

5-2015

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## Recommended Citation

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An Examination into the Relationship between Self-Compassion and Parenting Styles

by

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An Undergraduate Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the  
Honors College  
and the  
Honors-in-Psychology Program  
College of Arts and Sciences  
East Tennessee State University

April 24, 2015

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### Abstract

High self-compassion has been shown to provide many benefits for overall well-being. Some studies have suggested that the environment in which an individual grew up could have some effect on this trait in adulthood. The present research examined the relationship between the parenting style with which an individual was raised and their later adulthood self-compassion and compassion for others. It was hypothesized that the responsiveness of the parent would be directly related to the way that an individual learns to respond to themselves and others.

Authoritative parenting style was expected to be related to higher self-compassion and compassion for others as it is characterized by parents who respond positively to their child.

Authoritarian parenting was expected to be related to lower levels of each construct as it is characterized by negative responses to the child's actions. It was found that both authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles are associated with higher levels of self-compassion. The two parenting styles considered to negatively affect children raised in the style, authoritarian and permissive, were found to be related to higher levels of compassion for others. Future research directions for the relationship are discussed.

An Examination into the Relationship between  
Self-Compassion and Parenting Styles

As more and more research is being published on the topic, self-compassion is quickly becoming the standard of what is considered to be a healthy self-stance. Self-compassion is a way of dealing with the self that includes many strategies that children learn from their parents while growing up. The aim of the present research was to examine the interaction between the parenting style an individual received when they were growing up and their adulthood self-compassion and compassion for others. This is based on past research on self-compassion, self-esteem, compassion, and parenting styles.

### **Self-Compassion**

In the past, self-esteem has been endorsed as the ideal trait for a person to have. Following discoveries showing that happy and healthy individuals possessed higher self-esteem (Branden, 1994; Taylor & Brown, 1988), many people decided that self-esteem was a necessary trait to instill in children that would logically lead them to be happier and healthier adults. This led to educational programs and policies being created to assure that every child had high self-esteem (Katz, 1998). This is problematic, however, as new research shows some of the flaws associated with the construct. First, self-esteem is difficult to change throughout a person's lifetime as many people have a set perspective of what they are worth (Swann, 1996). Second, high self-esteem can actually be harmful in educational settings as it gives children an inflated sense of their academic abilities, forcing them to not try or study as hard as they may realistically need to (Damon, 1995). Third, because it is based on how we see our worth, self-esteem forces us to think that we are as good as or better than other people. Therefore, in order to protect one's self-esteem, one may see others more negatively in order to have a more favorable evaluation of

him or herself (Crocker, Thompson, McGraw, & Ingerman, 1987). Finally, high self-esteem has been shown to be highly related to narcissism (Leary, 2007).

Self-compassion can be regarded as an extremely promising alternative to self-esteem. When compared to self-esteem, in a study performed by Neff and Vonk (2009), self-compassion was found to be associated with more stable feelings of self-worth that is less contingent on others or particular outcomes of events. The same study showed that both self-compassion and self-esteem were predictors of happiness, optimism and positive affect. However, only self-compassion was negatively associated with social comparison, rumination, anger, and need for cognitive closure. This is extremely important as it emphasizes the belief that self-esteem is based on external comparison whereas self-compassion is a *self*-stance that comes from within.

Self-compassion originates from Buddhist philosophy and is concerned primarily with treating oneself in a caring and nonjudgmental manner that does not criticize. The concept has been more heavily researched since the publishing of an article by Neff (2003a). In this paper, self-compassion is defined as being comprised of three main components: (a) self-kindness vs. self-judgment, (b) sense of common humanity vs. isolation, and (c) mindfulness vs. over-identification. Following negative feelings or events, one would be self-kind by being understanding and non-criticizing. The sense of common humanity refers to the realization that one's suffering is part of the shared human experience and does not have to be taken personally or suffered though alone. A self-compassionate person would also be mindful by receiving their feelings in a balanced and non-judgmental way without ignoring them or ruminating on them. Because none of these aspects are based on external factors, self-compassion has been shown to predict a more stable view of one's self-worth that is less contingent on the outcomes of events (Neff, 2009).

Self-compassion offers many of the same benefits of self-esteem, including increased psychological well-being (Neff, Kirkpatrick, & Rude, 2007) and more positive affect (Neff, 2003a). Self-compassion has even been seen to increase with age (Werner et al., 2012) and still be positively associated with positive affect in older populations (Phillips & Ferguson, 2013). Critics of the construct have claimed that self-criticism is needed in order to improve oneself, suggesting that laziness and contentment may stem from self-kindness. However, Breines and Chen (2012) showed that individuals with high self-compassion had significantly higher self-improvement motivation than those with low self-compassion. This indicates that those who were harsh toward themselves after a personal failing may have less motivation to improve their future performance.

