

Secondary Publication



Körner, Robert; Schütz, Astrid; Petersen, Lars-Eric; u. a.

The Power to Care for Oneself : Power Increases Self-Compassion

Date of secondary publication: 16.06.2026

Version of Record (Published Version), Article

Persistent identifier: urn:nbn:de:bvb:473-irb-115608x

Primary publication

Körner, Robert; Schütz, Astrid; Petersen, Lars-Eric; u. a. (2026): The Power to Care for Oneself : Power Increases Self-Compassion, in: European journal of social psychology, Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, Online First, pp. 1–17, doi: 10.1002/ejsp.70090.

Legal Notice

This work is protected by copyright and/or the indication of a licence. You are free to use this work in any way permitted by the copyright and/or the licence that applies to your usage. For other uses, you must obtain permission from the rights-holders.

This document is made available under a Creative Commons license.



The license information is available online:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>

RESEARCH ARTICLE OPEN ACCESS

The Power to Care for Oneself: Power Increases Self-Compassion

Robert Körner^{1,2}  | Astrid Schütz¹  | Lars-Eric Petersen³  | Marine Groulon¹ | Serena Chen² ¹Department of Psychology, Otto-Friedrich-University of Bamberg, Bamberg, Germany | ²Department of Psychology, University of California, Berkeley, California, USA | ³Department of Psychology, Martin-Luther-University of Halle-Wittenberg, Halle, Germany**Correspondence:** Robert Körner (robert.koerner@uni-bamberg.de)**Received:** 2 February 2026 | **Revised:** 21 May 2026 | **Accepted:** 28 May 2026**Keywords:** hierarchy | power | self | self-compassion | authenticity

ABSTRACT

Sense of power and self-compassion both impact important intrapsychic and interpersonal outcomes. However, how powerholders treat themselves when experiencing failure or personal setbacks is unclear. We propose that powerholders are more apt than their lower-power counterparts to exhibit self-compassion when faced with difficulties. Across six main studies (and four supplemental studies) using experimental, correlational and real-world designs ($N_{\text{total}} = 3325$), converging support was found for a positive link between power and self-compassion. This held for experimentally-induced, self- and peer-reported and structural power, and for direct and indirect self-compassion measures. Further, as power means reduced dependence and increased security, we theorized and found that power enhances authenticity, which explained powerholders' greater self-compassion. These findings advance theory in suggesting that power is linked to adaptively dealing with personal adversities, carry implications for organizational politics and HR practices and suggest that self-compassion interventions for low-power individuals may be useful.

1 | Introduction

People who have influence over others can assert their wishes, make decisions and get their needs and goals fulfilled (Anderson et al. 2012; Keltner et al. 2003). However, powerholders¹—such as business leaders, politicians, military generals and educators—also have to decide on critical matters that impact other people and their organizations, and must deal with multiple matters simultaneously. Thus, when powerholders encounter setbacks or failures, this can negatively impact not only themselves but also people they hold power over. This magnified impact would seem to leave powerholders in need of self-protective resources when faced with failure.

The present research examined whether power influences how people treat themselves in the face of setbacks. Specifically, across ten studies, we tested whether power is positively linked to self-compassion, the latter referring to a response to setbacks and fail-

ures that involves adopting a caring attitude toward the self, being mindful and recognizing that setbacks are a common human experience (Neff 2023). Furthermore, building on evidence indicating that power is associated with authenticity (e.g., Chen 2020), we tested whether powerholders' heightened authenticity promotes self-compassionate responding. In addition, we also examined whether specific conditions and personality variables (i.e., relationship types, structural power, agency/communion) affect when power is linked to self-compassion.

1.1 | Power and Self-Compassion

Power has been defined in numerous ways (Keltner et al. 2003). We follow consensus definitions of *sense of power* as the felt ability to influence other people (Anderson et al. 2012; Körner et al. 2025). Sense of power has also been termed psychological, subjective or felt power. It can be distinguished from structural

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

© 2026 The Author(s). *European Journal of Social Psychology* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

power, which refers to control over resources that can afford influence (and thus also a sense of power; Keltner et al. 2003). Sense of power can arise not only from resource control but also from social status (Körner et al. 2025)². Here, we focused on sense of power because research suggests it shapes outcomes more strongly than does structural power (e.g., Bombari et al. 2017; Körner and Schütz 2021). Power manipulations usually assign participants to a hierarchical role, provide participants with resources or ask participants to remember powerful situations to increase their sense of power (Galinsky et al. 2015). Studies have shown that trait measures and experimental manipulations of power both tap into sense of power and yield similar effects (e.g., Anicich et al. 2016; Cai and Guinote 2017; Fast and Chen 2009; Schaerer et al. 2021).

Power has been reported to influence many self-related responses, including increased authenticity, self-concept consistency, confidence and overconfidence (e.g., Briñol et al. 2017; Kraus et al. 2011; Fast et al. 2012). Many of these responses reflect agentic aspects of the self, suggesting that power enhances agency (Guinote 2017). What is unclear is how power relates to more communally-oriented tendencies vis-à-vis the self, such as self-compassion.

Self-compassion refers to a caring way of relating to and treating the self when faced with a setback or failure. Neff (2003) characterizes self-compassion as having three interrelated facets. First, self-kindness (vs. self-judgment) refers to feelings of kindness and care toward oneself when experiencing difficulties. Second, mindfulness (vs. overidentification) entails taking a mindful and open attitude toward one's own suffering, having an accepting attitude about one's failures, and acknowledging that failure is an inevitable part of life. Finally, common humanity (vs. isolation) involves recognizing that failures are a shared human experience, which bolsters a sense of interconnectedness with others and minimizes feelings of isolation. These three facets show high intercorrelations and research supports treating self-compassion as a unidimensional construct (Neff et al. 2019).

Notably, self-compassion is explicitly non-evaluative (Neff 2003), making it distinct from both self-esteem and self-pity, which are evaluative and do not explicitly refer to reactions to failure. Self-compassion has been linked to health, well-being and optimism (Neff 2023). Recent reviews call for a deeper understanding of self-compassion in organizational contexts (Dodson and Heng 2022; Neff 2023), including how asymmetric power relationships affect it.

1.2 | The Self-Caring Powerholder

1.2.1 | Characteristics of Power Might Promote Self-Compassion

How might power influence self-compassion? We propose that power is typically associated with greater self-compassion. Self-compassionate responding comes into play in the face of setbacks and failures. Broadly speaking, setbacks and failures pose a threat to the self, a state of affairs that arouses the sympathetic system (e.g., Dickerson and Kemeny 2004; Seery 2011) and, accordingly, threat-defence mechanisms and self-criticism (e.g., Gruenewald et al. 2004; Tangney and Dearing 2003)—responses that hinder

access to self-compassionate responses such as self-kindness (e.g., Neff 2003, 2023). Power is characterized by being less dependent on others as well as enhanced feelings of security and safety (Keltner et al. 2003), which should reduce powerholders' sense of vulnerability and mitigate the threat of setbacks and failures. By contrast, lower-power individuals are subject to the evaluations and actions of others, and are dependent on others to obtain their needs and goals (Thibaut and Kelley 1978). This leaves them feeling more vulnerable, insecure and fearful of consequences when faced with setbacks and failures. Indeed, research suggests that in response to stressful events, powerholders experience less distress and show lower increases in cortisol and arousal than lower-power individuals do (e.g., Kuehn et al. 2015; Schmid and Schmid Mast 2013; Sherman and Mehta 2020; Sherman et al. 2012; Sherman et al. 2020). In short, we reason that setbacks and failures should pose less of a threat when one is higher compared to lower in power, paving the way for a greater capacity and inclination to respond self-compassionately.

Further, self-compassion can be viewed as a strategy of emotion regulation (e.g., Diedrich et al. 2014; Inwood and Ferrari 2018), one that encourages greater objectivity and acceptance, and less judgment, in how people view setbacks and failures and respond to the negative emotions that are typically triggered when such events occur. Research indicates that higher compared to lower power is associated with more effective self-regulation and more adaptive emotion regulation strategies, including greater acceptance and less suppression (Guinote 2017; Zerwas et al. 2023), regulatory responses that cohere well with an emotion regulatory perspective on self-compassion.

1.2.2 | Authenticity as a Mediator

What might explain the hypothesized link between power and self-compassion? We propose authenticity as a mediator for this link, a possibility supported by various strands of theorizing and research. First, considerable theorizing suggests that being less dependent on others and feeling more secure (i.e., defining characteristics of high power) allow powerholders to be truer to themselves (e.g., Chen 2020; Keltner et al. 2003), and there is substantial empirical evidence to support a link between power and authenticity (i.e., living and behaving in accord with one's beliefs, feelings and desires; e.g., Kifer et al. 2013; Kraus et al. 2011). For example, the approach inhibition theory of power (Keltner et al. 2003) and Guinote's (2017) framework of power as activating, wanting and goal-seeking both maintain that power leads to goal-directed action in line with the powerholder's wishes and desires. Empirically, power is linked to greater expression of one's felt thoughts and emotions (e.g., Hecht and LaFrance 1998), making powerholders less influenced by others and thus truer to themselves (Galinsky et al. 2008). By contrast, people with a lower sense of power are more likely to conform and are more influenced by the social context (Galinsky et al. 2008), corresponding to lower authenticity (Chen 2020).

Various lines of theory and research suggest, in turn, that authenticity is positively linked to self-compassion. In particular, authenticity is associated with self-acceptance (e.g., A. M. Wood et al. 2008), which should facilitate taking a non-judgmental

stance (i.e., self-kindness) when one is faced with a setback. In fact, authentic individuals tend to acknowledge and accept their thoughts and feelings instead of suppressing them (English and John 2013). Furthermore, authentic individuals more easily exhibit mindfulness (Tohme and Joseph 2025), allowing them to face difficulties with relative equanimity—another core element of self-compassion. In essence, living in accord with one's core values should foster a non-judgmental and mindful attitude toward the self when encountering setbacks and failures. Supporting this, authenticity-like interventions, such as writing about a personally important value and acceptance therapy (i.e., aiming to develop psychological flexibility by accepting one's thoughts and feelings instead of controlling or suppressing them) have been reported to increase self-compassion (e.g., Lindsay and Creswell 2014; Yadavaia et al. 2014). In short, authenticity might serve as a psychological mechanism linking power and self-compassion.

