

Week 3: Radical Acceptance Worksheet


Identifying a Situation Where Radical Acceptance Can Be Applied


What is Radical Acceptance?

Radical Acceptance means fully acknowledging reality as it is—without judgment, resistance, or trying to change what is beyond your control. It does not mean you approve of or like the situation, but rather, you stop fighting against it, allowing yourself to focus on how to cope.

Part 1: Identify a Situation

Think of a situation in your life that is difficult, painful, or frustrating but cannot be changed. It could be related to relationships, health, work, or any other life circumstance.

 Date: _____

 Describe the situation:

Part 2: Notice Your Reactions

Answer the following about how you have responded to this situation:

- What emotions do you feel when you think about this situation? (Anger, sadness, frustration, fear, guilt/shame).
- What thoughts go through your mind about this situation?
- Have you tried to resist this reality (wishing it were different, avoiding it, or blaming yourself/others)? If so, how?

 **Bring this worksheet to your next session to discuss your insights and challenges.**

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Part 3: Practicing Radical Acceptance

1. What aspects of this situation are beyond your control?
2. What aspects of this situation can you control?
3. If you fully accepted this situation, how might your emotions, thoughts, or actions change?
4. What is one statement you can say to yourself to remind you to practice Radical Acceptance? (Examples: "This is the way it is right now." "Fighting reality won't change it." "I can choose how to respond.")

Part 4: Reflection & Next Steps

What is one small action you can take this week to work toward Radical Acceptance?

How will you remind yourself to practice Radical Acceptance when difficult emotions arise?

 **Bring this worksheet to your next session to discuss your insights and challenges.**

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.

PRACTICING RADICAL ACCEPTANCE STEP BY STEP

- Observe that you are questioning or fighting reality (“It shouldn’t be this way”).
- Remind yourself that the unpleasant reality is just as it is and cannot be changed (“This is what happened”).
- Remind yourself that there are causes for the reality. Acknowledge that some sort of history led up to this very moment. Consider how people’s lives have been shaped by a series of factors.
- Notice that given these causal factors and how history led up to this moment, this reality had to occur just this way (“This is how things happened”).
- Practice accepting with the whole self (mind, body, and spirit). Be creative in finding ways to involve your whole self.
- Use accepting self-talk—but also consider using relaxation; mindfulness of your breath; half-smiling and willing hands while thinking about what feels unacceptable; prayer; going to a place that helps bring you to acceptance; or imagery.
- Practice opposite action. List all the behaviors you would do if you did accept the facts. Then act as if you have already accepted the facts. Engage in the behaviors that you would do if you really had accepted.
- Cope ahead with events that seem unacceptable. Imagine (in your mind’s eye) believing what act as if you have already accepted the facts. Engage in the behaviors that you would do if you really had accepted.
- Cope ahead with events that seem unacceptable. Imagine (in your mind’s eye) believing what you don’t want to accept. Rehearse in your mind what you would do if you accepted what seems unacceptable.
- Attend to body sensations as you think about what you need to accept. Allow disappointment, sadness, or grief to arise within you.
- Acknowledge that life can be worth living even when there is pain.
- Do pros and cons if you find yourself resisting practicing acceptance.