

Pura Fe Sings: : [00:09](#) True freedom involves the understanding of our true human spirit within. It dispels the lie of inadequacy and helplessness who are we? Powerful beyond measure. Who are we? Power of the creator....

Jana: [00:39](#) Hello. I am Jana Kyriakou. And um, I'm greeting you from Prague, Czech Republic. I am sitting here with Kami Dvorakova. Nice to see you Kami. She is my dear, dear dear friend. And um, she is also an expert in self compassion. Kami is a developmental psychologist. Um, she's a teacher of mindfulness, mindfulness of compassion, and a researcher, uh, Kami has been living, studying and working in the U S for 10 years. Right. You've been doing some amazing work at the University of Pennsylvania and then about three years ago, two or three years ago, you moved back to Czech Republic. Uh, you have been working with the Charles university in Prague and the national Institute for mental health. Um, her expertise and passion I would like to say is, is bringing social-emotional learning to, to children, youth. Um, but not only that. Maybe if you want, you can tell us a bit more about your, your, your work and your passion.

Kami: [01:51](#) Yes. Well, I have many passions and, um, it's definitely a great pleasure for me to be sharing mindfulness and self compassion with people just in general so that we can, so that I could bring and contribute, you know, to the wellbeing of our world. And that's the reason why I decided to study PhD. And actually the Pennsylvania state university, I know there are sometimes it can be confused, but, uh, Penn State, because I wanted to focus on prevention. I was, uh, in home therapist before that in Boston and it was, it was an incredible work for me to work with these families that had a lot of struggles, a lot of trauma, and it was such a, um, such a blessing to be working with them. And I also felt that I wanted to focus on, on the preventive things, how can we promote our wellbeing and mental health of our children, of our adults, of teachers so that we could prevent some of the development of these, um, the difficulties.

Kami: [02:57](#) And so the PhD gave a really good foundation on, uh, on the research, on wellbeing promoting practices. And I was already studying mindfulness, um, before doing my PhD. And so I was able to dive in a little bit more, learn also about the science and mechanisms and the research and all that fun stuff. And now I have the privilege to be teaching these things here in the Czech Republic. And it's been really, it's been fun. Yeah,

Jana: [03:28](#) it's amazing. Um, I know it's not easy. I have been working with you on some projects, so it's not the easy, the task you took on

to kind of really tried to change, for example, the whole education, sure. (laughing) So I feel like you actually must have this inner, and you, I know you do this inner strength, this inner power to make such a decision. Uh, but to make such a decision, uh, did you actually need to use some self-compassion yourself or it's of course, yes.

Kami: [04:10](#) I think you're touching on an important topic of, you know, even when the way you say it you know, or the way I was seeing like changing the educational system, that's a, it's a big task and I think I see now more as really just planting seeds here and there and um, I think it's important to be aware of like, okay, am I trying to change too much? You know, am I kind of putting on myself too much? And so for the reason is, you know, a couple of months ago I decided to take a break and to really, um, to really focus on learning and going deeper into what is it that I want to be doing in the world? What is it that I want to be contributing? And the part of self-compassion has been really one of these foundational tools for me. How, how I can take care of myself in a meaningful way and how I can also then bring my own wellbeing, you know, into, into the world and into people's lives.

Kami: [05:15](#) So I feel that just recently I actually had this kind of clear vision that these are the three things that has helped me so much in terms of bringing more joy into my life, uh, has been mindfulness, as the foundation of being aware, self compassion, and also nonviolent communication. These three components I feel that allow me to just enjoy what is in my life, you know, all the goodness that's already present, including you and you know, and from this place to be contributing. So self-compassion definitely is just a huge part of my life. And I feel that for me, when I was thinking about the question of what a really self-compassion is for me, um, what I realized in the clear, in a very simplified way, for me it means a sense of inner safety and that really describes what self-compassion is for me.

Kami: [06:21](#) And that sense of inner safety, uh, has been there now for already for a couple of years. But it took a long time, you know, to have a, have a lot of practice to develop that sense. And the way it looks for me or the way it feels for me is that there is this like quiet sense and quiet voice in the background where I really feel that whatever I do with my life or in my life, whatever I choose to do or whatever, mistakes, you know, and, uh, that happened, there is this sense of I will be okay. And even when, you know, some of these like habitual thoughts of not being good enough and not having, you know, smart enough ideas or no to doing enough, etc, all these lovely, lovely, habitual

patterns. Even those, when they appear, it feels that they appear within that space of inner safety.