1.2.3 | Filling Gaps

Examining the link between power and self-compassion addresses important gaps in the literature. Most research on power and self-related responses has focused on agentic characteristics such as confidence (Fast et al. 2012), leaving it unclear whether communally-oriented responses, directed at the self in the case of self-compassion, are also affected by power. In fact, if anything, low power is usually associated with communality (Magee and Smith 2013) and compassion (Van Kleef et al. 2008); thus, establishing a positive link between power and self-compassion would qualify the assumption that power always goes along with less gentle and caring attitudes—at least with respect to the self. Furthermore, if power and self-compassion are positively linked, there may be important downstream consequences because self-compassion is related to various adaptive thoughts and behaviours (Neff 2023).

1.3 | Overview of Studies

Across six main studies (and four supplemental studies), we tested the relation between power and self-compassion (for a summary, see Table 1). In Study 1 (and Study S2), we addressed whether power has a causal effect on self-compassion (see Online Supplement for details on all supplemental studies). In Study 2, we tested whether the link between the two constructs generalizes across different relationship contexts (work, friendship, romantic relationship) to assess whether this association is context-independent or has boundary conditions. We also controlled for broad personality traits in this study to examine the robustness of this link. In Study 3, we examined the power–self-compassion link among real-world employees and managers to enhance ecological validity by testing the association in naturally-occurring hierarchical relationships. This study also tested whether sense of power interacts with structural power in predicting self-compassion. In Study 4, we controlled for social desirability and utilized a new indirect self-compassion measure, advancing methodological features of self-compassion research. In Study 5, we tested whether the power–self-compassion link can also be interpersonally observed. Finally, in Studies 6a and 6b, we examined the hypothesis that authenticity mediates the

link. Across these studies and one supplemental study (Study S4), we employed a measurement-of-mediation design and an experimental-causal-chain design.

In the Online Supplement, we present studies that are replications of the main studies (Study S1 demonstrated the basic correlational link, Study S2 replicated Study 1 with a different experimental design, Study S3 replicated the agency and communion control analyses of Study 2 and Study S4 replicated authenticity as a statistical mediator). Further, in the Online Supplement, we briefly list and justify the power and self-compassion operationalizations we used to test the generalizability and robustness of our findings. In our studies, we deliberately used not only different versions of the self-compassion scales and different measurement approaches (self-reported and more indirect, behavioural measures), but also diverse manipulations of power and the most established sense of power scale (Anderson et al. 2012). This multi-method approach not only reduces the likelihood that our results are artefacts of particular operationalizations but also allows us to examine whether the observed effects hold across varying conceptualizations and contexts. By triangulating across methods, we strengthen the validity of our findings and increase confidence in their replicability and theoretical relevance. Table S6 (Online Supplement) displays the rationale for our sample sizes and stopping rules for data collection across all studies.

1.4 | Transparency and Openness

We report all manipulations, participants recruited and exclusions. For experiments, we report all measures; for some cross-sectional-studies that were part of larger projects, we report only the measures relevant to our research question because other measures are planned to be published in other projects. All data and materials are available at <https://osf.io/uhb5g>. Data were analysed using SPSS, Mplus, and R. Studies 1–5 were not preregistered; Studies 6a and 6b were preregistered.

2 | Study 1

In Study 1, we aimed to examine whether power has a causal effect on self-compassion. We manipulated power using a fictitious scenario task, a manipulation that has been shown to successfully induce a sense of power (e.g., Dubois et al. 2010), and subsequently assessed self-compassion in relation to a difficulty. We expected higher self-compassion among high-power compared to low-power participants.

2.1 | Method

We recruited 200 university students in exchange for course credit. Seven were removed due to implausibly fast processing times (>2 *SD* below the median processing time; this same criterion was used in all relevant studies below), leaving a final sample of 193 (78% women; $M_{\text{age}} = 25.10$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 7.58$, range: 18–58). See Table 2 for sensitivity power analyses for all studies.

TABLE 1 | Overview about studies.

Study	Power measure	Self-compassion measure	Additions	Key findings	Key theoretical insight
Main studies					
1: Experimental	Power manipulation (IV)	State SCS (DV)		Controlling for trait self-compassion, high-power participants reported higher state self-compassion than low-power participants did (between-subjects).	Power has causal effect on self-compassion.
2: Correlational	PSPS	Short SCS	Context-specific scales Control for Big Two personality traits	Positive correlation between power and self-compassion (on general measure and on work-, romance- and friendship-related measures; also after controlling for agency and communion). Managers reported higher self-compassion than subordinates did.	Positive link generalizes across three different relationship types. Findings have ecological relevance in real-world hierarchical settings.
3: Real-world study	PSPS	SCS			
4: Correlational	PSPS	SCS Indirect SC	Social desirability (control variable)	Power correlated positively with self-report and indirect measures of self-compassion. The power-self-compassion link remained positive after controlling for social desirability.	Positive link is robust to social desirability and can be found with new self-compassion measure.
5: Correlational observer study	PSPS (peer-report)	SCS (peer-report)		Positive correlation between peer-reported power and peer-reported self-compassion.	Positive link is interpersonally perceivable.
6a: Experimental	Power manipulation (IV)	Indirect SC (DV)	Authenticity (mediator) Mood (control variable)	Authenticity was a statistical mediator in the power-self-compassion link. High-power participants reported higher state self-compassion and state authenticity than low-power and control group participants did.	Authenticity explains why power is positively linked to self-compassion.
6b: Experimental	—	Short State SCS (DV)	Authenticity manipulation (IV)	High-authenticity participants reported higher state self-compassion than low-authenticity participants did.	Authenticity per se has a positive effect on self-compassion.
Supplemental studies					
S1: Correlational	PSPS	SCS		Positive correlation between both variables.	
S2: Experimental	Power manipulation (IV)	State SCS (DV)		Controlling for trait self-compassion, high-power participants reported higher state self-compassion than low-power participants did (both within and between-subjects).	
S3: Correlational	PSPS	SCS	Control for Big Two personality traits	Positive correlation between both variables (also after controlling for agency and communion).	
S4: Correlational	PSPS	Short SCS	Authenticity (mediator)	Authenticity was a statistical mediator in the power-self-compassion link.	
Validation study	PSPS	Short SCS Indirect SC	Scales on personality, well-being and self-evaluations	Positive correlation between both variables. Nomological validity on new, indirect self-compassion measure was supported.	

Abbreviations: DV = Dependent variable; IV = Independent variable; PSPS = Personal Sense of Power Scale (Anderson et al. 2012); SC = Self-compassion; SCS = Self-Compassion Scale (Neff 2003).

TABLE 2 | Sensitivity power analyses given sample sizes across main studies.

Study	Statistical test	Minimum detectable effect size	Observed effect size
Study 1	<i>F</i> test ANCOVA	$\eta_p^2 = 0.04$	$\eta_p^2 = 0.04$
Study 2	Correlation	$r = 0.18$	$r = 0.43$
Study 3	Correlation (subordinates)	$r = 0.19$	$r = 0.50$
	Correlation (managers)	$r = 0.21$	$r = 0.28$
	<i>t</i> test independent groups	$d = 0.28$	$d = 0.54$
Study 4	Correlation	$r = 0.19$	$r = 0.24$
Study 5	Correlation	$r = 0.17$	$r = 0.19$
Study 6a	<i>F</i> test ANOVA	$\eta_p^2 = 0.03$	$\eta_p^2 = 0.08$
Study 6b	<i>t</i> test independent groups	$d = 0.35$	$d = 0.30$

Note: Minimum detectable effect sizes were obtained from sensitivity analyses in G*Power using the available sample size, $\alpha = 0.05$, and target power of 0.80.

First, participants completed a baseline self-compassion measure, the 6-item *State Self-Compassion Scale Short Form* (Neff et al. 2021; $\alpha = 0.60$, for all subsequent measures, alpha is presented in parentheses behind the scale authors). Then, participants were randomly assigned to a high-power ($n = 89$) or low-power group ($n = 104$). High-power participants were asked to imagine that they lived in a large apartment and had received applications from potential flat-mates. They were to choose between applicants and were able to make requirements. Thus, high-power participants had resource control (i.e., control over who would get housing). Low-power participants were asked to imagine they applied for a room in an unattractive apartment but urgently needed a room. Thus, someone else decided whether they would receive the critical resource (i.e., housing). We pilot-tested the effectiveness of this power manipulation with 161 participants (see [Online Supplement](#)). Importantly, although the manipulation in this study may appear to differ in valence, feedback from pilot participants did not suggest that one situation was more positive than the other (see also the concept of power aversion; Hull et al. 2022). While we cannot fully rule out valence differences, the findings across studies suggest that valence is unlikely to have influenced the results (see e.g., mood control in Study 6a and control for agency and communion in Study 2).

Subsequently, all participants were asked to think about a painful or difficult situation that they are experiencing right now and completed the *State Self-Compassion Scale Long Form* in response to this experience (Neff et al. 2021; 16 items, e.g., ‘I’m getting carried away with my feelings,’ reverse scored; $\alpha = 0.86$). We used the longer scale to have participants’ rate items that were not included in the baseline self-compassion measure. In addition, participants completed items on their task engagement—specifically, their immersion and identification with their role in the scenario and their motivation to do the task on 7-point scales (3 items, e.g., ‘How motivated were you to put yourself in the scenario?’ $\alpha = 0.86$).

2.2 | Results and Discussion

An ANOVA controlling for baseline self-compassion indicated higher self-compassion among high-power compared to low-

power participants, $\eta_p^2 = 0.04$ (Table 3). When excluding 43 participants who had a mean that was equal to or below 4 on the aggregated engagement variables (i.e., they indicated low immersion, identification and/or motivation when completing the scenarios), the difference between high-power ($n = 74$) and low-power participants ($n = 76$) became stronger, $\eta_p^2 = 0.06$.

