



## Radical Acceptance

(When you cannot keep painful events and emotions from coming your way.)

### WHAT IS RADICAL ACCEPTANCE?

1. Radical means *all the way*, complete and total.
2. It is accepting in your mind, your heart, and your body.
3. It's when you stop fighting reality, stop throwing tantrums because reality is not the way you want it, and let go of bitterness.

### WHAT HAS TO BE ACCEPTED?

1. Reality is as it is (the facts about the past and the present are the facts, even if you don't like them).
2. There are limitations on the future for everyone (but only realistic limitations need to be accepted).
3. Everything has a cause (including events and situations that cause you pain and suffering).
4. Life can be worth living even with painful events in it.

### WHY ACCEPT REALITY?

1. Rejecting reality does not change reality.
2. Changing reality requires first accepting reality.
3. Pain can't be avoided; it is nature's way of signaling that something is wrong.
4. Rejecting reality turns pain into suffering.
5. Refusing to accept reality can keep you stuck in unhappiness, bitterness, anger, sadness, shame, or other painful emotions.
6. Acceptance may lead to sadness, but deep calmness usually follows.
7. The path out of hell is through misery. By refusing to accept the misery that is part of climbing out of hell, you fall back into hell.

# DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 11A

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## Radical Acceptance: Factors That Interfere

### **RADICAL ACCEPTANCE IS NOT:**

Approval, compassion, love, passivity, or against change.

### **FACTORS THAT INTERFERE WITH ACCEPTANCE**

- 1. You don't have the skills for acceptance; you do not know how to accept really painful events and facts.
- 2. You believe that if you accept a painful event, you are making light of it or are approving of the facts, and that nothing will be done to change or prevent future painful events.
- 3. Emotions get in the way (unbearable sadness; anger at the person or group that caused the painful event; rage at the injustice of the world; overwhelming shame about who you are; guilt about your own behavior).
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

# DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 12



(Distress Tolerance Worksheets 8, 8a, 10)

## Turning the Mind

TURNING THE MIND is like facing a fork in the road. You have to turn your mind toward the acceptance road, and away from the road of rejecting reality.

TURNING THE MIND is choosing to accept.

The CHOICE to accept does not itself equal acceptance. It just puts you on the path.



### TURNING THE MIND, STEP BY STEP

1. **OBSERVE** that you are not accepting. (Look for anger, bitterness, annoyance; avoiding emotions; saying “Why me?”, “Why is this happening?”, “I can’t stand this,” “It shouldn’t be this way.”)
2. Go within yourself and **MAKE AN INNER COMMITMENT** to accept reality as it is.
3. **DO IT AGAIN**, over and over. Keep turning your mind to acceptance each time you come to the fork in the road where you can reject reality or accept it.
4. **DEVELOP A PLAN** for catching yourself in the future when you drift out of acceptance.

# DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 13



(Distress Tolerance Worksheets 8, 8a, 10)

## Willingness

Willingness is readiness to enter and participate fully in life and living.

### Find a WILLING RESPONSE to each situation.

Willingness is DOING JUST WHAT IS NEEDED:

- In each situation.
- Wholeheartedly, without dragging your feet.

Willingness is listening very carefully to your WISE MIND, and then acting from your WISE MIND.

Willingness is ACTING WITH AWARENESS that you are connected to the universe (to the stars, people you like and don't like, the floor, etc.).

### Replace WILLFULNESS with WILLINGNESS.

- Willfulness is **REFUSING TO TOLERATE** the moment.
- Willfulness is refusing to make changes that are needed.
- Willfulness is **GIVING UP**.
- Willfulness is the **OPPOSITE OF "DOING WHAT WORKS."**
- Willfulness is trying to **FIX EVERY SITUATION**.
- Willfulness is insisting on **BEING IN CONTROL**.
- Willfulness is **ATTACHMENT TO "ME, ME, ME"** and "what I want right now!"

### WILLINGNESS, STEP BY STEP

1. **OBSERVE** the willfulness. Label it. Experience it.
2. **RADICALLY ACCEPT** that at this moment you feel (and may be acting) willful. You cannot fight willfulness with willfulness.
3. **TURN YOUR MIND** toward acceptance and willingness.
4. Try **HALF-SMILING** and a **WILLING POSTURE**.
5. When willfulness is immovable, **ASK, "WHAT'S THE THREAT?"**

### Situations where I notice my own:

Willfulness: \_\_\_\_\_

Willingness: \_\_\_\_\_

# DISTRESS TOLERANCE WORKSHEET 8

(Distress Tolerance Handouts 10–15a)

## Reality Acceptance Skills

Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Week Starting: \_\_\_\_\_

Check off two reality acceptance skills to practice this week during a stressful situation:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Radical acceptance | <input type="checkbox"/> Half-smiling                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Turning the mind   | <input type="checkbox"/> Willing hands                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Willingness        | <input type="checkbox"/> Mindfulness of current thoughts |

### Skill 1. Describe the situation and how you practiced the skill:

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How effective was the skill in helping you cope with the situation (keeping you from doing something to make the situation worse)? Circle a number below.

*I still couldn't stand  
the situation, even  
for one more minute.*

1

2

*I was able to cope somewhat,  
at least for a little while.  
It helped somewhat.*

3

4

*I could use skills,  
tolerated distress, and  
resisted problem urges.*

5

Did this skill help you cope with uncomfortable emotions or urges, or avoid conflict of any kind? Circle YES or NO.

**Describe how the skill helped or did not help:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### Skill 2. Describe the situation and how you practiced the skill:

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How effective was the skill in helping you cope with the situation (keeping you from doing something to make the situation worse)? Circle a number below.

*I still couldn't stand  
the situation, even  
for one more minute.*

1

2

*I was able to cope somewhat,  
at least for a little while.  
It helped somewhat.*

3

4

*I could use skills,  
tolerated distress, and  
resisted problem urges.*

5

Did this skill help you cope with uncomfortable emotions or urges, or avoid conflict of any kind? Circle YES or NO.

**Describe how the skill helped or did not help:** \_\_\_\_\_

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# DISTRESS TOLERANCE WORKSHEET 10

([Distress Tolerance Handouts 12, 13](#))

## Turning the Mind, Willingness, Willfulness

Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Week Starting: \_\_\_\_\_

Practice each skill, and rate your level of acceptance of reality as it is before and after: from 0 (no acceptance at all) to 5 (I'm at peace with this). List what you tried specifically under the rating.

**Turning the Mind:** Acceptance Before: \_\_\_\_\_ After: \_\_\_\_\_

**OBSERVE** not accepting. What did you observe? What were you having trouble accepting?

**MAKE AN INNER COMMITMENT** to accept what feels unacceptable. How did you do this?

Describe your **PLAN FOR CATCHING YOURSELF** the next time you drift from acceptance.

**WILLINGNESS** (rate 0–5): Acceptance Before: \_\_\_\_\_ After: \_\_\_\_\_  
Willfulness Before: \_\_\_\_\_ After: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe **EFFECTIVE BEHAVIOR** you did to move forward toward a goal.

**NOTICE WILLFULNESS.** Describe how you are not participating effectively in the world as it is, or how you are not doing something you know needs to be done to move toward a goal.

Describe how you **PRACTICED RADICALLY ACCEPTING YOUR WILLFULNESS.**

**MAKE AN INNER COMMITMENT** to accept what feels unacceptable. How did you do this?

Describe what you did that was **WILLING.**