Kami: [07:25](#) And so even when they show up, it's okay. So actually today morning I was meditating and, uh, I went to a park, a similar one like here and I was sitting and at one point I, uh, had an impulse to check something on my phone. And I did. And I, you know, broke my meditation. I know it's like, Oh my goodness. And I was aware of it you know? And I was on the phone for like a couple of minutes, I was meditating for like an hour. So this was somewhere in the middle. And then when I put the phone down I noticed that inner critic, and I was in my mind being busy, you know, and so the inner critic was kinda trying to get uh, their word in and be upset like, okay, why am I, you know, I go outside to meditate, then, then why am I taking my phone and blah blah blah, all this stuff, these things. And it was so interesting. It's first, you know, I felt my mind being kind of like busy with those things and I was trying kind of not to listen to the inner critic kind of almost like pushing into aside. But thanks to many years of practice what I decided to do was just to take a few breaths to ground myself. And then I decided to do this, like mini exercise that we do in mindful self compassion courses, which to give the inner critics space to really say whatever it wants to say. So the important thing about doing this exercise is first it's really important to ground so that the inquiry doesn't just make a lot of mess in your heart

Kami: [09:13](#) and mind, so I kind of grounded myself and then just told the inner voice to

Kami: [09:21](#) let it out, you know, tell it all to me, and there was this like verbal diarrhea, you know, of like, Oh, while you're meditating blah blah blah! But it was in that space in the grounded space of safety, and it was so sweet and cute and I couldn't like make that happen, you know, since I gave space to that inner critic and uh, (they pause to greet a dog) there was on its own, there have been this transformation that that inner critic almost, I have this very visual imagination, you know, and so that inner critic almost like transformed into this being that was like, I'm trying to help out here and I don't even get, you know, appreciated for all my work I do! And it was really sweet to see, to see that. And this whole thing, you know, took like a minute or so, very short. And so it kind of released that energy, you know, that was there, you know that critical energy gets released.

Kami: [10:26](#) And so I felt like thanking that inner critical part also felt like appreciating all it's work that it's trying to do to motivate me to

meditate and not just give it into my impulses of course. And then I just went back to my meditation and it was just so, felt so lovely, so natural, you know, and I felt that it really was, it's an example for me of what it really means to allow things to be there. Giving them space, not having to fix anything, you know, not trying to get rid of the inner critic or get rid of unpleasant thoughts or emotions. It's really feels that developing that sense of inner safety, that endeavor, that anything can, you know, can come up and if it transforms, great. If it doesn't, well it's okay. It has it's space to just be. And maybe many of you know this poem from Rumi, The Guest House and I have it printed.

Kami: [11:29](#) and I have it in the bathroom since that's a place where it's right in there in front of my eyes and it's, it's the exemplar or that example of just allowing whatever is there to be there. And it's a lovely poem. I definitely highly recommend.

Jana: [11:48](#) Maybe I will post it. We'll post it next to the video. A link maybe. Yeah. Yes. Yeah. Wonderful. Um, it's wonderful to hear it, um, as, um, as a human being and also as, um, maybe teacher or someone who, who is also trying to maybe make the world a better place, uh, like you like what caught my attention is also this, you're trying to do something big. Whether even I find comparison with your meditation, I am doing this big meditation and then I get this inner critic. I'm not doing it right. Sometimes I have a similar feeling when I'm trying to, um, influence a lot of people and create workshops, invite thousands of people and it's not happening.

Jana: [12:42](#) So I also get this inner critic, what am I doing wrong? I'm not good enough teacher or facilitator or, um, worker, whatever. Uh, so even as you say, but by allowing space to all this to happen and maybe even praising yourself, I know for, for the littlest like the little seeds, little goodness that we are doing, it's enough. That's enough.

Kami: [13:18](#) I totally agree. Like, I, you know, this yeah, this idea of changing the, saving the world, right being the savior, it's, I mean, it's a lovely idea and we can still be saving the world, but I think that it's important that it comes from the place of groundedness and humility. And I, I noticed that, yes, of course, that the part of my ego that wants to be this famous teacher of this or that, you know, and it's just, it's so interesting that when I do things from the place, then there's much more anxiety, much more, you know, fear and worries because there is this idea is this idea of how I should be versus the human being I am.