Several studies have examined the relationship between self-compassion and different psychological disorders. Krieger, Alterstein, Baettig, Doerig, and Holtforth (2013) found that individuals who had been diagnosed with depression had lower levels of self-compassion overall. Among depressed individuals, higher levels of self-compassion were associated with less rumination over symptoms, less avoidance of symptoms, and fewer symptoms reported altogether.

The way in which self-compassion can protect against psychological dysfunction is beginning to be studied. In a study performed by Albertson and Neff (2014), women who underwent a three-week self-compassion meditation training course had increased satisfaction with their bodies compared to women who were put on a waitlist. This increased body satisfaction was maintained when assessed three months later. Kyeong (2013) found that self-compassion mediated the effects of academic burnout on psychological well-being and

depressive symptoms. In this, self-compassion was seen to be an effective tool for college students who were experiencing burnout in protecting their mental health.

Trait self-compassion has also been found to have protective effects over a lifetime. In a study conducted by Jativa and Cerezo (2014), adolescents with poor school performance were asked questions about the victimization they received as children and their current well-being. It was found that self-compassion served as a partial mediator between victimization and psychological maladjustment. In those that had experienced higher levels of victimization, self-compassion was protective against later psychological maladjustment. Similar results were found by Vettese, Dyer, Li, and Wekerle (2011) in which self-compassion weakened the association between experienced childhood maltreatment and later emotion dysregulation. Both of these studies suggest that self-compassion can protect against threats to one's psychological well-being following traumatic childhood environments.

This protective relationship has been partially explained by a study performed by Leary, Tate, Adams, Allen, and Hancock (2007). The results of this study suggest that self-compassion moderates the way in which individuals react to events that are negative or involve negative feedback. When people treat themselves kindly following unpleasant events that relate to themselves, they are more likely to accept the situation and feel less negative affect afterward. This could explain why people who are higher in self-compassion are more capable of coping following negative events in their lives. Similar results were found by Peterson (2014), which showed that individuals who are higher in self-compassion are less likely to handicap themselves when receiving negative feedback. This suggests that self-compassion allows people to adopt a realistic world-view that is capable of coping with negativity.

### Compassion for Others

Compassion refers to the tendency to be affected by the suffering of others and want to actively help change it (Pommier, 2011). This construct was developed to be a sister scale to the self-compassion scale and has been shown in previous research to be slightly related. Self-compassion has been found to be significantly correlated to more positive relationship behavior (Neff & Beretvas, 2013) and higher emotional intelligence in nurses (Heffernan, Griffin, McNulty, & Fitzpatrick, 2010), suggesting that having self-compassion could allow individuals to treat others in a more compassionate way.

### Parenting Styles

Baumrind (1966) first suggested a model of parenting that involved three distinct parenting styles that are based on the different strategies that parents use when raising children. A fourth style was added by Maccoby and Martin (1983). Each of these styles was based on two factors: responsiveness vs. unresponsiveness and demandingness vs. non-demandingness (see

Figure 1). Responsiveness refers to the extent to which the parents respond to and accept the child's behavior, as opposed to being rejecting. Demandingness refers to the extent to which the parents are controlling of their child's behavior.

According to Baumrind (1966), the authoritative parenting style is considered to be the most adaptive of the three and involves both responsive and demanding strategies. This parenting

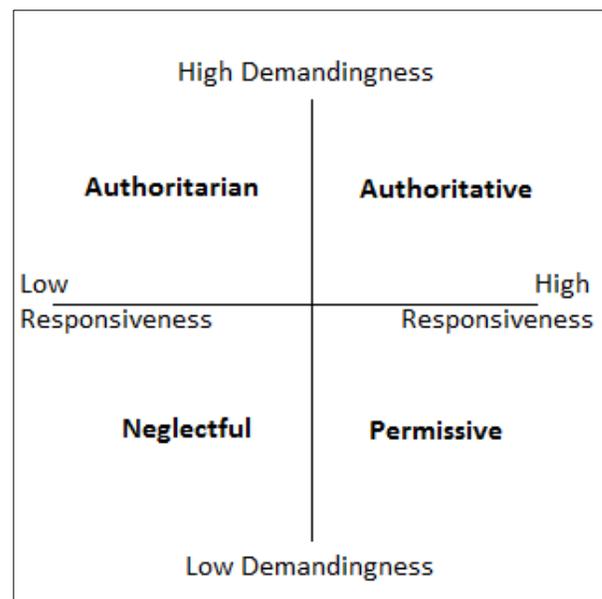


Figure 1.  
*Parenting styles are based on measures of demandingness and responsiveness.*

