



INNERLIFE
ADVENTURES

Radical Acceptance

"The curious paradox is that when I accept myself just as I am, then I can change." – Carl Rogers

Radical Acceptance is the first and one of the most difficult tasks about changing any situation. Radical Acceptance means you accept something completely without judging it. You don't get angry at it, try to fight it, or blame it. It also doesn't mean giving up and accepting everything bad that might happen to you. It is about recognizing the long chain of events and decisions made by you and others in your life that led to the current situation, and taking responsibility for your role in getting here while accepting that sometimes some things happen to us outside of our control. Acceptance disarms the struggle with unwanted thoughts and feelings freeing up your energy to make change.

Think of a distressing situation that you experienced recently. Use the following questions to see and feel differently about the situation.

What happened in the situation? _____

What past events happened that led up to this situation? _____

What role did you play in creating the situation? _____

What roles did other people play in creating the situation? _____

What do you have control of in this situation? _____

What don't you have control of in this situation? _____

What was your response to the situation? _____

How did your response affect your own thoughts and feelings? _____

How did your response affect the thoughts and feelings of other people? _____

How could you have changed your response to this situation so that it led to less suffering for yourself and others?

How could the situation have occurred differently if you had decided to radically accept the situation?

It is very important to remember that *radical acceptance also applies (and mostly applies) to accepting yourself*. That is **embracing who you are without judging or criticizing yourself**. Or, to say it another way, **loving yourself just the way you are**, with all of your goodness and all of your faults. Finding the goodness inside yourself may be a challenge, especially if you are struggling with overwhelming emotions. Many people tend to think of themselves as being defective, bad, or unlovable. This is simply untrue! It is a product of our harsh thinking about ourselves and it causes us to overlook our good qualities and add more pain to our lives. *This is why radically accepting yourself in every moment is so extremely important.*

Adapted from *The Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills Workbook* by McKay, Wood, and Brantley. (2007).