



***"Not everything that is faced can be changed. But
nothing can be changed until it is faced."***

James Baldwin

"SIT IN THE MUD" OF ACCEPTANCE

A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP WITH YOURSELF IS BUILT ON A SOLID FOUNDATION OF HONESTY & TRUST

8 REASONS TO DO ACCEPTANCE WORK

- 1 See through murkiness, accept losses and failures, and realize aspects of your life that you can and cannot change
- 2 You may be stuck on autopilot without knowing it and repeating maladaptive patterns of behavior
- 3 Provides your mind with the information it needs for self-forgiveness, grieving, letting go, and healing
- 4 It is calming to the nervous system when we are grounded in reality - even if reality is currently disappointing
- 5 Increases your personal power to learn from the past, refocus, let go, and move yourself in a desired direction
- 6 Creates clear perspective of your genuine feelings towards aspects of your life and values
- 7 Allows the opportunity to connect with your unique and authentic dreams, goals, desires, and renewed hope
- 8 With acceptance, your mind will allow you to refocuses attention on the present moment and towards the future - where you have power - instead of looping thoughts about the past (a loss, your ex, regrets, self-berating)

This practice is derived from Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT): to be completed at your home

In your own words, what does "acceptance" mean to you?

Be unapologetically real right now. Do not try to be "happy." Just be. Literally look around your current home. What do you **dislike** (décor, sofa, bed, your home overall, organization or lack thereof, who you live with, etc.)? Be SPECIFIC.

Look around your home and list what you **like** about your surroundings. Be SPECIFIC.

What about your current life situations do you **like** (relationship status, family, car, financial situation, friendships, career, goal attainment, etc. Simply allow. Be vague or specific, whatever comes natural. Free-write whatever comes up for you.

What about your current life situations do you **dislike** (relationship status, family, car, financial situation, career, friendships, etc. Let your disappointments flow. Be vague or specific, whatever comes natural. Free-write first thoughts.

How do you feel about these dislikes? List specific emotions. Where do you feel these emotions in your body?

List your most painful disappointments - the aspects of your current reality that are the most difficult to accept.

Which of these aspects is the most difficult to accept at this point?

What gets in the way of accepting this part of reality?

What do you fear may happen if you allow yourself to accept this unconditionally?

Take two deep breaths. Visualize confronting this difficult reality. If you could literally speak to it, what would you say to it?

What feelings surface when you confront this difficult aspect?

When was the last time you recall feeling this way? Describe where you were, your senses, such as smells, sounds, visuals.

How did you work with these difficult feelings last time? What strength or skills did you use to get through it?

Is there someone to support you through this difficult time? If not, imagine who you wish could be here to help you (this can be someone you know, someone in history, a pet, or a religious or spiritual figure that brings you comfort)?

“Without suffering, there's no happiness. So we shouldn't discriminate against the mud. We have to learn how to embrace and cradle our own suffering... with a lot of tenderness.”

Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Art of Transforming Suffering*

Describe a time you were able to support yourself emotionally with compassion through a difficult time.

How might you provide yourself with support and compassion at this point in your life?

What can you learn from current disappointments, if anything? Even if it is a lesson you feel you should've known already.

If you could make a day or perhaps a full week of "sitting in the mud" with acceptance and feeling the disappointment to allow for healing, crying, grieving, learning lessons, and even planning for a better future... what would this day look like? Where would you go? What would you do? Describe your most ideal setting and way of processing.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR BLUEPRINT AND EXPECTATIONS OF YOURSELF AND YOUR LIFE

We can be subconsciously disappointed and even depressed if we are not living according to the BLUEPRINT, VALUES, and BELIEFS we have about what we want in life. Identify how you may be falling short of your expectations.

Relationship Status, Family, Friends and Support System

Describe what you wanted by this age and at this point in your life?	The Reality	Is change possible? Yes or No	If change is possible, what can you do? If not possible, can you feel acceptance and compassion for yourself?

Career Status and Financial Situation

Describe what you wanted by this age and at this point in your life?	The Reality	Is change possible? Yes or No	If change is possible, what can you do? If not possible, can you feel acceptance and compassion for yourself?

Home, Sense of Stability and Where You Live

Describe what you wanted by this age and at this point in your life?	The Reality	Is change possible? Yes or No	If change is possible, what can you do? If not possible, can you feel acceptance and compassion for yourself?

Overall Health and Well-Being

Describe what you wanted by this age and at this point in your life?	The Reality	Is change possible? Yes or No	If change is possible, what can you do? If not possible, can you feel acceptance and compassion for yourself?

FACING AND ACCEPTING THE REALITY OF YOUR CURRENT SITUATION IS ESSENTIAL TO FEEL THROUGH THE PAIN, INCREASE PERSONAL POWER AND BUILD YOURSELF UP FROM THIS STABLE FOUNDATION OF REALITY

IDENTIFYING “WHAT IF’S” AND “IF-ONLY’S”

Healing and feeling better requires identifying “what if’s” and “if only’s.” It is important to identify these aspects that are standing in your way and keeping you stuck.

REGRETS: “what if’s” = past

REGRETS allow you to learn lessons, albeit regrets are typically painful. Regrets usually hold shame and other painful emotions. This is why we tend to avoid them or distract ourselves from our regrets instead of face them and learn from them. In order to cleanse and let go, we need to understand and learn from regrets.

Be curious as you list REGRETS (“if only’s”): there are examples to get you started

If only I had invited Becky to my birthday part in 5th grade... I feel guilty about that to this day

If only I hadn’t yelled at Jeff in front of everyone

If only I had started my exercise program last year because I’d be thinner now if I had

If only

If only

If only

If only

If only

If only

If only

If only

If only

If only

If only

If only

If only

Continue free-writing any regrets from your childhood, adulthood and specific regrets in relationships

Describe **lessons** you have learned from your regrets and any **gifts and blessings** you have from them

IDENTIFYING "WHAT IF'S" AND "IF-ONLY'S"

FEARS: "if only's" = future

FEARS and ANXIETY have valuable information. Fears reveal your desires, needs and unmet needs. Like REGRETS, we tend to automatically avoid, numb, or distract ourselves from our FEARS because they tend to feel alarming, overwhelming and painful. We must learn to "see, hear, value and understand" our fears in order to realize their valuable information and plan our lives accordingly with a proactive approach.

Identify and list FEARS ("what if's"): examples included to get your started

What if the same thing happens again in my next relationship?

What if I never lose enough weight to be healthy?

What if I never find love again?

What if I am too old or too broken to have a better life?

What if

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Continue free-writing any fears and "what if's," both short-term and long term

Describe what proactive planning or creating solutions you can think of for the "what if's" you've listed