- Kami: [14:12](#) And I, uh, as I was mentioning to you before, you know, today when I was walking to the, uh, to take a train, there was a man, uh, collecting chestnuts that are falling from the trees. And because I left my house early enough, you know, I had enough time and I was present, I was there. Uh, I smiled at him. We talked, we exchange a few sentences. And I feel those are the moments, those moments of connection. I know I'm myself that I forget that it's not just about teaching these courses and changing the whole educational system
- Kami: [14:51](#) But these like interactions between human beings, you know, these interactions that I am part of. It's where the gold is, you know, that's where the magic can happen. And it is a constant reminder of course, you know, because there's so much pressure, and I feel that too, of producing and creating and yeah. And um, even on the, I did the Camino and the Santiago, uh, for the last two months and, even there
- Kami: [15:28](#) like, how many kilometers did you walk? You know, and where did you start? And it's all,
- Kami: [15:33](#) and it's okay. It's okay to notice that. But when you notice that the question for me is, then do I want it to, is this, do I want to go in this direction? Do I want to be comparing myself and always having this kind of whip for like I have to do more, how can I really take action from the grounded place. Of ways that is kind to the world but also kind do myself. Um, again, a specific example that comes to my mind. I was, so I was doing, I did the whole Camino. Um, but
- Kami: [16:19](#) I know, but I think it was like the second week, uh, it was so interesting, especially the beginning. There's so many of these habitual patterns of achieving and accomplishing and walking more than 20 kilometers every day. There was this one day where it was going to, it was one of the heat waves in Spain. And so it was like going to be more than 40 degrees Celsius, you know, really hot. And that day I was kind of tired. And so in my heart I felt I wanted to walk just a little bit, you know, and walk on there like 10 kilometers
- Kami: [16:57](#) and have a, have the afternoon free for myself. And uh, it was such a difficult decision to make. When I arrived to the town and it was like 11:00 AM, you know, and I was, uh, okay, that's where I was going to stay. It was so difficult in my body because there was my mind with pressure to do more and LA, LA, LA, all this stuff. But I felt it so clearly. The best thing for me would be to stay and to just enjoy the day, which is what I ended up doing, and had a really lovely afternoon. So again, this small

example that it's okay to take care of ourselves. It's okay to be kind to ourselves. And

Kami: [17:50](#) you know, Kristen Neff who is one of the creators of the mindful self compassion program, uh, she talks about these two sides of self-compassion, the yin and yang aspect of self compassion. And so what I love about this, that it's a combination of both. The yin part is this taking care of ourselves with this very soothing like, okay, it's fine. It's okay to do just a little bit or just to stay at home, you know, that's totally fine. But then there's also this yang part, that one is about the action in the world. So just rephrasing the way how she talks about it is that the yin part is this soothing, you know, kind of the bear hug. And this kind and soothing energy. But the yang is this action where this mama bear will like fight, you know, to protect her cubs.

Kami: [18:51](#) And it's, I think that what we can do with mindfulness and compassion is kind of this dance between these two. You know, and it's, I love to think about it as a dance because it's this flexibility, you know? Yes. Sometimes I just need to really put my hands on my chest, really feel that I'm here for myself, feel my breath, feel my body. And I also from that place, I can take action. And I have been talking more about this, that self-compassion is also, you're saying no, and setting limits and setting boundaries and, and it's not just women, but we forget, you know, sometimes also in the mindfulness world or uh, you know, self care, wellbeing world, we kind of think it's always just about being like, Oh, nice and compassionate and sweet. Yes. And it's also saying, no, this is not okay. And stopping some of the difficult behaviors that, you know, maybe at our workplace are happening or that in the world that are happening. So it's really, it's both, you know, and I really love that, that it's, it's the combination of two.

Jana: [20:09](#) Love it. Yeah, totally love it. (they laugh)

Jana: [20:12](#) You mentioned a couple of times earlier that, um, that this connection with your body, in the Camino trip, how, kind of, to me that your mind was saying something but your body was saying something else. Um, how is your relationship to your body? You have also went through the Embody Love Movement, um, workshop. Where we specifically talk about this self respect and the relationship and self-compassion. Um really focused on the body. So what is your relationship to your body and how does maybe the self compassion, what role does it play in it?

Kami: [20:55](#) Yeah, so it's so interesting, you know, because I feel that inside of me, there (inaudible), there's this incredible gratitude for, for this physical body that you can, we can inhabit that we can, you know, this amazing vehicle that gives us signals. It's just, it's just mindblowing to really tune in to the breath and everything that is happening in our body.

Kami: [21:25](#) And there's been also the psychological part where I grew up in a household where, um, the body, uh, was being shamed in some ways, you know, and um, the idea of being slim and thin, you know, that's the, is the good way, right? And um, it's actually with self-compassion, full and complete acceptance of my body is the hardest part. It's really the hardest part because it seems that it's not only, you know, the way I grew up, but it's, we're surrounded by this as we all know. And so going through your workshop was just really lovely because I remember that something really clicked in me where I felt that really that pride of my, my physical self and feeling that, you know, well, I can wear whatever I want. And you know, it doesn't matter if my skirt is too short or too tight or whatever. And I remember it was really at your workshop that it clicked, you know, and so I feel for me where I am right now, it's not so much about my body shape or you know, thinness, bigness and all these things, but it's really more about physical strength.