In sum, inducing a sense of power through a scenario task that varied resource control increased state self-compassion. We replicated this finding in another experiment using a different power manipulation and a combined within- and between-subjects design (see Study S2).³

3 | Study 2

In Study 2, we examined the generalizability of the positive link between power and self-compassion across different relationship types. Power is a fundamentally relational concept and thus may vary across relationship types (Anderson et al. 2012; Kifer et al. 2013). People can indicate their generalized level of power across relationships and situations but they can also reliably indicate their power experienced vis-à-vis a specific relationship partner or in a particular situation (Anderson et al. 2012). Initial evidence suggests that self-compassion can also vary across relationships, for example, how self-caring an individual is after a conflict in a romantic relationship may differ from how caring the person is after a conflict at work (Zuroff et al. 2021). More broadly, as people behave differently in different interpersonal contexts (Chen et al. 2006; Mischel and Shoda 1995; Roberts and Donahue 1994), it is possible that power shows different relationships with self-compassion depending on the particular interpersonal context in question.

To examine this possibility, and thus the generalizability of our key finding, we assessed the link between power and self-compassion across work, romance and friendship contexts. Further, we tested how much variance the interpersonal contexts account for in generalized, trait-level assessments of power and self-compassion, which also allowed us to gain insight into potential context-specific variations in the link between power and self-compassion. In this study, we used a scale that has been

TABLE 3 | Results (mean, standard deviation, ANCOVA or *t*-test results) of group differences between high and low power [Study 1], managers and subordinates [Study 3], and high and low authenticity [Study 6b].

	High power		Low power		Group differences		
	M_{adjusted}	SE	M_{adjusted}	SE	F	p	η_p^2
Study 1							
Self-compassion	3.45	0.04	3.30	0.04	7.89	0.005	0.04
Self-compassion (after exclusions)	3.49	0.04	3.29	0.04	9.95	0.002	0.06
	Managers		Subordinates		Group differences		
	M	SD	M	SD	t	p	d
Study 3							
Power	5.62	0.87	4.74	1.04	8.98	< 0.001	0.91
Self-compassion	3.48	0.51	3.18	0.59	5.29	< 0.001	0.54
Power (dyads)	5.65	0.80	4.93	1.00	6.26	< 0.001	0.59
Self-compassion (dyads)	3.52	0.50	3.26	0.54	3.96	< 0.001	0.38
	High authenticity		Low authenticity		Group differences		
	M	SD	M	SD	t	p	d
Study 6b							
Authenticity	5.28	0.88	4.64	1.23	5.88	< 0.001	0.61
Self-compassion	4.06	0.93	3.77	1.09	2.38	0.018	0.30

Note: All *p*-values are two-tailed.

widely used to tap individuals' generalized sense of power, but has also been tailored for use in assessing relationship-specific sense of power (Anderson et al. 2012; e.g., Overall et al. 2023; Schaerer et al. 2021; see Körner et al. 2025).

In addition, we analysed whether the link between power and self-compassion holds after controlling for broad personality traits—namely, agency and communion. If the link holds, this would suggest that power is uniquely associated with self-compassion rather than merely reflecting broader agentic or communal orientations.

3.1 | Method

Participants were recruited via social media, email lists and personal addresses. Students received course credit for their participation and employees volunteered. Overall, 229 individuals took part (83% women; $M_{\text{age}} = 26.20$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 11.51$, range: 18 to 75). Participants were a mix of students (77%) and employed persons (17.5%) living in southern Germany.

Power was assessed with the German version of the *Personal Sense of Power Scale* (Anderson et al. 2012; Körner et al. 2022). The scale captures perceived social influence and decision-making ability with 6 items (e.g., 'In my relationships with others ... my ideas and opinions are often ignored'). Responses are given on a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Self-compassion was assessed with the *Self-Compassion Scale Short Form* (Raes et al. 2011; 12 items, e.g., 'When I fail at something that's important to me, I tend to feel alone in my failure.').

Responses are given on a scale ranging from 1 (*almost never*) to 5 (*almost always*). We employed four different instructions for the power and self-compassion scales. First, we used generalized instructions ($\alpha_{\text{power}} = 0.84$; $\alpha_{\text{self-compassion}} = 0.86$). Then, we asked for sense of power and self-compassion experienced at work (or academic context; $\alpha_{\text{power}} = 0.86$; $\alpha_{\text{self-compassion}} = 0.87$), in one's present romantic relationship ($\alpha_{\text{power}} = 0.85$; $\alpha_{\text{self-compassion}} = 0.84$), and in an important friendship ($\alpha_{\text{power}} = 0.77$; $\alpha_{\text{self-compassion}} = 0.80$). For example, for sense of power vis-à-vis a friend, we asked, 'In the following, think about your relationship with your best friend' and presented an item such as 'In our friendship ... my wishes do not carry much weight.' For self-compassion at work, we asked, 'Think about your work/study' and presented an item such as 'When I fail at an academic or work task that is important to me, I am consumed by feelings of inadequacy.' If a specific context did not apply to participants (e.g., they did not have a romantic partner), they ticked 'no response'.

In addition, participants completed measures of agency (5 items, e.g., 'ambitious', $\alpha = 0.73$) and communion (5 items, e.g., 'warm', $\alpha = 0.77$; Dufner et al. 2016).

3.2 | Results and Discussion

3.2.1 | Generalizability Across Interpersonal Contexts

As expected, general sense of power correlated positively with general self-compassion, $r(227) = 0.43$, $p < 0.001$. Medium to strong positive correlations between power and self-compassion were also found in the work (or academic) context,

TABLE 4 | Commonality analyses of general self-compassion (SC) and general power for the total variance explained by context measures.

Dependent variable	Predictors	Unique variance (%)	Total variance (%)	Dependent variable	Predictors	Unique variance (%)	Total variance (%)
General SC $R^2 = 69\%$	SC work	26	64	General power $R^2 = 61\%$	Power work	32	55
	SC friendship	1	25		Power friendship	1	17
	SC relationship	5	41		Power relationship	4	23
General SC $R^2 = 24\%$	Power work	17	24	General power $R^2 = 16\%$	SC work	4	13
	Power friendship	0	4		SC friendship	0	7
	Power relationship	1	7		SC relationship	2	11

Note: Unique variance is the unique contribution of each context measure. Total variance is the variance this context measure explains including both unique and shared (or common) contributions. Shared contributions are calculated by subtracting the unique variance from the total variance explained. R^2 indicates the total variance explained by all unique (3 context measures) and common (4 combinations) contributions.

$r(201) = 0.40$, friendship context, $r(227) = 0.27$, and romantic relationship context, $r(115) = 0.43$, all $ps < 0.001$. Thus, the positive link between power and self-compassion appears to generalize across relationship types.

Further, when we controlled for agency and communion in the link between general sense of power and general self-compassion, the link remained very similar, $r(225) = 0.40$, $p < 0.001$. Moreover, this result was replicated in [Study S3](#), $r(300) = 0.29$, $p < 0.001$ (after controlling for agency and communion: $r(296) = 0.30$, $p < 0.001$; see supporting information). The link between both constructs does not seem to depend on shared variance with broad personality traits or evaluative item content.

3.2.2 | Ancillary Commonality Analyses

We also conducted four commonality analyses (Nimon et al. 2008) to explore which context measures contribute the most variance to general power and general self-compassion. Work-related self-compassion was the biggest contributor of unique variance (26%) for general self-compassion, but both work-related and romantic relationship-related self-compassion had large shared variances that contributed to general self-compassion (see Table 4). By contrast, general power was mainly explained by work-related power (unique contribution: 32%), although all context measures had sizeable shared contributions. Overall, people seem mostly to take into account their work experiences when indicating how self-compassionate and how powerful they feel but the other contexts bear some relevance.

Further, the power context measures explained 24% of the variance in general self-compassion. Work-related power uniquely explained 17% of the variance in general self-compassion whereas friendship-related and relationship-related power contributed only because they shared variance with the other contexts. Thus, how powerful people feel at work is relevant to how much general self-compassion an individual experiences. This suggests that individuals' sense of power in professional contexts has a particularly strong influence on their overall self-compassion.

The self-compassion contexts explained 16% of the variance in general power. The variance was mostly explained by shared variances between the contexts. Thus, the self-compassion contexts explained less variance in power than power contexts did in self-compassion. In short, power seems to be more important to understand levels of self-compassion than vice versa. This asymmetry may reflect the importance of work identities (respectively one's sense of power at the workplace) in shaping self and identity (Elsbach 2009), particularly in cultures that emphasize professional success. This finding aligns with the idea that sense of power can serve as a psychological basis for broader tendencies of coping with failure and stress, and self-appraisal (Kuehn et al. 2015; Schmid and Schmid Mast 2013).

4 | Study 3

Study 2 highlighted the relevance of work-related power and self-compassion. Study 3 tested whether the positive link between power and self-compassion holds in organizational settings—namely, among managers and subordinates—thereby boosting ecological validity (see e.g., Liborius et al. 2025). Further, we expected higher power and self-compassion among people in formal power compared to subordinate positions. In addition, we examined whether the link is stronger for structural or for sense of power and whether the two forms of power interact in predicting self-compassion.

4.1 | Method

Data were collected as part of a larger project. Here, we only report the results relevant for this study. In total, 220 subordinates and 176 managers participated. Participants were recruited as subordinate–manager dyads and completed role-specific questionnaires corresponding to their formal organizational position. Managers had to oversee at least one subordinate. In some cases, only one member of a dyad participated and we classified their role based on the participant's formal organizational position. Subordinates (73% women) were mainly between 25 and 35 years old (44%), but a substantial number of older subordinates also participated (25% between 46 and 60; 13% between 36 and

45). Managers (50% women) were mainly between 46 and 60 years old (40%), although there was a non-trivial percentage of younger managers in the sample (21% between 25 and 35 years; 19% between 36 and 45 years). Participants worked in various industries (e.g., education, healthcare, IT). On average, managers oversaw 24 subordinates ($SD = 42$; range: 1–320).

