

Practicing Radical Acceptance

There are many situations in our lives that we can't control. For example, we can't change other people (no matter how hard we may try!). Being in a difficult or painful situation and not having the ability or control to change it can cause intense negative emotions like sadness, anger, frustration, and shame.

It can be tempting to repeatedly problem-solve and try to change these situations or to reject reality altogether. But the more you try to control a situation that is beyond your control, the more miserable you'll feel.

Radical acceptance means accepting even the most difficult situations the way they are without trying to change or avoid them.

When you practice radical acceptance, you embrace reality and acknowledge the situation without judgment and criticizing other people or yourself.

Accepting unchangeable situations doesn't mean that you approve of them or learn to like them. It means that you take on an "it is what it is" mentality and let go of intense negative emotions.

Don't try to practice radical acceptance if you can change the situation yourself, or if the situation you're trying to accept isn't really reality. For example, you can't accept things that haven't happened yet, e.g., *"I just need to accept that I'll be alone forever."*



Steps to practicing radical acceptance:



01 Observe that you're fighting against reality. Stay in the present moment and pay attention to the emotions that you're experiencing.



02 Remind yourself that the unpleasant reality can't be changed.



03 Acknowledge that this reality is shaped by different factors and events that took place over time.



04 Practice acceptance with your mind, body, and spirit. You may use mindful breathing, visualization, other relaxation techniques, or prayer.



05 Be mindful of your body's sensations (tension, tightness) as you think about the things that you need to accept.



06 Embrace feelings of disappointment, sadness, or grief. Understand that it's OK and expected to feel these feelings.



07 Acknowledge that life is worth living even when it's painful. Remind yourself of things that make life worth living.



08 Act "as if" – if you really accepted this situation, how would you be thinking and acting differently? Practice doing these things.



09 If you find yourself struggling at this point, write down some pros and cons of accepting and not accepting reality.

You can also use coping statements during this practice.

They may be helpful when you try to let go of negative thoughts and feelings.

For example:

