

Distress Tolerance Skills: Radical Acceptance

| Turning the Mind | Willingness | Half Smiling Willing Hands | Mindfulness of Current Thoughts | Radical Acceptance |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| <p>1. Observe You Are No Longer Accepting</p> <p>2. Make an Inner Commitment to Accept Reality As It Is. Choose to accept. Keep turning the mind</p> <p>3. Do It Again, Over and Over. Painful events can take longer to fully accept. Choice to accept may need to be made every day—sometimes many, times a day, hour or a minute.</p> <p>4. Develop a Plan for Catching Yourself When You Drift Out of Acceptance</p> | <p>Active participation in reality. Readiness to respond to life's situations wisely, as needed, voluntarily, without grudge.</p> <p>Accepting what is</p> <p>Responding to what is in an effective way</p> <p>Focusing on both individual and common needs</p> <p>Wholeheartedly living life</p> <p>Responding from wise mind</p> <p>Committing to participate in the cosmic process of the universe.</p> <p>WILLFULNESS to WILLINGNESS:</p> <p>1. Observe, identify, label willfulness</p> <p>2. Accept you are feeling willful</p> <p>3. Turn the mind toward acceptance and willingness and participating in reality just as it is</p> <p>4. Try half-smiling and willing posture.</p> <p>5. Ask "What's the threat?"</p> | <p>Half-smiling</p> <p>1. Relax your face from the top of your head down to your chin and jaw.</p> <p>2. Let both corners of your lips go slightly up, just so you can feel them. A half-smile is slightly upturned lips with a relaxed face.</p> <p>3. Adopt a peaceful facial expression</p> <p>The face communicates to your brain; Your brain connects to your mind</p> <p>WILLING HANDS</p> <p>Standing: Drop your arms down from your shoulders; keep them straight or bent slightly at the elbows. With hands unclenched, turn your hands outward, with thumbs out to your sides, palms up, and fingers relaxed.</p> <p>Sitting: Place your hands on your lap or your thighs. With hands unclenched, turn your hands outward, with palms up, and fingers relaxed.</p> <p>Lying down: Arms by your side, hands unclenched, turn your palms up with fingers relaxed</p> <p>Your hands communicate to your brain; Your body connects to your mind</p> | <p>Notice thoughts and radically accept them as sensations of the brain that come and go. Do not react, or hold on to them, simply observe them.</p> <p>Observing thoughts changes our relationship to thoughts without changing the thoughts themselves.</p> <p>1. Observe thoughts as coming and going</p> <p>2. Be curious about your thoughts</p> <p>3. Remember you are not your thoughts</p> <p>4. Do not block or suppress thoughts</p> <p>Unnecessary Suffering and Reactive Problem Behaviors Are Often Caused by Thoughts</p> <p>Observing thoughts Provides Distance from Them</p> <p>Observing thoughts Reveals Them for What They Are</p> <p>Reacting to a Thought As If It Is a Fact Obscures Seeing "What Is"</p> <p>Observing thoughts Shows That They Are Not So Catastrophic</p> <p>Observing thoughts Is the Path to Freedom</p> | <p>Fully accept only the facts about the present and the past, and reasonable probabilities about the future. that must be accepted. accept actual facts.</p> <p>Accept: Everyone's future has limitations</p> <p>We can be limited by our biology, past behavior, and our environment</p> <p>Everything in the universe has a cause</p> <p>There is a cause and effect for what happens</p> <p>Life can be worth living even if contains pain</p> <p>Pain can't be avoided</p> <p>Rejecting reality turns pain into suffering</p> <p>Accepting reality can bring freedom</p> <p>Acceptance can lead to sadness but calm usually follows</p> <p>The path of hell is through misery</p> |

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STEPS for Radical Acceptance

1. Observe That You Are Questioning or Fighting Reality

Describe in detail what you need to accept, without exaggerating or minimizing. Describe factually and without judgment. It is all too easy to fight reality without even realizing you are doing it. This is especially true when you consistently avoid contact with what you have to accept. Acknowledging that you are not accepting, therefore, is the first essential step to acceptance.

2. Remind Yourself That the Reality Is Just as It Is

Often you can skip past nonacceptance by simply making an accepting statement to yourself. Useful statements might be ‘Everything is as it should be,’ ‘The situation is,’ ‘Reality is,’ or ‘Every day is a good day.’ This last one is a Zen saying meant to convey that everything simply is; it’s neither good nor bad.”

3. Consider Causes of the Reality You Need to Accept

Acceptance is a lot easier once you understand the causes of the situation you are trying to accept. Sometimes you may need to go far into the past to grasp all of them, but this can be very helpful. People often shy away from analyzing causes, because they equate understanding causes with making excuses. Making excuses is then equated with ‘letting a person off’ without a consequence for the behavior. However, you can ensure consequences for behavior and still understand the causes. In fact, without understanding the causes, it will be almost impossible ever to change the behavior you do not like.

4. Practice Accepting with the Whole Self (Mind, Body, and Spirit)

The basic idea in radical acceptance is that you’ve got to accept all the way. To do this you need to practice ‘letting go.’ If you are not accepting, your body will tighten up and your muscles will tense. Letting go is letting go of the tension in your body. If your mind screams ‘No! I don’t want to!’ and you tighten back up, don’t worry. That happens. Start over. Just start relaxing again and keep letting go. Practice saying yes to the universe. Practice mindfulness as a way to practice acceptance of the present moment. A focus on breathing is intended to help individuals accept and tolerate themselves, the world, and reality as it is. It is also an important part of relaxation training and the treatment of panic attacks.

5. Practice Opposite Action

Next, practice opposite action all the way, so that you can accept the present moment. “Act as if you have already radically accepted something, and you will find in time that you have accepted it.” Imagine yourself accepting. Practice saying out loud that you accept. Practice a half-smile and willing-hands position to make acceptance easier. Think or talk about what you are accepting.

6. Cope Ahead

Cope ahead with events that seem unacceptable. Often difficulties in accepting things are due to fears that the truth will be a catastrophe. In these situations, cope ahead replaces fear with a sense of mastery. Imagine what you would do if you actually did accept what seems unacceptable. Rehearse what you would do if you accepted. Imagine solving or escaping problems that arise.

7. Attend to Body Sensations

Attend to your body sensations while you are thinking of what you are trying to accept. Notice places in your body where you feel tight or tense. Practice mindfulness of current emotions when difficult emotions associated with acceptance arise— sadness, anger, fear, or shame.

8. Allow Disappointment, Sadness, or Grief to Arise within You

At times, acceptance leads to almost unbearable disappointment, sadness, and grief. It is important to recognize that although you indeed may feel acute disappointment, sadness, or grief, you can survive it, and acceptance leads to peace at the end of the process.

9. Acknowledge That Life Can Be Worth Living Even When There Is Pain

Notice when you are refusing to accept painful events in your life. Remind yourself that even with painful events, life can be worth living. With compassion toward yourself, try to let go of resistance to accepting. Let go of catastrophizing. Say in your mind, I can stand this. I can handle this. Remind yourself that all lives have some margin of pain.

10. Do Pros and Cons

Do pros and cons as a way to motivate yourself for acceptance. Fill out one of the pros-and-cons worksheets for accepting.