Participants were recruited via email lists, social media and contacts in companies and workers' unions. As an incentive, we offered entry into a lottery for books and online workshops. To assess power, we used the *Personal Sense of Power Scale* (Anderson et al. 2012; $\alpha_{\text{managers/subordinates}} = 0.82/0.83$; Study 2). To assess self-compassion, we asked participants to think about how they act toward themselves when experiencing a failure or setback, followed by the 26-item *Self-Compassion Scale* (Neff 2003; $\alpha = 0.91$; e.g., 'When I'm feeling down, I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that's wrong,' reverse scored, $\alpha_{\text{managers/subordinates}} = 0.89/0.92$).

4.2 | Results and Discussion

Among managers, power was positively correlated with self-compassion, $r(174) = 0.28$, $p < 0.001$. The same was true among subordinates, $r(218) = 0.50$, $p < 0.001$. Also, managers reported higher power than subordinates, $d = 0.91$ (Table 3). Managers also reported higher self-compassion than subordinates, $d = 0.54$.

As many participants participated in dyads (i.e., 112 manager–subordinate dyads), we also conducted paired-samples t tests. Again, we found that managers reported higher power than subordinates, $d = 0.59$ (Table 3). Managers also reported higher self-compassion than subordinates, $d = 0.38$. Thus, people in positions of power not only feel more powerful, but also report higher self-compassion.

Moreover, using Model 1 in PROCESS version 5.0, we found that structural power (subordinates vs. managers) moderated the link between sense of power and self-compassion (interaction: $b = -0.12$, 95% CI $[-0.23, -0.01]$, $p = 0.032$). The positive link between power and self-compassion was stronger among subordinates ($b = 0.28$, 95% CI $[0.22, 0.34]$, $p < 0.001$) than among managers ($b = 0.16$, 95% CI $[0.07, 0.25]$, $p < 0.001$).

Overall, using a real-world sample of managers and subordinates, Study 3 found that power is positively related to self-compassion, bolstering our prior findings, while also increasing ecological validity. The link was stronger for sense of power (average correlation = 0.39) than for structural power (average correlation = 0.13). Interestingly, the power–self-compassion link was especially strong among those lower in the hierarchy. This may be because most people in positions of power experience a relatively high sense of power (i.e., less variance in power), whereas in lower-power positions, only people who also feel powerful might be self-compassionate when encountering failure. Alternatively, both power and self-compassion are positively valued and represent characteristics of well-adjusted people (Anderson et al. 2012; Neff 2023), making it possible that responses to scales assessing the two constructs are influenced by social desirability, thereby inflating the link. Concerns about social desirability may be especially pronounced among subordinates compared to

managers who, by virtue of their higher power, are likely to be more authentic (Kifer et al. 2013; Kraus et al. 2011) and thus less influenced by social desirability concerns. This issue was addressed next.

5 | Study 4

The first aim of Study 4 was to examine the link between power and self-compassion while controlling for social desirability. This helps to rule out the possibility that shared method variance due to self-presentational concerns may inflate the association between power and self-compassion.

A second goal involved the development of a new indirect measure of self-compassion. Most self-compassion research has relied on self-report measures, perhaps most frequently in the form of Neff's (2003) Self-Compassion Scale or variants of it. This approach seems justified, considering that self-compassion is a trait inherent to one's inner world and characterized by low observability. Yet, developing new self-compassion measures is needed to increase generalizability. In this vein, we created an open-ended writing task in which participants were asked to indicate their feelings, thoughts and behaviour when failing on a personally important project—without mentioning self-compassion (full details on the instructions for this writing task, as well as the results of a validation study for this new measure of self-compassion can be found in the [Online Supplement](#)). Afterwards, trained coders rated participants' responses for the level of self-compassion they reflected. This allowed us to test whether self-compassion spontaneously expressed in writing about a failure is associated with power. By being more implicit, this new measure is less subject to concerns related to both social desirability and common method variance.

5.1 | Method

Participants were mostly students (90%) and some employed persons (10%) living in southern Germany. Students received course credit for their participation; employees volunteered. Participants were recruited via social media, email lists and word-of-mouth advertising. We excluded two participants (Study 1 criterion). The final sample comprised 207 participants (84% women; $M_{\text{age}} = 24.22$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 9.22$, range: 17–61).

Participants completed the indirect, self-compassion task. They were asked to indicate their feelings, thoughts and behaviour when failing on a personally important project—without any explicit mention of self-compassion. Two independent, trained coders rated how self-compassionate participants' responses were. Interrater agreement was high; Cohen's $\kappa = 0.74$. For each participant, the mean of the coders' ratings was used as their self-compassion score.

Further, participants completed the same power ($\alpha = 0.83$) and self-compassion scales ($\alpha = 0.92$) as in Study 3. Finally, participants completed an 11-item short form of the *Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale* (Reynolds 1982). Participants indicated whether statements were true or false for them (e.g., 'No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener,' $\alpha = 0.59$).

5.2 | Results and Discussion

First, trait self-compassion was positively correlated with the indirect self-compassion measure, $r(203) = 0.38, p < 0.001$. Second, sense of power was positively associated with both the standard scale, $r(205) = 0.31, p < 0.001$ and the indirect self-compassion measure, $r(203) = 0.24, p < 0.001$. When controlling for social desirability, the link between power and trait self-compassion remained significant, $r(201) = 0.35, p < 0.001$, as did the link between power and the indirect self-compassion measure, $r(201) = 0.26, p < 0.001$.

Overall, a robust and positive link between power and self-compassion also emerged using an indirect measure of self-compassion. This new measure may help cross-validate findings and reduce self-report biases in future research. Also, that the power and self-compassion link remained when directly controlling for social desirability minimizes a social desirability account.

6 | Study 5

Across several studies, using both correlational and experimental methods, we have documented a positive association between power and self-compassion. However, many of these findings were based solely on self-report. Self-reports can be biased and may differ from observer reports. In this study, we aimed to add an outside perspective by testing whether individuals who are rated as powerful are also seen as self-compassionate by close acquaintances. In other words, we examined whether the positive link between power and self-compassion can be perceived interpersonally. This is an interesting question to pose as observers are considered to contain unique information that can enrich our understanding of interrelations between constructs (Connelly and Ones 2010). If we are able to replicate the positive self-report-based link between power and self-compassion based on observer ratings, this would suggest the link between these two traits is fairly robust, particularly given that one of the traits is not highly observable (i.e., self-compassion is typically low in visibility).

6.1 | Method

Participants were mostly students (92.6%) and some employed persons (7.4%) living in eastern Germany. Students received course credit for their participation, while employees volunteered. To test whether the power–self-compassion link is discerned by others, recruited participants were asked to identify a peer who could fill out a survey about them. We excluded six participants because of implausibly fast processing times. The final sample comprised 256 dyads. Participants, heretofore referred to as targets (87% women; $M_{\text{age}} = 23.18, SD_{\text{age}} = 8.50$, range: 17–61), completed the same power ($\alpha = 0.83$) and the same self-compassion scale as in Study 3 ($\alpha = 0.92$).

Peers were recruited by the targets in exchange for additional course credit for participants. In total, 256 peers were matched (64% women; $M_{\text{age}} = 29.87, SD_{\text{age}} = 13.42$, range: 17–68). Peers were family members (32%), romantic partners (31%) or friends (36%). They completed peer-rating versions of the targets' power ($\alpha = 0.80$) and self-compassion ($\alpha = 0.93$) scales. Further, peers

indicated how long (in months/years) they have known the target and how well they know the target (1 = *not at all/barely* to 10 = *very well*).

6.2 | Results and Discussion

First, targets' power and self-compassion correlated positively, $r(254) = 0.32, p < 0.001$, replicating prior studies. Second, there was self-other agreement (SOA) for both power, $SOA(254) = 0.23, p < 0.001$, and self-compassion, $SOA(254) = 0.51, p < 0.001$. Third, peer-rated power correlated positively with peer-rated self-compassion, $r(254) = 0.19, p = 0.002$ (two-tailed). The correlation showed a medium effect size (Funder and Ozer 2019). Moreover, the strength of the relationship remained significant when we predicted peer-rated self-compassion by peer-rated power while controlling for relationship duration and quality, $\beta_{\text{Power}} = 0.20, p = 0.002$ (two-tailed).

Overall, although the power–self-compassion association is stronger based on self-reported measures, the positive link between power and self-compassion seems to be interpersonally perceivable. If people judge their close acquaintances as powerful, they also tend to judge them as relatively high in self-compassion.

7 | Study 6a

While the prior eight main and supplemental studies speak to the causality, observability and generalizability (i.e., boundary conditions) of the link between power and self-compassion, in the final studies, we tested a potential mechanism. Preliminary findings of our Validation Study (for full results, see [Online Supplement](#)) suggest that authenticity may be more likely to be a mediator between power and self-compassion than emotion regulation and adaptive coping. This may be the case as powerholders live and behave in line with their beliefs, feelings and desires (see Chen 2020) and this elevated authenticity could facilitate key features of self-compassion such as non-judgmental self-acceptance, mindfulness and acceptance of one's thoughts and emotions instead of suppressing them.

Media outlets portray authenticity as a means to better cope with failure (e.g., 'Being true to your values makes it easier to deal with fallout,' Walsh 2023). As articulated in the introduction, we predicted this may be the case because power has been theoretically and empirically linked to authenticity, and authenticity may pave the way for several core elements of self-compassion. To examine this in more detail, we employed an experimental-causal-chain-design: Study 6a tested the effect of power on authenticity and self-compassion. Study 6b tested the effect of authenticity on self-compassion.

7.1 | Methodological Aspects

We relied on an online sample (Prolific) in Study 6a. As different attrition rates among experimental groups can reduce internal validity, we employed three strategies to reduce attrition (Zhou and Fishbach 2016): (a) Forewarned participants about the study tasks (i.e., they were told that they would engage in writing tasks);

(b) personalized the survey (i.e., prolific ID was requested); and (c) appealed to conscience (i.e., we told participants that dropping out reduces data quality).

