



Welcome to Acceptance and Commitment Therapy!

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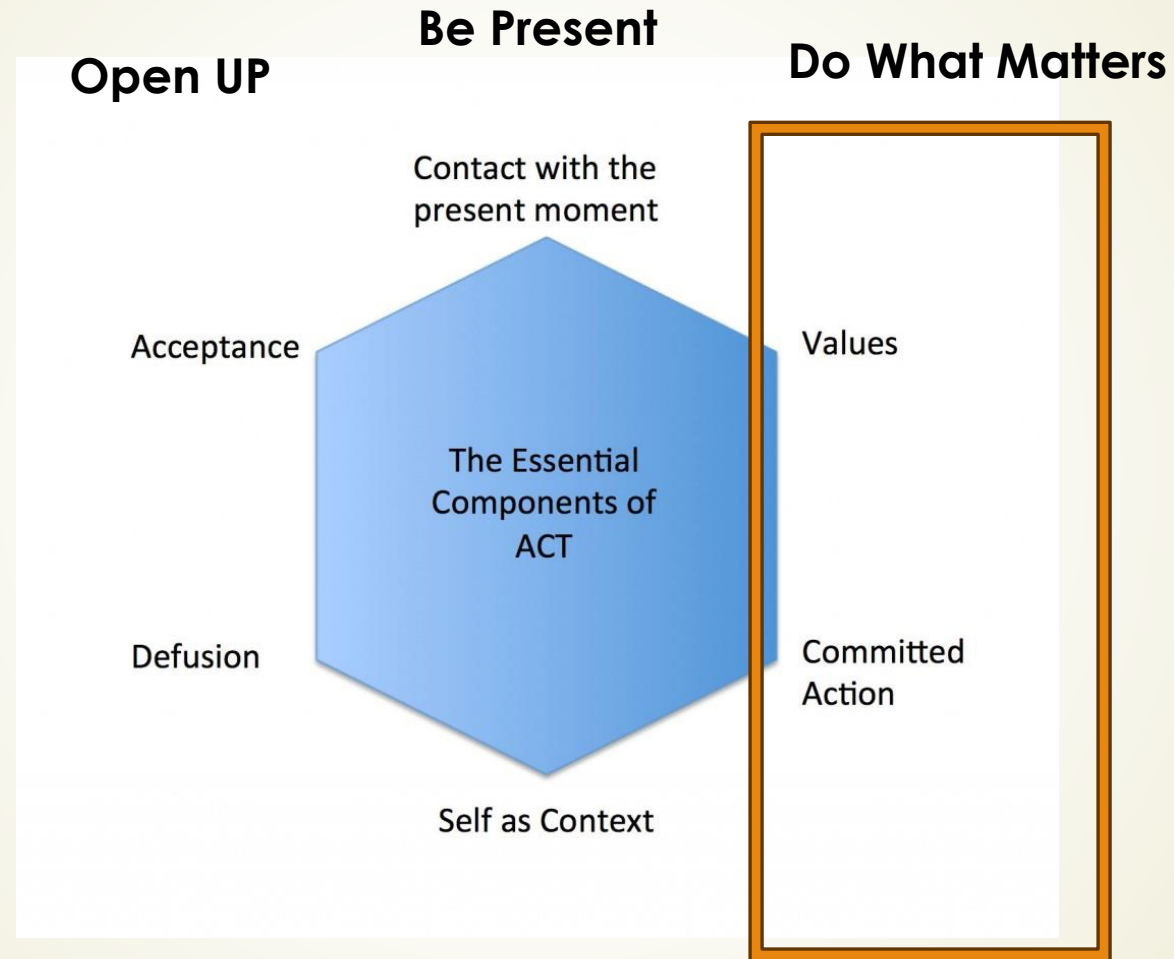
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*Session 2: Intentional Commitment to Behavior Change:
Values and Committed Action*

1. Describe Values and Committed Action and their underlying processes.
2. Identify a strategy/intervention for each process.

Psychological Flexibility: The Hexaflex



Be Present

Open Up

Psychological
Flexibility

**Do What
Matters**

Opening Up

- Able to separate, unhook, detach from thoughts and feelings?
- Able to make room for thoughts and feelings, and allow them to be there?

