

## SELF-AWARENESS THROUGH CONFLICT

When feeling irritated

First, do self-compassion break (see handout)

1. Does this person remind me of someone who hurt me in the past?
2. Looking honestly, does the irritating quality of the other person mirror a similar quality in myself?
3. Taking stock, is there part of me that wishes I could be more like the person who is irritating me?

### *A Caveat:*

Practicing this type of self-compassionate self-inquiry in the context of interpersonal conflict can be a wonderful opportunity to gain self-knowledge. We can gain awareness of any tendencies to displace anger, fear, and hurt related to past traumas onto our partner. We can also recognize when we are projecting our own imperfections onto our partner or wallowing in envy instead of acknowledging and nourishing our own latent gifts. This may resolve many relationship conflicts and make working with remaining difficulties easier.

However, please remember that you have a right to physical and psychological safety, mutuality, and respect within your relationships. This exercise works best when both parties are willing to practice it earnestly and discuss it respectfully, rather than one person doing all the emotional labor. Self-inquiry is not a substitute for healthy boundaries. If your partner is physically or sexually abusive or consistently demeans your experience, accomplishments and/or genuine efforts to express your feelings, you have a right to set boundaries and prioritize your safety and well-being.