Further, we employed an established power manipulation (i.e., autobiographical recall) that reliably induces a sense of power (e.g., Galinsky et al. 2003; Johnson and Lammers 2012) and included a control group. Much power research has lacked the use of a control group and therefore has not allowed for inferences about whether the high-power or the low-power condition is responsible for any documented effects (Schaerer et al. 2018).

Finally, although evidence on the effect of power on mood and emotions is mixed (e.g., Galinsky et al. 2003; Keltner et al. 2003), to rule out a potential mood account for the hypothesized effect of power on both authenticity and self-compassion, we controlled for mood. This common practice helps bolster confidence that any effects of power are independent from positive mood (e.g., Rucker et al. 2011).

7.2 | Method

7.2.1 | Participants

As preregistered (https://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=39L_DJ7), we recruited 300 US participants via Prolific. After excluding participants who indicated low self-reported data quality (see Instruments), or did not recall a powerful or powerless situation (see Procedure), the final sample size was 276 (51% men, 48% women; $M_{\text{age}} = 40.45$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 12.85$, range: 20–81). Completion of the survey took approximately 11 min on average. Participants received \$2.20 in compensation.

7.2.2 | Procedure and Instruments

First, participants provided demographics and the commitment instructions were presented (similar to Zhou and Fishbach 2016), reminding participants that the study includes open-ended questions requiring brief written responses. Participants were informed upfront to minimize dropout and ensure high-quality data (supporting information).

Then, participants were randomly assigned to a high-power ($n = 91$), low-power ($n = 91$) or control group ($n = 94$). In the high-power group, participants were asked to recall a particular incident when they had power over others (Galinsky et al. 2003). Low-power participants were asked to recall a particular incident when someone else had power over them. Control-group participants were asked to describe what they ate yesterday.

Afterwards, state authenticity was measured with seven items ($\alpha = 0.91$; e.g., ‘I feel alienated from myself,’ reverse scored, Kifer et al. 2013). Then, the indirect self-compassion measure followed, asking participants to write how they would treat themselves when failing on a personally important project (Study 4). Afterward, participants rated how much they felt each of four emotions ‘right now, in this moment’ (tense, calm, happy and discouraged, $\alpha = 0.88$, Smith and Trope 2006).

Finally, we used the *Self-Reported Response Quality Scale* (D. Wood et al. 2017) to have participants report on the quality of their responses using seven items ($\alpha = 0.60$; e.g., ‘My responses to items on this survey are accurate.’). We removed participants with low self-reported data quality (mean < 4).

Two independent, trained coders rated how self-compassionate the responses in the indirect self-compassion measure were (see Study 4). Two other raters coded the autobiographical power memories provided by high-power and low-power participants: (3) Strong memory; (2) weak memory (i.e., very short texts; situations that do not clearly relate to high or low power); or (1) missed the point (these participants were excluded). Interrater agreement was high for self-compassion, Cohen’s $\kappa = 0.78$ and power memories, $\kappa = 0.91$. Disagreements in the power ratings were resolved via discussion.

7.3 | Results and Discussion

Replicating our earlier results, but extending them with the addition of a control condition, a power effect emerged for responses on the indirect self-compassion measure, $F(2, 273) = 12.55$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.08$. Post hoc Scheffé tests showed that high-power participants expressed higher self-compassion than control-group and low-power participants (Table 5), who did not differ, although low-power participants’ written responses were rated the lowest in self-compassion. When we controlled for mood, the effects remained similar: High-power participants expressed higher self-compassion than control-group and low-power participants, who did not differ.

A power effect was also found for state authenticity, $F(2, 273) = 4.78$, $p = 0.009$ (two-tailed), $\eta_p^2 = 0.03$, replicating extant evidence that power enhances authenticity, and supporting the first step of the causal chain in our mediational hypothesis. Post hoc Scheffé tests showed that high-power participants reported higher authenticity than low-power participants (Table 5). The mean for control-group participants fell in between the means for high-power and low-power participants, but the control group did not significantly differ from either of the other groups. Controlling for mood yielded similar but sharper effects: High-power participants reported higher authenticity than both low-power and control-group participants. Control-group participants did not differ significantly from low-power participants.

Next, we tested if authenticity statistically mediates the effect of power on self-compassion using indicator coding in PROCESS (i.e., one group was chosen as the reference group and the indirect effects were tested by comparing the remaining two groups with the reference group). In line with convention, we used the ‘lowest’ group as the reference group (low-power group). The total effect of the low-power effect relative to the control-group effect was not significant, $p = 0.273$ (two-tailed), and the indirect effect included zero in the bootstrapped 95%-CI [−0.02, 0.08]. Yet, the total effect of the low-power effect relative to the high-power effect was significant, $p < 0.001$, and the indirect did not include zero in the 95%-CI [0.01, 0.13]. As both the total and the direct effect were significant ($p < 0.001$), and zero was not included in the 95%-CI, authenticity was a partial

TABLE 5 | Study 6a: Results (mean, standard deviation, post hoc Scheffé tests) of group differences between high power, control group and low power on self-compassion and authenticity.

	High power			Control group			Low power			Group differences (<i>p</i> values)		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		High power-control	High power-low power	Control-low power
Self-compassion	2.14	1.08		1.61	1.00		1.47	0.77		< 0.001	< 0.001	0.592
Authenticity	5.99	0.95		5.66	1.40		5.42	1.30		0.413	0.009	0.210
	<i>M</i> _{adjusted}	SE		<i>M</i> _{adjusted}	SE		<i>M</i> _{adjusted}	SE				
Self-compassion (controlling for mood)	2.14	0.09		1.61	0.09		1.47	0.09		< 0.001	< 0.001	0.277
Authenticity (controlling for mood)	5.98	0.12		5.67	0.12		5.43	0.12		0.066	0.001	0.158

Note: All *p*-values are two-tailed.

statistical mediator of the power–self-compassion relationship (Table 6).

Altogether, the first part of the causal chain was partially supported: High-power participants reported higher state authenticity relative to low-power participants (and to control-group participants when controlling for mood). Further, authenticity statistically mediated the effect of power on self-compassion (for the high vs. low power comparison). Yet, low-power participants did not differ from control-group participants. High power seems to be the driving force behind the effect of power on both authenticity and self-compassion, although more research is needed to establish this more conclusively. Extant research on power and authenticity either did not include a control group or did not report comparisons of control-group participants with high-power or low-power participants (Kifer et al. 2013; Kraus et al. 2011). Further, the effects we found in this study cannot be attributed to changes in mood. Note that in Study S4, we also found authenticity to be a statistical mediator between power and self-compassion, but power was measured, not manipulated.

8 | Study 6b

As the complement to Study 6a's establishment of the first step in the proposed causal chain (i.e., power–authenticity–self-compassion), Study 6b tested the effect of authenticity on self-compassion.

8.1 | Method

8.1.1 | Participants and Procedure

Overall, 296 participants were recruited via an email list for German-speaking participants interested in psychological studies. As incentive, we offered participation in a lottery of online shop vouchers with a total value of €250. As preregistered (https://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=3LN_CFW), we removed participants with implausibly fast processing times and low data quality (see Instruments; $n = 9$) and participants who failed the authenticity manipulation (i.e., they wrote they cannot remember an (in)authentic situation or they did not write about a specific (in)authenticity-related situation; $n = 28$). The final sample size was 259 (71% women, 29% men; $M_{\text{age}} = 54.18$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 13.19$, range: 18–82).

First, participants completed demographics followed by the authenticity manipulation (Kifer et al. 2013). They were randomly assigned to the high- ($n = 139$) or low-authenticity group ($n = 120$) and recalled and described a situation in which they felt [in]authentic, reflecting on how they behaved, what happened and how they felt in 2–3 sentences (supporting information).

Then, all participants completed measures of state authenticity, self-compassion and self-reported data quality. Study completion time was approximately 8 min. Two independent coders rated whether the participant had successfully completed the task (i.e., recalled an incident when they felt [in]authentic). Interrater

TABLE 6 | Study 6a: Results of mediation analyses predicting self-compassion by power mediated by authenticity.

	<i>b</i>	SE	<i>p</i>	95% CI	Effect size <i>ps</i>
Power → Authenticity (a)	0.56	0.17	0.001	[0.23, 0.90]	
Authenticity → Self-compassion (b)	0.11	0.04	0.005	[0.03, 0.19]	
Power → Self-compassion (c')	0.61	0.14	<0.001	[0.33, 0.89]	0.61
Indirect (a*b)	0.06	0.03	—	[0.01, 0.13]	0.06
Total (c)	0.68	0.14	< 0.001	[0.40, 0.95]	0.68

Note: Bold values indicate significant indirect effects. *p*-values are two-tailed. Unstandardized regression coefficients (*b*) and bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals (*k* = 10,000 samples) are reported. For the direct, indirect and total effects, partially standardized effect sizes (*ps*) were computed. They indicate the change in standard deviations on the criterion for a one-unit increase in the predictor. The effects of the low-power relative to the high-power group are presented.

agreement was high, Cohen's $\kappa = 0.74$. Disagreements were resolved via discussion.

8.1.2 | Instruments

As a manipulation check, participants responded to four state authenticity items (e.g., 'I feel out of touch with the "real me"', reverse scored, $\alpha = 0.81$; Gino et al. 2010).

To assess self-compassion, participants were asked to think about a painful situation and describe it briefly. They then received the *State Self-Compassion Scale Short Form* (Neff et al. 2021; $\alpha = 0.74$, Study 1) to complete.

We used the *Self-Reported Response Quality Scale* (D. Wood et al. 2017; Study 6a) to exclude participants who did not thoroughly complete this study.

8.2 | Results and Discussion

Supporting the effectiveness of our authenticity manipulation, participants in the high-authenticity group reported higher state authenticity than low-authenticity participants, $d = 0.61$ (Table 3). Importantly, high-authenticity participants also reported higher state self-compassion than participants in the low-authenticity group, $d = 0.30$ (Table 3). These results support the second part of the causal chain: Authenticity affects state self-compassion. Together, Studies 6a and 6b's findings support our authenticity-as-mediator hypothesis for the link between power and self-compassion.