Being Present

- Able to engage fully in here-and-now experience? Ability for task-focused attention?
- Aware of own thoughts and feelings? Able to empathize? Able to take perspective on self and self-story?

Doing What Matters

- Able to be clear about and connected with values?
- Able to take and sustain values-guided action?
- Able to set goals? Sufficient skills to achieve goals?



Values-Based Living

- ▶ Processes:
 - ▶ Clarify **who** you want to be and **how** you want to move through this life
 - ▶ Moving toward experiences that are meaningful and important right now
- ▶ Common challenge:
 - ▶ Unclear values: unsure **who**, **how**, or **why**
 - ▶ Current activities do not feel meaningful or fulfilling
 - ▶ Shift in roles or relationships that make previous values unworkable
- ▶ Process examples:
 - ▶ 80th birthday prompt
 - ▶ Documentary film prompt
 - ▶ Bulls-Eye
 - ▶ Write your own tombstone, eulogy
 - ▶ Values Card Sort
 - ▶ Values checklist



80th birthday prompt

- ▶ Imagine it is your 80th birthday.
- ▶ Everyone that is important in your life is in attendance.
- ▶ They are taking an opportunity to share how you have lived your life.
- ▶ What do you hope they will say?



Documentary film prompt

- ▶ Suppose a camera crew wanted to do a profile on your family. With your permission, they followed you around with a camera crew for a week, filmed everything you did, and edited it into a documentary. And then suppose the camera crew did the same one year from now.
- ▶ What do you hope will be captured on the “1 year update?” How do you hope things will be different?
- ▶ Can you imagine a title for the documentary filmed now?
- ▶ Can you imagine a title for the documentary filmed in one year?

YOUR VALUES: *What really matters to you, deep in your heart? What do you want to do with your time on this planet? What sort of person do you want to be? What personal strengths or qualities do you want to develop?*

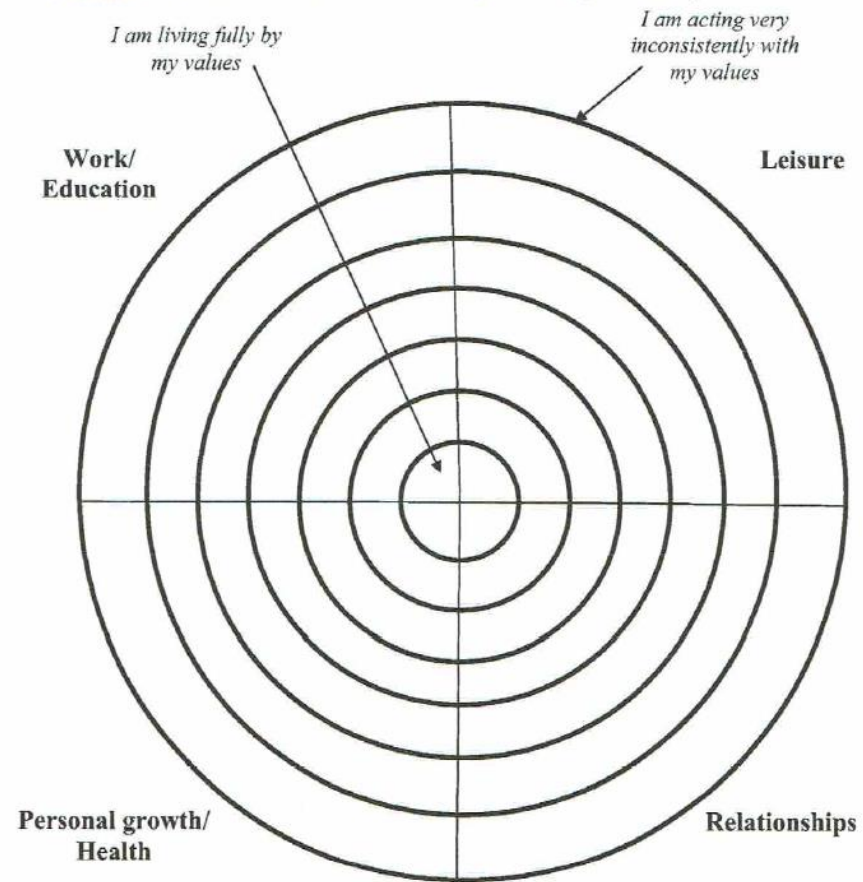
1. Work/Education: includes workplace, career, education, skills development, etc.