style is characterized by rules and punishment that are consistent and rationally explained to the child. A child raised in this environment would be taught to be independent and able to regulate his or her emotions. These children would also feel as though their opinions are valued. They would be able to make decisions as they have been taught the reasoning behind others' decisions. Martinez, Garcia, and Yubero (2007) found that children who had been raised in authoritative households showed higher self-esteem than those raised in any of the other styles. The more authoritative that a mother or father's parenting style is, the better academic performance that is predicted (Turner, Chandler, & Heffer, 2009). Authoritative parenting style is suggested to be the most optimal technique when raising children (Steinberg, 2001).

Authoritarian parenting style is marked by demanding and non-responsive strategies and is also described in Baumrind (1966). A parent utilizing this style has high expectations of compliance to rules with little explanation about why they exist. He/She would also likely demand obedience from the child and have a high emphasis on status, in the effort to try to shape the child into what they want them to be. Punishment would likely be inconsistent and without full explanation, meaning children raised in this style do not know what to expect when they do something wrong.

According to Baumrind (1966), indulgent/permissive style is characterized by a responsive but non-demanding strategy. Children raised in this parenting style will often not be taught to regulate themselves and will be very impulsive. Parents who utilize this method may believe that the way to show their love to their children is to let them do and have whatever they want. One quote that reflects this way of thinking states that, "The child should not do anything until he comes to the opinion – his own opinion – that it should be done" (Neill, 1964, p. 114). Children raised in this style will be responsible for regulating themselves and their activities.

Individuals who were raised in this style have been shown to have poorer emotion regulation (Jabeen, Anis-ul-Haque, & Riaz, 2013) and higher levels of aggression (Batool, 2013).

The final category is neglectful parenting style, which utilizes non-demanding and non-responsive strategies and was added by Maccoby and Martin (1983). Parents who use this style may even attempt to minimize interaction with their children, possibly due to the fact that they have given up on parenting their child(ren).

### **Self-Compassion and Parenting Styles**

Several studies have been performed that detail the way in which the parenting style one received while growing up can affect the way that individual acts as an adult. Recent research is suggesting that self-compassion is one of these traits that can be affected by the environment in which a person was raised. In a study performed by Neff and McGehee (2010), high childhood received maternal support, more harmonious family functioning, and secure attachment were associated with higher levels of adulthood self-compassion. Tanaka, Wekerle, Schmuck, and Paglia-Boak (2011) found that higher adulthood emotional abuse, neglect, and physical abuse were associated with lower self-compassion. Individuals with low levels of self-compassion were also found to be more likely to have psychological distress or substance abuse problems.

Past research performed on parenting styles has also suggested links to self-compassion. According to Baumrind (1966), authoritative parenting style is the most adaptive for children. This is the style that is characterized as being high in demandingness and high in responsiveness. This parenting style allows independence and decision-making skills to cultivate, while still maintaining an accurate view of the self. Parents who utilize this style will also be more likely to fully explain punishment and rules, allowing for more reasonable responses to negative events. This skill could lead to adults who have a realistic and balanced view of themselves and that are

able to react to personal failures in way that is non-criticizing and non-punishing. It has also been found that children raised in authoritative households have a more internal locus of control and a higher self-concept (McClun & Merrell, 1998), possibly allowing them to be more self-compassionate and able to take responsibility for their actions. Past research linking authoritative parenting style to high self-esteem also suggests that a similar relationship could be found with self-compassion (Buri, Louiselle, Misukanis, & Mueller, 1988).

Authoritarian parenting style is also expected to be related to self-compassion. This parenting style is characterized as being high in demandingness and low in responsiveness. As parents who utilize this style often will punish in an inconsistent and unexplained way (Baumrind, 1966), this could lead to adults who choose to punish themselves first following every failing. In a study performed by Kawamura, Frost, and Harmatz (2002), it was found that having experienced an authoritarian parenting style was related to two maladaptive measures of perfectionism – concern over mistakes and doubts about actions. The article suggests that this is due to the children internalizing criticism that they receive and developing their own harsh self-criticism, possibly leading them to treat themselves as their parents treated them. McClun and Merrell (1998) also found that children raised in authoritarian households had a lower self-concept and a more external locus of self-control. This could lead to adults who feel that they are not fully responsible for or in control of their personal failings. It has also been shown that authoritarian parenting is inversely related to self-esteem, suggesting a similar relationship will be found with self-compassion (Buri, Louiselle, Misukanis, & Mueller, 1988).