9 | General Discussion

People who have influence over others may encounter setbacks and failures that impact not only themselves but also others over whom they hold power. Self-compassion is a resource for health and well-being (Neff 2023), raising the question of whether people with differing degrees of power (e.g., managers, subordinates) vary in their self-compassionate responding to setbacks and failures.

The present studies are the first to examine the link between power and self-compassion and report consistent correlational

and experimental evidence that power relates positively to self-compassion. Furthermore, our findings suggest that: (a) Power causally impacts self-compassion; (b) the positive power-self-compassion link generalizes across relationship types, community and student samples, laboratory and real-world contexts, as well as both direct and indirect measures of self-compassion; (c) the link does not depend on social desirability, broad personality traits or mood; and (d) powerful individuals tend to be judged as self-compassionate by close others. Further, we found (e) that authenticity is a mechanism that helps to explain why powerful individuals experience higher self-compassion.

9.1 | Theoretical Discussion

Although extant theorizing on power (e.g., Keltner et al. 2003) suggests that power involves reduced dependence, increased security and elevated authenticity—and, we argue, greater self-compassion in times of difficulty—no existing power theory makes predictions about communal responses toward the self. In other words, existing theory and research have been largely silent on how powerholders behave during times of failure and personal setbacks. For example, prevailing theoretical frameworks on power tend to offer predictions about how powerholders think, feel and behave in general (Guinote 2017; Keltner et al. 2003; Magee and Smith 2013). Some studies have tested how power influences psychological responses in stressful situations (e.g., Sherman and Mehta 2020) or during ego threat (Fast and Chen 2009), but more research is needed on how power is linked to experiences of and reactions to personal setbacks. Our research provides a basis for new inquiries into the relationship between power and handling personal adversity (e.g., recovery from trauma, growth mindset, self-forgiveness, goal reorientation after a setback).

The present findings cohere with theory and research postulating or identifying authenticity as a mediator between power and outcome variables (e.g., Keltner et al. 2003; Kifer et al. 2013). For example, the approach/inhibition theory posits that one of the four key effects of power is that power leads to behaviour governed by internal traits and states—one common operationalization of authenticity. However, consequences like authenticity are seldom tested as mediators to explain why power relates to more distal variables (for an exception with well-being as outcome, see Kifer et al. 2013). Our authenticity findings may thus stimulate other work testing authenticity as a potential

mechanism between power and other more distal variables (e.g., resilience, stress management).

The current findings can also be interpreted in light of two leading power theories: Approach/inhibition theory of Power (Keltner et al. 2003) proposes that power leads to approach-oriented behaviours and thus triggers action. Situated Focus Theory of Power (Guinote 2007, 2010) proposes that power leads to a clear cognitive focus in line with one's wishes, needs and goals. Together, these two theories suggest better self-regulation of powerholders or people who experience a high sense of power (DeWall et al. 2011; Guinote 2017). In the context of failure, excessive self-focus on shortcomings and inhibition are inconsistent with the action-oriented tendencies of powerholders. Instead, strategies such as self-kindness (vs. self-judgment) and recognizing that failures are a common human experience may facilitate continued goal pursuit. From this perspective, self-compassion as a proactive, goal-directed regulatory strategy that helps individuals move forward following setbacks (Neff 2023) should be facilitated by the experience of power. Thus, our findings are consistent with the notion that power may promote the use of effective self-regulation. Future research could manipulate goals or motivation and examine whether they strengthen (vs. attenuate) the effect of power on self-compassion.

At the same time, an alternative explanation is that power may place individuals in contexts that make self-compassion more accessible or less costly (e.g., differences in experienced rewards and threats). Powerholders typically live in resource-rich environments and are more oriented toward rewards than threats (e.g., Keltner et al. 2003; Sabey et al. 2025), which is associated with more positive affective experiences (Berdahl and Martorana 2006; Kifer et al. 2013). This could make self-compassion either less necessary or more easily accessible for individuals high in power. By contrast, low-power individuals, who have less access to rewards and are more strongly exposed to threats (Keltner et al. 2003), may face more frequent setbacks while lacking the psychological resources needed for self-compassionate responding. In most of our studies, participants recalled personal failures. While this increases ecological validity, it also implies that the recalled events may differ between high- and low-power individuals in severity, controllability or emotional impact, making self-compassionate responses not directly comparable across power levels. However, the association between power and self-compassion remained robust when controlling for mood (Study 6a), suggesting that it cannot be reduced to general affective differences stemming from greater exposure to rewards. The link between power and self-compassion may thus not solely attributable to differences in exposure to rewards versus threats, but likely also reflects psychological processes associated with power itself. Future research should more directly examine the role of environmental affordances (e.g., reward and threat exposure) in the link between power and self-compassion.

9.2 | Methodological and Practical Implications

The present research also has methodological and practical implications. To date, self-compassion has been mainly measured with self-reports (mostly one particular scale, Neff 2003). However, more indirect, behavioural measures are feasible and compelling

alternatives. When participants were asked to indicate how they treat themselves when experiencing a personal failure, their spontaneous responses yielded varying degrees of self-compassion that could be reliably coded by trained raters. Indeed, across three studies (Studies 4 and 6a and the validation study), we found high average interrater agreement (Cohen's $\kappa = 0.77$). In addition, we tested the nomological validity of this indirect measure of self-compassion (validation study) and found correlations between the measure and 24 constructs related to personality, well-being and self-evaluations, aligning with findings from the literature using Neff's Self-Compassion Scale. Future research can use this measure to cross-validate extant self-compassion findings.

Self-compassion has many positive correlates and consequences such as better health and well-being (Neff 2023). Further, self-compassion can be trained. Thus, understanding factors that affect self-compassion may help to unleash its full potential. As the current studies suggest, people with a low sense of power (e.g., typically subordinates) exhibit less self-compassion than powerholders do. Therefore, professional development programs could incorporate interventions to promote self-compassionate responding that could prove useful for not only employees, but also new managers who are suddenly faced with the higher job demands of their new position (see Study 3).

9.3 | Boundary Conditions of the Power-Self-Compassion Link

Our research adds to the generalizability of power findings across relationship types (Study 2). Only a limited number of studies have examined whether the correlates of power replicate across different relationship types (e.g., Kifer et al. 2013; Overall et al. 2023). For example, whereas some correlates of power such as behavioral approach and satisfaction generalize across relationship types, others such as prosocial tendencies seem to be relationship-specific (Kifer et al. 2013; Körner and Altmann 2025; Overall et al. 2023; Van Kleef et al. 2008). Extending this literature, our findings show that the positive power-self-compassion link can be observed with comparable effect sizes across general, hierarchical (work) and intimate (romantic relationship; friendship) contexts. In this way, our work adds to the limited literature on power across relationship types as well as the scarce literature on power in friendships (Körner and Altmann 2025). More broadly, our findings suggest that the links between power and self-relevant attitudes and characteristics involved in handling personal adversity may apply to both hierarchical and intimate relationships (see also Kifer et al. 2013), providing a foundation for future research.

Further, our real-world study illuminates how sense of power and structural power interact in predicting self-compassion. Prior work has yielded mixed evidence regarding this interaction: Some studies show that outcomes such as self-expression and emotion recognition are highest when sense of power and structural power align (Chen et al. 2009; Stamkou et al. 2016), whereas others find that prosocial behaviour is strongest when individuals with lower (vs. higher) structural power experience a higher sense of power (van Dijke et al. 2018). Consistent with the latter finding, we found that the link between sense of power and self-compassion was stronger among subordinates than among managers. Thus,

our findings not only contribute to the literature examining how structural and sense of power interact, but also suggest that individuals with low structural power may particularly benefit from feeling powerful, not only in terms of showing prosocial and compassionate responses to others but also in terms of showing such responses to themselves. In this way, a heightened sense of power may serve a compensatory function for low structural power when individuals deal with setbacks.

Finally, individual differences may attenuate (or strengthen) the link between power and self-compassion. Prior research has identified moderators of power effects such as personality, relationship orientation and power motivation (e.g., Chen et al. 2001; Foulk et al. 2020). In supplemental analyses, we found that agency, but not communion, attenuated the positive link between power and self-compassion (Study 2 and Study S3). Agency, characterized by a striving to get ahead, being independent from others, competence and assertiveness (Bakan 1966), may reduce individuals' sense of connectedness with others (i.e., 'lower common humanity') and limit the tendency to respond to one's own failures with acceptance. However, the link between power and self-compassion remained positive even at high levels of agency. It is, however, possible that traits that are more strongly dominance-related such as the power motive or Dark Triad traits in fact conflict with self-compassion and could thus lead individuals with high power to respond to failure with greater self-criticism rather than self-compassion. Examining such traits may help identify boundary conditions under which power not only promotes self-compassion.

9.4 | Strengths, Limitations and Future Research Directions

Although our findings replicated across ten studies, spanning student and community samples from Germany and the United States, and a multitude of different measures and manipulations for power and self-compassion, it is important to acknowledge several limitations. First, to provide privacy in Study 3, we did not ask for participants' exact age. We know that managers were older than subordinates, but we are not able to rule out whether age differences may have affected the results. In Study S1, age did not affect the link, but future studies could compare managers and subordinates that are matched on age and other sociodemographic characteristics. Moreover, future research could examine whether SES moderates the link between power and self-compassion, examining, among other possibilities, whether people with low sense of power and high SES (though a rare combination) might still exhibit high levels of self-compassion.

Further, despite conducting four experiments, we relied on self-report measures in several correlational studies (see supporting information). As both power and self-compassion are positive in valence, one could be concerned that the strong positive link between them could be at least partially attributed to the positive evaluative content of the scale items. Although we cannot rule this out entirely, several strands of data argue against it. In Study 2 and Study S3, when we controlled for participants' scores on measures of agency and communion, both positive in valence, the link between power and self-compassion remained.

Together with Study 4's finding that the power–self-compassion link holds when controlling for social desirability—as well as our evidence for the link using indirect measures of self-compassion in three studies—it seems that the shared positive valence of the scale items used in the self-report measures of power and self-compassion measures would affect the results at most weakly.

