

Radical Acceptance Practice



Before we jump into practicing, let's review: What is the purpose of radical acceptance?

The purpose of Radical Acceptance is to teach you to cope with any painful situations and emotions in the future. Instead of suffering endlessly because of distressing feelings or events, Radical Acceptance guides you to feel that pain and cope with it anyway. Radical Acceptance is complete, total acceptance of what is happening, without trying to fight reality.

WHAT IS RADICAL ACCEPTANCE NOT?

Agreeing with everything that has happened:

Were you passed over for a promotion you know you deserved? A common thought about Radical Acceptance is that when we accept the things we are unhappy about, that means we are agreeing with them. However, in this example, accepting that you were passed over for something you deserved does not mean deciding you weren't right for it in the first place. It simply means accepting what has happened, and rather than focusing on what you can't change, you are going to focus on reality and things that are in your control.

Approving of everyone's choices or behaviors:

Much the same as the first lit item, within Radical Acceptance it is not necessary to approve of all choices made by your friends, family, coworkers, etc. You can still disapprove of the choices they make or the behaviors they exhibit. The difference is just that you accept you can't control them or change their own behavior. Instead of operating from a place of resentment or disapproval, you operate from a place of clear understanding & acceptance. You see that they have made the choice, and all you can do now is figure out what you want to do.

Seeing your life as one without choices:

A common thought when being first introduced to Radical acceptance is: *if I'm just accepting everything as out of my control, doesn't that mean I don't have any choice in what happens in my life?* The truth is actually the exact opposite. Radical Acceptance allows you to see the reality around you clearly. You see what is in your control and what is not. You accept what is not in your control, and you are left with the power to make your own choices regarding what is in your control.

HOW CAN YOU PRACTICE RADICAL ACCEPTANCE?

For a more thorough look at what Radical Acceptance is, refer back to the “**Radical Acceptance**” sheet. For now, focus on the three key points of practicing radical acceptance:

1. *Recognize that you are fighting reality.*
2. *Remember that even if you want to, you can't change the facts.*
3. *Actively practice acceptance.*

YOUR TURN: PRACTICING RADICAL ACCEPTANCE

PART ONE: DETERMINE WHAT REQUIRES YOUR RADICAL ACCEPTANCE

What is going on in your life that you need to radically accept? What have you been struggling to accept? When deciding what in your life requires radical acceptance, try to think of instances where an unaccepting attitude has been holding you back or hindering you in some way. Are you upset with someone for a choice they made? Are you unhappy with work because you didn't get a promotion? While these feelings are completely valid, if you fixate on them indefinitely instead of taking time to accept how things are, in the end you only damage your own progress.

Pick two important things in your life that require your acceptance right now.

When you have chosen them, write them down below. Next to each item, assign a number between zero and five. Zero for “*No acceptance at all, I am in complete denial, I reject the reality completely, etc.*” and five for “*I have accepted this completely, and made total peace with it.*”

1. _____
2. _____

Now, chose two more things, of lesser importance, that you are struggling to accept this week. Do the same as you did above and rate them on a scale of 0-5.

1. _____
2. _____

PART TWO: REFINE YOUR LIST

Look at the lists you've made above. For each item:

1. **Check the facts:** *Do you have all of the correct information? Are you filling in gaps with your own assumptions, or do you know that the information you have is true?*
2. **Check for opinions:** *When you wrote them out, did you write the items as facts, or is your own interpretation of the event coming through? Reword it if opinions or interpretations are apparent. Try to describe whatever it is using only factual statements.*
3. **Check for judgement:** *Do you use judgment words in your list? (Things like "good" "bad" "right" or "wrong"?) Reword them and leave out any language that indicates a moral judgment.*

PART THREE: PRACTICE RADICAL ACCEPTANCE

Choose one item from each list:

1. _____
2. _____

For each item, focus only on the facts of the situation. Give them your full attention until your Wise Mind *[This state of mind is a combination of Reasonable Mind and Emotion Mind. In this state of mind, logic and emotion have equal importance. Instead of either of the extreme states or Reasonable Mind and Emotion Mind, Wise Mind combines the strengths of each state of mind. Focusing on emotions and reason gives you a balanced viewpoint from which to make decisions.]* is able to accept them as facts without trying to argue or resist the truth of them.

Exercises which may help you achieve this:

- Acknowledged that in not accepting these facts, I was fighting, questioning, or resisting reality.
- Worked to non-judgmentally consider the causes of this reality. Then, when I considered those causes, I worked to accept them as out of my own control.
- Practiced acceptance with mind, body & spirit
- Listened & paid attention to my body as I stated these facts to myself, and tended to whatever physical needs or sensations came up as I focused on what required my acceptance.
- Let myself feel frustration, anger, sadness, disappointment, grief, etc. regarding the facts I need to accept.
- Reminded myself that these are perfectly valid emotions and there is nothing wrong with feeling them. Then reminded myself that I can feel anger/disappointment/etc. with a situation and still accept it as reality. Reminded myself that life is still worth living, even through painful moments, and that all life has some degree of pain.
- Made a pros and cons list for both accepting the truth and living in denial.
- Other: _____

After completing these exercises, look back at your list. Use the same scale as before (0-5) and rate the level of acceptance you now feel.

1. _____
2. _____