A recent study performed in Australia by Pepping, Davis, O'Donovan, and Pal (2015) investigated hypotheses very similar to the ones discussed here with a sample that is comparable in age and gender makeup. The Pepping et al. study found that “poor parenting” (defined as low

parental warmth, high parental overprotection, and high parental rejection) was associated with lower self-compassion in adults. This is related to the present study as parental warmth and rejection could be considered analogous to responsiveness in the previously mentioned model. In this, high responsiveness would be related to high parental warmth, whereas low responsiveness would be associated with high parental rejection. The results of the Pepping et al. study could be mirrored in the present research by showing that low parental responsiveness is related to lower self-compassion, while high parental responsiveness is related to higher self-compassion.

### **Present Research**

In the current study, I expected to find that the two parenting styles that differ on measures of responsiveness (authoritative and authoritarian) would be associated with differing levels of self-compassion. As responsiveness refers to the extent to which the parent responds to and accepts the child's behavior, I hypothesized that the way that a parent responds to the child would teach that child how to respond to him or herself. Specifically, I hypothesized that higher levels of authoritative parenting experienced as children would be associated with higher levels of self-compassion as adults. Conversely, I expected to find that participants who experienced higher levels of authoritarian parenting as children would have lower levels of self-compassion as adults. There were no specific hypotheses associated with permissive parenting as past research has not suggested a relationship. It is possible that these individuals never had high expectations put on them as children, and therefore may not have had many chances to be responded to in a positive or negative way.

Compassion for others was included as an exploratory measure as it is relatively new in the literature. However, similar results were predicted. This is primarily based on a past study performed by Neff and Pommier (2013) that showed that individuals higher in self-compassion

had higher compassion for humanity. I expected to find that individuals who were responded to in a healthier way would be more likely to notice and respond to the suffering of others.

Specifically, I expected authoritative parenting style to be associated with higher compassion for others and authoritarian parenting style to be associated with lower compassion for others.

## Method

### Participants

Three hundred and fourteen individuals participated in this research (70% female,  $M_{age} = 21.15$ ,  $SD = 5.8$ ). Two hundred and thirty-six individuals were included in the final regression analyses as these responses included data for both the mother and father, allowing us to control for the influence of each.

### Measures

*Self-Compassion.* Levels of adulthood self-compassion was measured with the Self-Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003b, see Appendix A). This scale has shown to be valid and reliable in Neff (2003b) and consists of ten items measuring self-kindness versus self-judgment (i.e. “I try to be loving towards myself when I’m feeling emotional pain”), eight items measuring common humanity versus isolation (i.e. “I try to see my failings as part of the human condition”), and eight items measuring mindfulness over over-identification (i.e. “When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance”). Overall scores of self-compassion were averaged for each participant.

*Compassion for Others.* This was measured by using the Compassion Scale developed by Pommier (2011, see Appendix B). This scale has been shown to be valid and reliable by the author and was included in order to compare the way in which these individuals deal with themselves and how they deal with others. Categories in this scale mirror those included in the

Self-Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003b). For analyses, an average compassion score was analyzed from each participant.

*Parenting Style.* Parenting style was assessed by administering the Parental Authority Questionnaire, a scale found to be valid and reliable when created by Buri (1991, see Appendix C). This questionnaire assessed each parent separately and provided a total score of authoritarianism, permissiveness, and authoritativeness. In order to include the most variety of responses, the survey asked about a “mother or maternal figure” and a “father or paternal figure”. This survey was chosen above others that categorize each parent into a style as every parent tends to utilize techniques from each of the parenting styles. Questions in this survey were modified in order to reflect retrospective analysis.

### **Procedure**

Participants accessed the survey through the online Sona Research Participation System and were compensated with class credit. Consent was given through an electronic signature before the surveys began and demographic information was collected. Participants were given the self-compassion scale, the compassion scale, and finally the scales assessing parenting styles. Responses about the mother’s parenting style were recorded before responses for the father.

### **Results**

Correlations and multiple linear regressions were used to calculate the relationship between parenting style and self-compassion as well as compassion for others. Table 1 includes all bivariate correlations and descriptive statistics. Mother’s authoritativeness and authoritarianism are both significantly and positively correlated with self-compassion in adulthood. Mother’s authoritarianism and father’s permissiveness were significantly positively correlated with adulthood compassion for others.