Further, we identified authenticity as a potential mechanism in the power–self-compassion link. Across three studies, we twice found evidence for partial statistical mediation (Study 6a and Study S4) and once evidence for full statistical mediation (Validation Study). Authenticity even emerged as a stronger statistical mediator than adaptive coping and emotion regulation (see Validation Study, Online Supplement). Yet, power is also linked to greater attention to rewards (vs. threats) and approach behaviours (e.g., Keltner et al. 2003), which might work as additional and independent mediators beyond authenticity. Future research could thoroughly examine whether authenticity is the only relevant mediator or whether some of the other mentioned candidates explain additional variance why power is linked to higher self-compassion.

Moreover, our results are restricted to a western context. As self-concepts and various self-related processes differ between individualistic and collectivistic countries, cross-cultural validation of the findings is needed.

Future research should also examine whether the positive link between power and self-compassion replicates when individuals with varying levels of trait (instead of state) power are confronted with identical failures, or when differences in reward versus threat focus are experimentally controlled. Such designs would allow for a more decisive test of whether reward versus threat focus constitutes an alternative explanation or a mechanism underlying the association between power and self-compassion.

Finally, in our studies, low power was consistently linked to lower self-compassion, but there may also be specific conditions under which low-power participants show equal or even higher self-compassion than powerholders. For example, when low-power participants experience social support and acceptance by others, they may be likely to treat themselves with self-kindness and acknowledge that others also experience failures. Such a possibility is supported by research suggesting that social resources such as support can mitigate some of the negative effects of low power (Schaerer et al. 2021).

9.5 | Conclusion

Altogether, our studies provide valuable insight into the relationship between sense of power and self-compassion. Power seems not only to be positively linked to self-compassion, but also to have the potential to increase self-compassion. Further, the positive link between power and self-compassion can be partially explained by powerholders' elevated authenticity. These findings advance power theories by offering initial evidence regarding how power relates to the handling of personal adversity. As psychologists and practitioners aim to understand the thoughts, feelings and behaviours of powerful and powerless people, the

present results suggest the utility of considering self-compassion as a variable that varies with a person's sense of power.

Author Contributions

Robert Körner: conceived of the present idea with support from Serena Chen. **Robert Körner, Astrid Schütz,** and **Serena Chen:** designed the studies. **Robert Körner, Marine Groulon,** and **Lars-Eric Petersen:** collected the data. **Robert Körner:** performed the computations of all studies. **Robert Körner:** drafted the initial manuscript. **Robert Körner, Serena Chen,** and **Astrid Schütz:** critically revised the manuscript. **Astrid Schütz:** provided software.

Acknowledgements

Open access funding enabled and organized by Projekt DEAL.

Funding

The authors have nothing to report.

Ethics Statement

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable standards. This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any of the authors.

Consent

Informed consent was obtained from all participants who were included in the study.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability Statement

Studies 6a and 6b and the Validation Study were preregistered. Data, materials and code are available at <https://osf.io/uhb5g/>.

Endnotes

¹When using the term powerholder, we refer to a person who has influence over others rather than structural power forms such as the possession of a power position (social rank) or resource control.

²Note that resource control and 'respect and esteem' can have different effects on self and others (e.g., Anicich et al. 2016).

³Because controlling for baseline self-compassion or power had little impact in the first three experiments, we omitted these measures in later studies to save time and resources.

References

- Anderson, C., O. P. John, and D. Keltner. 2012. "The Personal Sense of Power." *Journal of Personality* 80, no. 2: 313–344.
- Anicich, E. M., N. J. Fast, N. Halevy, and A. D. Galinsky. 2016. "When the Bases of Social Hierarchy Collide: Power Without Status Drives Interpersonal Conflict." *Organization Science* 27, no. 1: 123–140.
- Bakan, D. 1966. *The Duality of Human Existence: An Essay on Psychology and Religion*. Rand McNally.
- Berdahl, J. L., and P. Martorana. 2006. "Effects of Power on Emotion and Expression During a Controversial Group Discussion." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 36, no. 4: 497–509.

- Bombardieri, D., M. Schmid Mast, and M. Bachmann. 2017. "Felt Power Explains the Link Between Position Power and Experienced Emotions." *Emotion* 17, no. 1: 55–66.
- Briñol, P., R. E. Petty, G. R. Durso, and D. D. Rucker. 2017. "Power and Persuasion: Processes by Which Perceived Power Can Influence Evaluative Judgments." *Review of General Psychology* 21, no. 3: 223–241.
- Cai, R. A., and A. Guinote. 2017. "Doing Many Things at a Time: Lack of Power Decreases the Ability to Multitask." *British Journal of Social Psychology* 56, no. 3: 475–492.
- Chen, S. 2020. "Social Power and the Self." *Current Opinion in Psychology* 33: 69–73.
- Chen, S., H. C. Boucher, and M. P. Tapias. 2006. "The Relational Self Revealed: Integrative Conceptualization and Implications for Interpersonal Life." *Psychological Bulletin* 132, no. 2: 151–179.
- Chen, S., C. A. Langner, and R. Mendoza-Denton. 2009. "When Dispositional and Role Power Fit: Implications for Self-Expression and Self-Other Congruence." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 96, no. 3: 710–727.
- Chen, S., A. Y. Lee-Chai, and J. A. Bargh. 2001. "Relationship Orientation as a Moderator of the Effects of Social Power." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 80, no. 2: 173–187.
- Connelly, B. S., and D. S. Ones. 2010. "An Other Perspective on Personality: Meta-Analytic Integration of Observers' Accuracy and Predictive Validity." *Psychological Bulletin* 136, no. 6: 1092–1122.
- DeWall, C. N., R. F. Baumeister, N. L. Mead, and K. D. Vohs. 2011. "How Leaders Self-Regulate Their Task Performance: Evidence That Power Promotes Diligence, Depletion, and Disdain." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 100, no. 1: 47–65.
- Dickerson, S. S., and M. E. Kemeny. 2004. "Acute Stressors and Cortisol Responses: A Theoretical Integration and Synthesis of Laboratory Research." *Psychological Bulletin* 130, no. 3: 355–391.
- Diedrich, A., M. Grant, S. G. Hofmann, W. Hiller, and M. Berking. 2014. "Self-Compassion as an Emotion Regulation Strategy in Major Depressive Disorder." *Behaviour Research and Therapy* 58: 43–51.
- Dodson, S. J., and Y. T. Heng. 2022. "Self-Compassion in Organizations: A Review and Future Research Agenda." *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 43, no. 2: 168–196.
- Dubois, D., D. D. Rucker, and A. D. Galinsky. 2010. "The Accentuation Bias: Money Literally Looms Larger (and Sometimes Smaller) to the Powerless." *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 1, no. 3: 199–205.
- Dufner, M., D. Leising, and J. E. Gebauer. 2016. "Which Basic Rules Underlie Social Judgments? Agency Follows a Zero-Sum Principle and Communion Follows a Non-Zero-Sum Principle." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 42, no. 5: 677–687.
- Elsbach, K. D. 2009. "Identity Affirmation Through Signature Style: A Study of Toy Car Designers." *Human Relations* 62, no. 7: 1041–1072.
- English, T., and O. P. John. 2013. "Understanding the Social Effects of Emotion Regulation: The Mediating Role of Authenticity for Individual Differences in Suppression." *Emotion* 13, no. 2: 314–329.
- Fast, N. J., and S. Chen. 2009. "When the Boss Feels Inadequate: Power, Incompetence, and Aggression." *Psychological Science* 20, no. 11: 1406–1413.
- Fast, N. J., N. Sivanathan, N. D. Mayer, and A. D. Galinsky. 2012. "Power and Overconfident Decision-making." *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 117, no. 2: 249–260.
- Foulk, T. A., N. Chhizola, and G. Chen. 2020. "Power Corrupts (or Does It?): An Examination of the Boundary Conditions of the Antisocial Effects of Experienced Power." *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 14, no. 4: e12524.
- Funder, D. C., and D. J. Ozer. 2019. "Evaluating Effect Size in Psychological Research: Sense and Nonsense." *Advances in Methods and Practices in Psychological Science* 2, no. 2: 156–168.

