

Distress Tolerance Handout #5

Basic Principles of Accepting Reality

Accepting reality does not mean you have to like the circumstances. Some tools to help you accept reality are breathing, half smile, awareness.

For Example: Radical Acceptance: I have suicidal thoughts all the time but it doesn't mean I like having them or will act on them.

WILLINGNESS

Cultivate a WILLING response to each situation

Willingness is doing just what is needed in each situation, in an unpretentious way. It is focusing on effectiveness.

Willingness is listening very carefully to your WISE MIND, acting from your inner self.

Willingness is becoming aware of your connection to the universe - to the earth, to the floor you are standing on, to the chair you are sitting on, to the person you are talking to.

Ask yourself, in 5 years from now, will the situation that causes the distress matter?

WILLFULNESS

Willfulness is like sitting on your hands when action is needed, refusing to make changes that are needed.

Willfulness causes you to fight any suggestions that will improve the distress and thus make it more tolerable.

Willfulness is giving up.

It is the opposite of doing what works, of being effective. Willfulness is trying to fix every situation or refusing to tolerate the distressful moment.

TURNING THE MIND

Acceptance of reality requires an act of CHOICE. It is like coming to a fork in the road. You have to turn your mind towards the acceptance road and away from the rejecting reality road.

You have to make an inner COMMITMENT to accept. The commitment to accept does not itself equal acceptance. It just turns you toward the path. But it is the first step.

You have to turn your mind and commit to acceptance OVER AND OVER AND OVER again. Sometimes, you have to make the commitment many times in the space of a few minutes.

RADICAL ACCEPTANCE

Freedom from suffering requires ACCEPTANCE FROM DEEP WITHIN.

It is allowing yourself to go completely with whatever the situation is. Let go of fighting reality.

ACCEPTANCE IS THE ONLY WAY OUT OF HELL WHICH MUST NOT BE INTERPRETED AS APPROVAL OF THE DISTRESSFUL SITUATION

Pain creates suffering only when you refuse to ACCEPT the pain.

Deciding to tolerate the moment is ACCEPTANCE.

ACCEPTANCE is acknowledging what is.

To accept something is not the same as judging it to be good.

By stopping your self from fighting, the rage or anger you feel will dissipate as long as you continue to accept your condition or your faulty perceptions to events or interpersonal communications difficulties. You will be amazed at how much better you will feel when you are able to accept.