The first multiple regression model included self-compassion as the dependent variable with compassion and parenting styles as the predictor variables (see Table 2). Although there was a high amount of variance, the overall model was able to significantly predict 6.2% of the variance observed in self-compassion ( $R^2 = .062$ ,  $F = 2.153$ ,  $p < .05$ ). When controlling for all other variables, the authoritativeness of the mother ( $b = .009$ ,  $t(236) = 2.307$ ,  $p = .022$ ) and mother's authoritarianism ( $b = .008$ ,  $t(236) = 2.307$ ,  $p = .050$ ) significantly predicted adulthood self-compassion.

The second linear regression tested the way in which self-compassion and parenting styles could be used to predict compassion for others (see Table 3). The overall model significantly predicted 13.5% of the variance seen in compassion ( $R^2 = .135$ ,  $F = 5.086$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Mother's authoritarianism ( $b = .285$ ,  $t(236) = 2.974$ ,  $p = .003$ ) and mother's permissiveness ( $b = .255$ ,  $t(236) = 2.900$ ,  $p = .004$ ) significantly predicted adulthood compassion. Though father's permissiveness was significantly correlated with compassion for others, this effect disappeared when controlling for the other variables in the regression analysis.

Although self-compassion and compassion for others were significantly correlated with one another, they were not predictive of one another when controlling for the other variables in the regression analysis. This suggests that, although related, these are two different constructs that must be considered separately.

### **Discussion**

The overall purpose of the current study was to examine the way that the parenting style one experienced growing up can affect later self-compassion and compassion for others. More generally, I wanted to see if we learn to treat ourselves and others based on the way that our parents treated us.

My first hypothesis for self-compassion was supported. Mothers whose parenting style was high in authoritativeness had children who reported higher self-compassion in adulthood. This was expected as this style has been shown to be the most advantageous to children and is characterized as being very accepting and positively responsive (Baumrind, 1966). This suggests that these individuals were treated kindly by their mothers after a failing and that they were able to internalize this when they had to deal with their own personal failings.

My second hypothesis was not supported. Significant results were found for mothers who used a more authoritarian parenting style, but they were in the opposite direction of what was expected. Mothers who used a more authoritarian parenting style (characterized by high demandingness and low responsiveness) had children who reported higher self-compassion in adulthood.

The results found for self-compassion suggest that parenting styles high in demandingness are associated with higher self-compassion. However, further research including the neglectful parenting style, which is low in demandingness, is necessary in order to support this finding. It is possible that children raised in more demanding environments know how it feels to have expectations put on them and therefore have had experience in not meeting the expectations of others. This normal lifelong exposure to personal failing could have forced these individuals to be more kind to themselves as they have had to develop a way to cope with the feeling of disappointment. Individuals raised by mothers with a more permissive style of parenting could have never had to meet the expectations of their parents and therefore were not able to develop a healthy way of dealing with failure.

The results found for compassion for others did not support either of the exploratory hypotheses. Instead, it was found that having had a mother that used a parenting style high in

authoritarianism or permissiveness was associated with higher compassion for others as an adult. Correlation analyses also showed that these two measures were inversely related in the present study, indicating that this relationship may exist for very different reasons. One thing that these two styles have in common is that they are both associated with negative outcomes for individuals raised in them. In fact, it has even been advised that parents who use a more authoritarian parenting style will have less compassionate children (Carlo, McGinley, Hayes, Bathenhorst, & Wilkinson, 2007) This is the exact opposite of results found in the present study. One possible explanation of the results found is that individuals raised in a more negative parenting environment may be more likely to develop compassion for others later in life as they have been negatively treated themselves. More generally, compassion stems from empathy for these individuals. By having received less positive treatment as a child (because they were not raised in an authoritative household), individuals raised in these two styles could be more compelled to notice and want to change the suffering of others because they have dealt with it themselves to some degree. It is also possible that this relationship only exists in adults, but cannot be seen in children that are still in the home.

Mother's authoritarianism was the only significant predictor of both self-compassion and compassion for others, even though past studies have shown that individuals high in self-compassion tend to have higher compassion for others (Neff & Pommier, 2013). Further research must be done to see if parenting style is a possible mediator between self-compassion and compassion for others.

It is important to note that all of the significant results found in this study are related to the parenting style used by the mother of the participant. As mentioned previously, similar results were found in a study performed by Neff and McGehee (2010) that showed that higher

received maternal support was associated with higher self-compassion. This may have also been found due to the fact that my sample was predominately female (70%), and females may be more likely to model their behavior after the way that they see their mothers act.

