillness comes blossoming. And we experience this in our own lives, too. The simple and crucial act of making choices creates and destroys. We say *yes* to opportunities, which requires us to say *no* to other possibilities. As a writer, I compose draft upon draft, only to trim away words, to destroy what I have written, so the story can emerge. All art is like this.

And each of our lives is our work of art.

We will make our truest art when we have full access to our wholeness; when we can hear the creator alongside the destroyer. How does this happen? When we befriend the destroyer, we enable the creator to show her face. What is the work? A process of opening emotional space in our nervous system, which allows us to engage in an authentic, empathic dialogue with our inner voices. Here, dialogue means—a conversation to which we do not know the outcome. For our dialogue, we turn to Non-Violent Communication.

[Non-Violent Communication](#) offers the grace of its robust self-empathy practice, which resources us with more self-compassion, opening space for an exchange with our parts using NVC's structure for building authentic dialogue and resolving conflict.\*\* The conflicts we can address with NVC range from those inside ourselves (the personal), to the interpersonal and beyond into our communities. In FSC, we start with the roots of that tree of connection, with the personal, with our relationship to ourselves. From there, we grow into the branching limbs of our various communities and society.

**Who am I to do this?** I am the binder ingredient in this work. My background and training gather these elements together. Each of the disciplines I've mentioned is powerful in its own right, yet they are rarely combined. Together they add up to something bigger than the sum of their parts. They support, nurture and bring out the best in each other, even as together they offer something completely new. I have a longtime mindfulness and meditation practice—from silent retreats, to a vision quest, sacred medicine journeys, a daily meditation practice, experience in a sensory deprivation float tank, neurofeedback, [Search Inside Yourself](#) training and equine learning. On the theatre front, I have a broad training that includes traditional techniques, as well as physical training,

like clown and Lecoq. I also certified as a Moment Work Teacher with Tectonic Theatre Project. I've written (and performed) two award-winning solo shows, as well as an ensemble play for ten women. I have written two books about the transformative impact of sports in women's lives, which cultivated my understanding and appreciation for the oneness of our mind-body (a topic I've also [spoken](#) about). I have participated in IFS training and an array of NVC training. In exploring each of these modalities, I started to notice the ways in which they might speak to each other and intensify each other's benefits. At [ImagiNation Playshops](#), my co-founder Julia Sherman and I have developed workshops that dive into these modalities (and others) to create a vibrant, group experience.

FSC is the natural, organic progression of all the work I've done up to now. My profound desire is to offer a space for exploration, which brings people into a relationship of deeper intimacy with themselves and fuels their generativity. With FSC, I feel like I've come home. All the disparate threads of my life have woven themselves together, as if by magic, into a beautiful tapestry.

I so look forward to sharing the beauty with you.

\*Here's a sampling of thoughts on this topic of neuroscience and role-playing:  
[Acting changes the brain: it's how actors get lost in a role](#), by Christian Jarrett  
[Role-Playing: Preparing for Difficult Conversations and Situations](#), from Mind Tools  
[Changing the brain through Role-playing](#), by Siope Kinikini

\*\*Deep gratitude to my friend and "empathy buddy", [Malkiel](#), who was the first to suggest experimenting with the NVC dialogue formats for use with our internal voices, in lieu of with other people. We continue to experiment together with the dialogue format, finding new ways to deepen our engagement with the process.