- Galinsky, A. D., D. H. Gruenfeld, and J. C. Magee. 2003. "From Power to Action." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 85, no. 3: 453–466.
- Galinsky, A. D., J. C. Magee, D. H. Gruenfeld, J. A. Whitson, and K. A. Liljenquist. 2008. "Power Reduces the Press of the Situation: Implications for Creativity, Conformity, and Dissonance." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 95, no. 6: 1450–1466.
- Gino, F., M. I. Norton, and D. Ariely. 2010. "The Counterfeit Self: The Deceptive Costs of Faking It." *Psychological Science* 21, no. 5: 712–720.
- Gruenewald, T. L., M. E. Kemeny, N. Aziz, and J. L. Fahey. 2004. "Acute Threat to the Social Self: Shame, Social Self-Esteem, and Cortisol Activity." *Psychosomatic Medicine* 66, no. 6: 915–924.
- Guinote, A. 2007. "Behaviour Variability and the Situated Focus Theory of Power." *European Review of Social Psychology* 18, no. 1: 256–295.
- Guinote, A. 2010. "The Situated Focus Theory of Power." In *The Social Psychology of Power*, edited by A. Guinote and T. K. Vescio, 141–173. The Guilford Press.
- Guinote, A. 2017. "How Power Affects People: Activating, Wanting, and Goal Seeking." *Annual Review of Psychology* 68: 353–381.
- Hecht, M. A., and M. LaFrance. 1998. "License or Obligation to Smile: The Effect of Power and Sex on Amount and Type of Smiling." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 24, no. 12: 1332–1342.
- Hull, K. E., J. R. Overbeck, L. D. Smillie, and P. D. L. Howe. 2022. "The P-Word: Power Aversion and Responsibility Aversion as Explanations for the Avoidance of Power." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 52, no. 3: 184–196. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12857>.
- Inwood, E., and M. Ferrari. 2018. "Mechanisms of Change in the Relationship Between Self-Compassion, Emotion Regulation, and Mental Health: A Systematic Review." *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being* 10, no. 2: 215–235.
- Johnson, C. S., and J. Lammers. 2012. "The Powerful Disregard Social Comparison Information." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 48, no. 1: 329–334.
- Keltner, D., D. H. Gruenfeld, and C. Anderson. 2003. "Power, Approach, and Inhibition." *Psychological Review* 110, no. 2: 265–284.
- Kifer, Y., D. Heller, W. Q. E. Perunovic, and A. D. Galinsky. 2013. "The Good Life of the Powerful: The Experience of Power and Authenticity Enhances Subjective Well-Being." *Psychological Science* 24, no. 3: 280–288.
- Körner, R., and T. Altmann. 2025. "Power in Friendships: How Experienced and Desired Power Are Associated With Relationship Functioning." *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 42, no. 9: 2335–2362.
- Körner, R., T. Heydasch, and A. Schütz. 2022. "It's All About Power: Validation of Trait and State Versions of the German Personal Sense of Power Scale." *European Journal of Psychological Assessment* 38, no. 1: 36–48. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1015-5759/a000642>.
- Körner, R., J. R. Overbeck, and A. Schütz. 2025. "Structuring Hierarchy Concepts: Evaluating Measures of Power, Status, Dominance, and Prestige on the Basis of an Integrative Model and Systematic Literature Review." *Psychological Bulletin* 151, no. 3: 322–364.
- Körner, R., and A. Schütz. 2021. "Power in Romantic Relationships: How Positional and Experienced Power Are Associated With Relationship Quality." *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 38, no. 9: 2653–2677.
- Kraus, M. W., S. Chen, and D. Keltner. 2011. "The Power to be Me: Power Elevates Self-Concept Consistency and Authenticity." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 47, no. 5: 974–980.
- Kuehn, M. M., S. Chen, and A. M. Gordon. 2015. "Having a Thicker Skin: Social Power Buffers the Negative Effects of Social Rejection." *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 6, no. 6: 701–709.
- Liborius, P., C. Kiewitz, and A. Faber. 2025. "Up Close and Powerful: Leaders' Personal Sense of Power and Psychological Closeness to Their Team as Antecedents of Leader Humility, Subordinate Job Engagement and Trust." *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 46, no. 9: 1226–1246.
- Lindsay, E. K., and J. D. Creswell. 2014. "Helping the Self Help Others: Self-Affirmation Increases Self-Compassion and Pro-Social Behaviors." *Frontiers in Psychology* 5: 421.
- Magee, J. C., and P. K. Smith. 2013. "The Social Distance Theory of Power." *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 17, no. 2: 158–186.
- Mischel, W., and Y. Shoda. 1995. "A Cognitive-Affective System Theory of Personality: Reconceptualizing Situations, Dispositions, Dynamics, and Invariance in Personality Structure." *Psychological Review* 102, no. 2: 246–268.
- Neff, K. D. 2003. "The Development and Validation of a Scale to Measure Self-Compassion." *Self and Identity* 2, no. 3: 223–250.
- Neff, K. D. 2023. "Self-Compassion: Theory, Method, Research, and Intervention." *Annual Review of Psychology* 74: 193–218.
- Neff, K. D., S. S. Rude, and K. L. Kirkpatrick. 2007. "An Examination of Self-Compassion in Relation to Positive Psychological Functioning and Personality Traits." *Journal of Research in Personality* 41, no. 4: 908–916.
- Neff, K. D., I. Tóth-Király, M. C. Knox, A. Kuchar, and O. Davidson. 2021. "The Development and Validation of the State Self-Compassion Scale (Long-and Short Form)." *Mindfulness* 12: 121–140.
- Neff, K. D., I. Tóth-Király, L. M. Yarnell, et al. 2019. "Examining the Factor Structure of the Self-Compassion Scale in 20 Diverse Samples: Support for Use of a Total Score and Six Subscale Scores." *Psychological Assessment* 31, no. 1: 27–45.
- Nimon, K., M. Lewis, R. Kane, and R. M. Haynes. 2008. "An R Package to Compute Commonality Coefficients in the Multiple Regression Case: An Introduction to the Package and a Practical Example." *Behavior Research Methods* 40, no. 2: 457–466.
- Overall, N. C., J. K. Maner, M. D. Hammond, et al. 2023. "Actor and Partner Power Are Distinct and Have Differential Effects on Social Behavior." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 124, no. 2: 311–343.
- Raes, F., E. Pommier, K. D. Neff, and D. Van Gucht. 2011. "Construction and Factorial Validation of a Short Form of the Self-Compassion Scale." *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy* 18, no. 3: 250–255.
- Reynolds, W. M. 1982. "Development of Reliable and Valid Short Forms of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale." *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 38, no. 1: 119–125.
- Roberts, B. W., and E. M. Donahue. 1994. "One Personality, Multiple Selves: Integrating Personality and Social Roles." *Journal of Personality* 62, no. 2: 199–218.
- Rucker, D. D., D. Dubois, and A. D. Galinsky. 2011. "Generous Paupers and Stingy Princes: Power Drives Consumer Spending on Self Versus Others." *Journal of Consumer Research* 37, no. 6: 1015–1029.
- Sabey, T. B., B. C. Shanklin, J. A. Colquitt, and M. D. Baer. 2025. "The Approach-Inhibition Theory of Power: A Meta-Analytic Test and Synthesis." *Psychological Bulletin* 151, no. 10: 1245–1279.
- Schaerer, M., C. du Plessis, A. J. Yap, and S. Thau. 2018. "Low Power Individuals in Social Power Research: A Quantitative Review, Theoretical Framework, and Empirical Test." *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 149: 73–96.
- Schaerer, M., T. Foulk, C. du Plessis, M. H. Tu, and S. Krishnan. 2021. "Just Because You're Powerless Doesn't Mean They Aren't Out to Get You: Low Power, Paranoia, and Aggression." *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 165: 1–20.
- Schmid, P. C., and M. Schmid Mast. 2013. "Power Increases Performance in a Social Evaluation Situation as a Result of Decreased Stress Responses." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 43, no. 3: 201–211.
- Seery, M. D. 2011. "Challenge or Threat? Cardiovascular Indexes of Resilience and Vulnerability to Potential Stress in Humans." *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews* 35, no. 7: 1603–1610.
- Sherman, G. D., J. J. Lee, A. J. Cuddy, et al. 2012. "Leadership Is Associated With Lower Levels of Stress." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 109, no. 44: 17903–17907.

- Sherman, G. D., and P. H. Mehta. 2020. "Stress, Cortisol, and Social Hierarchy." *Current Opinion in Psychology* 33: 227–232.
- Sherman, G. D., S. Türkay, S. T. Moulton, et al. 2020. "The Generalized Sense of Power Is a Psychological Resource: Evidence From a Disaster Response Field Training Exercise." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 50, no. 4: 733–748.
- Smith, P. K., and Y. Trope. 2006. "You Focus on the Forest When You're in Charge of the Trees: Power Priming and Abstract Information Processing." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 90, no. 4: 578–596.
- Stamkou, E., G. A. van Kleef, A. H. Fischer, and M. E. Kret. 2016. "Are the Powerful Really Blind to the Feelings of Others? How Hierarchical Concerns Shape Attention to Emotions." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 42, no. 6: 755–768.
- Tangney, J. P., and R. L. Dearing. 2003. *Shame and Guilt*. Guilford Press.
- Thibaut, J. W., and H. H. Kelley. 1978. *The Social Psychology of Groups*. Wiley.
- Tohme, O., and S. Joseph. 2025. "Authenticity Is Correlated With Mindfulness and Emotional Intelligence." *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 65, no. 1: 139–156.
- van Dijke, M., D. De Cremer, G. Langendijk, and C. Anderson. 2018. "Ranking Low, Feeling High: How Hierarchical Position and Experienced Power Promote Prosocial Behavior in Response to Procedural Justice." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 103, no. 2: 164–181.
- Van Kleef, G. A., C. Oveis, I. Van Der Löwe, A. LuoKogan, J. Goetz, and D. Keltner. 2008. "Power, Distress, and Compassion: Turning a Blind Eye to the Suffering of Others." *Psychological Science* 19, no. 12: 1315–1322.
- Walsh, N. 2023. "What the 10 Biggest CEO Failures of 2022 Teach Every Leader." Inc. <https://www.inc.com/nuala-walsh/what-10-biggest-ceo-failures-of-2022-teach-every-leader-for-2023.html>.
- Wood, D., P. D. Harms, G. H. Lowman, and J. A. DeSimone. 2017. "Response Speed and Response Consistency as Mutually Validating Indicators of Data Quality in Online Samples." *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 8, no. 4: 454–464.
- Wood, A. M., P. A. Linley, J. Maltby, M. Baliousis, and S. Joseph. 2008. "The Authentic Personality: A Theoretical and Empirical Conceptualization and the Development of the Authenticity Scale." *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 55, no. 3: 385–399.
- Yadavaia, J. E., S. C. Hayes, and R. Vilardaga. 2014. "Using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy to Increase Self-Compassion: A Randomized Controlled Trial." *Journal of Contextual Behavioral Science* 3, no. 4: 248–257.
- Zerwas, F. K., J. A. Tharp, S. Chen, and I. B. Mauss. 2023. "Individual Differences in Social Power: Links With Beliefs About Emotion and Emotion Regulation." *Journal of Personality* 91, no. 2: 314–331.
- Zhang, J. W., S. Chen, T. K. Tomova Shakur, et al. 2019. "A Compassionate Self Is a True Self? Self-Compassion Promotes Subjective Authenticity." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 45, no. 9: 1323–1337.
- Zhou, H., and A. Fishbach. 2016. "The Pitfall of Experimenting on the Web: How Unattended Selective Attrition Leads to Surprising (Yet False) Research Conclusions." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 111, no. 4: 493–504.
- Zuroff, D. C., K. A. Clegg, S. L. Levine, et al. 2021. "Beyond Trait Models of Self-Criticism and Self-Compassion: Variability Over Domains and the Search for Signatures." *Personality and Individual Differences* 170: 110429.

Supporting Information

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section.

Supporting File 1: ejsp70090-sup-0001-SuppMat.docx