Although my results did not mirror those found by Pepping, Davis, O'Donovan, and Pal (2015) which showed that parental warmth and rejection were associated with self-compassion, there are several differences between the two studies. The most important difference is that the present research analyzed mother and father measures separately, while the Pepping study asked about parents as a single unit. Although it is not certain what effect this had on the way my participants perceived their parents, it is possible that each parent has a differential way of determining how we treat ourselves and others. Another difference between the two studies stems from the inclusion of attachment style in the Pepping et al. study, which was found to be a significant mediator of the relationship. Future research should include this measure in order to fully understand the relationship between the variables.

### **Relevance**

The present research expands what is currently known about both parenting styles and self-compassion. Self-compassion is quickly becoming the standard for what is considered to be a healthy self-stance due to the many benefits and few downsides the concept offers. The results of this study support authoritative parenting style as the strongest predictor of later self-compassion. This finding offers a way in which self-compassion could be fostered in children and further endorses authoritative parenting style as the most beneficial parenting choice. Techniques could be developed that utilize strategies based on authoritative parenting style in order to allow children to develop compassion for themselves. Parenting styles high in

authoritarianism were also found to significantly predict high self-compassion in adults, suggesting the importance of having expectations for your child's behavior.

Past research has suggested that self-compassion could be a tool when reacting to negative events or emotions in one's life. This has been shown in studies suggesting that individuals who had high self-compassion had better outcomes following negative events or childhood trauma (Jativa & Cerezo, 2014; Leary, 2007; Vettese et al., 2011) The viability of self-compassion as an intervention tool for those who have experienced negative parenting styles will need to be tested further to explore its efficacy. This research also shows that individuals raised in negative family environments are more likely to be compassionate towards others. Future research should further examine this relationship as no past studies have suggested such a finding.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

One limitation of the present research is that questionnaires assessing the parenting style that an individual received can be subjective to the perception of the person taking the survey. It is possible that self-compassion could cause adults to view the parenting style they received to be less harsh as they have a tendency to be less blaming and more understanding. It could also be possible that people low in self-compassion could view their experienced parenting style as being more severe as they have a tendency to be more susceptible to negative emotions following evaluation or punishment. It is unclear how this could be controlled for in future research.

Responses could also be affected by the locus of control for each of these groups. Research has shown that individuals high in self-compassion have a more internal locus of self-control, possibly making them less likely to blame their parents for their actions (McClun &

Merrell, 1998). The same study showed that individuals low in self-compassion had a more external locus of self-control, possibly making these individuals more likely to blame their parents for the decisions they made. As a result, it would be worthwhile for future research to assess locus of control in addition to the parenting style participants received as children and their current level of self-compassion.

A second limitation of the current study is that the scale used to assess parenting style did not include neglectful parenting style. This prevents us from making solid conclusions about the responsiveness and demandingness aspects of the parenting style model, or about positive and negative styles of parenting. Future research on this subject should be sure to incorporate each of the parenting styles described by Baumrind (1966) and extended by Maccoby and Martin (1983).

Another limitation of this study stems from the sample used. Although the mean age for the sample was 21.15 and primarily comprised of 18-year-old freshmen, there was a wide variety in the ages that responded. It is possible that individuals that just started college, and may even still be living at home, would respond much differently from non-traditional college students who have been removed from their parents' houses for many years. This could also be affected by research showing that self-compassion increases over the lifetime, introducing a third factor into the relationship (Werner et al., 2012). As a result, future research should control for the age of participants when conducting statistical analyses to examine whether the way our parents treat us can affect us throughout the lifetime and to also determine whether the relationship only exists for individuals more recently under their parents' guidance.

The present research did not account for different types of families. In order to control for each parent's style, I only used participants who had responded for both their father and their mother. This excluded all individuals who may have been raised in a one-parent household or

who had an inconsistent family environment. Future research should address this gap in the research and incorporate individuals who may not have been raised in traditional households.

### **Conclusions**

The results of this study suggest that the way we are treated by our parents can have a profound effect on the way that we treat ourselves and others as an adult. It is also suggested that we may model our behavior after the way our mother treats us, more so than after the way our father treats us. Future research must be conducted in order to examine the many complicated facets of this relationship.