Kami: [22:45](#) And practice. So practicing physical strength, which for me is, and it will mean something different for everyone. You know, I always knew about the mind body connection, but I never really realized that a sense of physical strength even if that means, you know, just walking for five minutes outside and developing my physical strength in that way. That's really the foundation for my mental and emotional strength. So, um, actually one of the priorities that I realized on the Camino was to do more exercise, but in a way that feels good for me. Well, so I don't like jogging and I don't have to, but I love walking. So now in Prague I walk almost everywhere, whenever I can, all the time. I also started to do Capoeira, which makes me feel really you know, It makes me feel strong even though I cannot do all the different kicks and all these things, that that doesn't matter.

Kami: [23:52](#) So really finding some physical activities that makes me happy, and this how I am developing or that's the process of developing physical strength, and for me it really gives that foundation for the mental and emotional balance and stability. So yes, body is incredible and it's important to protect it and take care of it, and it's just such a blessing to be here to be alive, you know? And play!

Jana: [24:26](#) Yeah. I love play.

Kami: [24:28](#) Yeah. Yeah.

Jana: [24:31](#) So Kami, um, would you maybe, um, share with us one simple practice, exercise, however you want to call it. What can we and what can everybody maybe try doing something simple everyday to, to cultivate self compassion, self respect or the groundedness you were talking about?

Kami: [24:56](#) So I actually realized that I have been doing this just it's, you know, now it's just so natural to me and I, it is about physical touch. And so the idea, so in mindful self compassion, one of the ideas that we are basically developing is to be a friend to ourselves.

Kami: [25:20](#) And that can be done in many different ways. And physical touch is really useful because it can kind of override some of the mental, you know, um, difficulties sometimes. And physical touch right away tells our body, tells ourselves that there is somebody, even though it's just ourselves, that somebody's present, you know, so and when we were born as a baby, you know, babies, we need that physical contact and there is research that shows that kids in orphanages that didn't have the physical contact had much more higher, um, probability of mental health issues and different difficulties. And the body also absorbs a lot of trauma at the same time. So we have to, with our own physical touch, we need to also be very, um, careful and kind, you know, so one very simple practice can be just bringing our hands to our heart, and just tuning into this feeling of our breath in our body. And feeling how the hands with each inhale and exhale.....And the contact of our hands on our chest can really just be that reminder that we are physically, emotionally present with ourselves. The touch can be also, it can be on our heart, it can be our belly. But even during this interview what I have been doing is that I just bring my hands to my legs and it's kind of like stroking myself gently, you know? And it can be in a very simple way, you know, sitting at a, at a work meeting and just having our hands like this can be that reminder when we do it consciously, when we remember, wow, I can just feel my hands as a sense of support

Kami: [27:39](#) You don't have to, maybe at a work meeting, we don't have to do this, just this can be enough, you know? So just the physical sense and just exploring where does it feel good? Sometimes this, you know, it just can be like, Oh,

Kami: [27:54](#) so nice. Maybe at home when we just want to give ourselves this sense of comfort, and just exploring wherever that feels good, whatever that place on our body is for us.

Jana: [28:12](#) Lovely. Thank you so much. Kami, can you tell us

Jana: [28:16](#) at the end, maybe what your plans are or where can people find you, uh, or if you're planning any courses people can attend or somewhere online uh social media perhaps.

Kami: [28:33](#) Yes. Well, uh, right now I'm really focusing on sharing these, these things, these ideas, here in the Czech Republic, but I also do, um, um, so here in the Czech Republic I do in-person mindful self compassion courses and focusing on bringing these things into our everyday life. So that's one, one thing, I'm also part of many different projects and ideas, but, um, I also do online stuff, uh, with people. And I have a colleague actually in Pennsylvania, uh, who connects me with, uh, with some of her people that I can meet with them over Skype and so, or zoom or all these. So if anyone is interested, you can contact me and you know, maybe you can put my link for my, you know, email and for my Facebook page and, I also love singing. That's one of my priorities now. So we do singing here in the Czech Republic. And my plan is really to keep fulfilling my dreams. That's the main thing.

Jana: [29:45](#) So thank you. So for seeing, maybe Kami, if you're Czech or if you live in, in Prague or Czech Republic, maybe visit the website, have them Czech Mindfulness club. You have events usually they're most of them. So mindfulnessclub.cz or Facebook mindfulness club. And yeah, and I will share Kami's contact too. Thank you so much. So much. Thank you. And um, yeah, love yourself.