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Table 1:

*Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations found between self-compassion, compassion, and parenting styles*

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1. Self-Compassion</b>	-							
<b>2. Compassion for Others</b>	.142*	-						
<b>3. Mother's Authoritativeness</b>	.112*	.101	-					
<b>4. Mother's Authoritarianism</b>	.118*	.102	-.445*	-				
<b>5. Mother's Permissiveness</b>	.001	.195*	.269*	-.529*	-			
<b>6. Father's Authoritativeness</b>	.076	.082	.463*	-.016	.048	-		
<b>7. Father's Authoritarianism</b>	.053	.033	-.120*	.355*	-.209*	.188*	-	
<b>8. Father's Permissiveness</b>	.057	.202*	.012	-.068	.452*	.082	-.515*	-
<b>Mean</b>	3.13	3.21	35.83	32.95	24.14	30.79	35.24	24.19
<b>SD</b>	.358	.369	8.46	8.58	6.38	8.20	8.70	7.13

Note: N = 236, \* $p \leq .05$

Table 2:

*Results from linear regression predicting self-compassion*

	<i>b</i>	<i>SEb</i>	$\beta$	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>
<b>Constant</b>	2.168	.282		<b>2.153*</b>	.062
<b>Compassion</b>	.084	.067	.086		
<b>Mother's Authoritativeness</b>	.009	.004	<b>.202*</b>		
<b>Mother's Authoritarianism</b>	.008	.004	<b>.198*</b>		
<b>Mother's Permissiveness</b>	.001	.005	.013		
<b>Father's Authoritativeness</b>	-.001	.004	-.023		
<b>Father's Authoritarianism</b>	.001	.004	.034		
<b>Father's Permissiveness</b>	.080	.005	.066		

Note: N = 236, \* $p \leq .05$

Table 3:

*Results from linear regression predicting compassion for others*

	<i>b</i>	<i>SEb</i>	$\beta$	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>
<b>Constant</b>	1.689	.293		<b>5.086*</b>	.135
<b>Self-Compassion</b>	.082	.065	.079		
<b>Mother's Authoritativeness</b>	.007	.004	.161		
<b>Mother's Authoritarianism</b>	.012	.004	<b>.285*</b>		
<b>Mother's Permissiveness</b>	.015	.005	<b>.255*</b>		
<b>Father's Authoritativeness</b>	.000	.004	-.010		
<b>Father's Authoritarianism</b>	.003	.004	.067		
<b>Father's Permissiveness</b>	.007	.005	.135		

Note: N = 236, \* $p \leq .05$

## Appendix A

The *Self-Compassion Scale* was developed by Neff (2003b) and is measured on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 referring to “almost never” and 5 referring to “almost always”

1. I'm disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies.
2. When I'm feeling down I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that's wrong.
3. When things are going badly for me, I see the difficulties as part of life that everyone goes through.
4. When I think about my inadequacies, it tends to make me feel more separate and cut off from the rest of the world.
5. I try to be loving towards myself when I'm feeling emotional pain.
6. When I fail at something important to me I become consumed by feelings of inadequacy.
7. When I'm down and out, I remind myself that there are lots of other people in the world feeling like I am.
8. When times are really difficult, I tend to be tough on myself.
9. When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance.
10. When I feel inadequate in some way, I try to remind myself that feelings of inadequacy are shared by most people.
11. I'm intolerant and impatient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.
12. When I'm going through a very hard time, I give myself the caring and tenderness I need.
13. When I'm feeling down, I tend to feel like most other people are probably happier than I am.
14. When something painful happens I try to take a balanced view of the situation.
15. I try to see my failings as part of the human condition.

16. When I see aspects of myself that I don't like, I get down on myself.
17. When I fail at something important to me I try to keep things in perspective.
18. When I'm really struggling, I tend to feel like other people must be having an easier time of it.
19. I'm kind to myself when I'm experiencing suffering.
20. When something upsets me I get carried away with my feelings.
21. I can be a bit cold-hearted towards myself when I'm experiencing suffering.
22. When I'm feeling down I try to approach my feelings with curiosity and openness.
23. I'm tolerant of my own flaws and inadequacies.
24. When something painful happens I tend to blow the incident out of proportion.
25. When I fail at something that's important to me, I tend to feel alone in my failure.
26. I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.

## Appendix B

The *Compassion Scale* was developed by Pommier (2011). Items on this measure can be answered on scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning “almost never” and 5 meaning “almost always”.

1. When people cry in front of me, I often don't feel anything at all.
2. Sometimes when people talk about their problems, I feel like I don't care.
3. I don't feel emotionally connected to people in pain.
4. I pay careful attention when other people talk to me.
5. I feel detached from others when they tell me their tales of woe.
6. If I see someone going through a difficult time, I try to be caring toward that person.
7. I often tune out when people tell me about their troubles.
8. I like to be there for others in times of difficulty.
9. I notice when people are upset, even if they don't say anything.
10. When I see someone feeling down, I feel like I can't relate to them.
11. Everyone feels down sometimes, it is part of being human.
12. Sometimes I am cold to others when they are down and out.
13. I tend to listen patiently when people tell me their problems.
14. I don't concern myself with other people's problems.
15. It's important to recognize that all people have weaknesses and no one's perfect.
16. My heart goes out to people who are unhappy.
17. Despite my differences with others, I know that everyone feels pain just like me.
18. When others are feeling troubled, I usually let someone else attend to them.
19. I don't think much about the concerns of others.

20. Suffering is just a part of the common human experience.
21. When people tell me about their problems, I try to keep a balanced perspective on the situation.
22. I can't really connect with other people when they're suffering.
23. I try to avoid people who are experiencing a lot of pain.
24. When others feel sadness, I try to comfort them.

## Appendix C

The *Parental Authority Questionnaire* was developed by Buri (1991). The version below asks about the participant's mother, while a modified version using male pronouns and "father" was used to assess their father. This scale asks participants to select a number on a scale of 1-5, with 1 meaning "strongly disagree" and 5 meaning "strongly agree". In this scale, the type of parenting style that the question pertains to is denoted with an asterisk (\*permissive, \*\*authoritarian, and \*\*\*authoritative).

1. While I was growing up my mother felt that in a well-run home the children should have their way in the family as often as the parents do. \*
2. Even if her children didn't agree with her, my mother felt that it was for our own good if I were forced to conform to what she thought was right. \*\*
3. Whenever my mother told me to do something as I was growing up, she expected me to do it immediately without asking any questions. \*\*
4. As I was growing up, once family policy had been established, my mother discuss the reasoning behind the policy with the children in the family. \*\*\*
5. My mother has always encouraged verbal give-and-take whenever I have felt that family rules and restrictions were unreasonable. \*\*\*
6. My mother has always felt that what children need is to be free to make up their own minds and to do what they want to do, even if this does not agree with what their parents might want. \*
7. As I was growing up, my mother did not allow me to question any decision she had made. \*\*

8. As I was growing up, my mother directed the activities and decisions of the children in the family through reasoning and discipline. \*\*\*
9. My mother has always felt that more force should be used by parents in order to get their children to behave the way they are supposed to. \*\*
10. As I was growing up, my mother did *not* feel that I needed to obey rules and regulations of behavior simply because someone in authority had established them. \*
11. As I was growing up, I knew what my mother expected of me in my family, but I also felt free to discuss those expectations with my mother when I felt that they were unreasonable.\*\*\*
12. My mother felt that wise parents should teach their children early just who is boss in the family.\*\*
13. As I was growing up, my mother seldom gave me expectations and guidelines for my behavior. \*
14. Most of the time as I was growing up my mother did what the children in the family wanted when making family decisions. \*
15. As the children in my family were growing up, my mother consistently gave us direction and guidance in rational and objective ways. \*\*\*
16. As I was growing up, my mother would get very upset if I tried to disagree with her. \*\*
17. My mother feels that most problems in society would be solved if parents did *not* restrict their children's activities, decisions, and desires as they are growing up. \*
18. As I was growing up, my mother let me know what behavior she expected of me, and if I didn't meet those expectations, she punished me.\*\*

19. As I was growing up, my mother allowed me to decide most things for myself without a lot of direction from her. \*
20. As I was growing up, my mother took the children's opinions into consideration when making family decisions, but she would not decide for something simply because the children wanted it. \*\*\*
21. My mother did not view herself as responsible for directing and guiding my behavior as I was growing up. \*
22. My mother had clear standards of behavior for the children in our home as I was growing up, but she was willing to adjust those standards to the needs of each of the individual children in the family. \*\*\*
23. My mother gave me direction for my behavior and activities as I was growing up and she expected me to follow her direction, but she was always willing to listen to my concerns and to discuss that direction with me. \*\*\*
24. As I was growing up, my mother allowed me to form my own point of view on family matters and she generally allowed me to decide for myself what I was going to do. \*
25. My mother has always felt that most problems in society would be solved if I could get parents to strictly and forcibly deal with their children when they don't do what they are supposed to as they are growing up. \*\*
26. As I was growing up, my mother often told me exactly what she wanted me to do and how she expected me to do it. \*\*
27. As I was growing up, my mother gave me clear direction for my behaviors and activities, but she was also understanding when I disagreed with her. \*\*\*

28. As I was growing up, my mother did not direct the behaviors, activities, and desires of the children in the family. \*
29. As I was growing up, I knew what my mother expected of me in the family and she insisted that I conform to those expectations simply out of respect for her authority. \*\*
30. As I was growing up, if my mother made a decision in the family that hurt me, she was willing to discuss that decision with me and to admit it if she had made a mistake. \*\*\*