2. Relationships: includes your partner, children, parents, relatives, friends, co-workers, and other social contacts.

3. Personal Growth/Health: may include religion, spirituality, creativity, life skills, meditation, yoga, nature; exercise, nutrition, and/or addressing health risk factors like smoking, alcohol, drugs or overeating etc

4. Leisure: how you play, relax, stimulate, or enjoy yourself; activities for rest, recreation, fun and creativity.

THE BULL'S EYE: make an X in each area of the dart board, to represent where you stand today.



["The Bull's Eye" – ActMindfully.com](http://ActMindfully.com)

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Tombstone Exercise

This exercise is about exploring what you want your life to stand for.

In the left tombstone, write down some things that you want to control or avoid. For example, you could write “here lies Sally, she was never embarrassed” or “here lies Fred, he always did everything in the right order.”

In the right tombstone, write down some things that are about what is truly important to you. For example, you could write, “here lies Enrique, he spent a lot of time listening to his favorite music” or “here lies Chaquita, she stayed true to her passions.”

Reflect on both. Which would you prefer your tombstone to say?

Here lies

She/He

Here lies

She/He

<p>PERSONAL VALUES Card Sort W.R. Miller, J. C'de Baca, D.B. Matthews, P.L. Wilbourne University of New Mexico, 2001</p>	<p>IMPORTANT TO ME</p>
<p>VERY IMPORTANT TO ME</p>	<p>NOT IMPORTANT TO ME</p>
<p>ACCEPTANCE to be accepted as I am 1 9/01</p>	<p>ACCURACY to be accurate in my opinions and beliefs 2 9/01</p>
<p>ACHIEVEMENT to have important accomplishments 3 9/01</p>	<p>ADVENTURE to have new and exciting experiences 4 9/01</p>

<p>COURTESY to be considerate and polite toward others 17 9/01</p>	<p>CREATIVITY to have new and original ideas 18 9/01</p>
<p>DEPENDABILITY to be reliable and trustworthy 19 9/01</p>	<p>DUTY to carry out my duties and obligations 20 9/01</p>
<p>ECOLOGY to live in harmony with the environment 21 9/01</p>	<p>EXCITEMENT to have a life full of thrills and stimulation 22 9/01</p>
<p>FAITHFULNESS to be loyal and true in relationships 23 9/01</p>	<p>FAME to be known and recognized 24 9/01</p>

A Quick Look at Your Values – page 1

Values are your heart's deepest desires for how you want to behave as a human being. Values are not about what you want to get or achieve; they are about how you want to behave or act on an ongoing basis; how you want to treat yourself, others, the world around you.

There are literally hundreds of different values, but below you'll find a list of the most common ones. Probably, not all of them will be relevant to you. Keep in mind there are no such things as 'right values' or 'wrong values'. It's a bit like our taste in pizzas. If you prefer ham and pineapple but I prefer salami and olives, that doesn't mean that my taste in pizzas is *right* and yours is *wrong*. It just means we have different tastes. And similarly, we may have different values. So pick a domain of life that you want to improve, and read through the list below and write a letter next to each value: V = Very important, Q = Quite important, and N = Not so important - *for the specific domain of life you have picked to work on.*

1. Acceptance: to be open to and accepting of myself, others, life etc
2. Adventure: to be adventurous; to actively seek, create, or explore novel or stimulating experiences
3. Assertiveness: to respectfully stand up for my rights and request what I want
4. Authenticity: to be authentic, genuine, real; to be true to myself
5. Beauty: to appreciate, create, nurture or cultivate beauty in myself, others, the environment etc
6. Caring: to be caring towards myself, others, the environment etc
7. Challenge: to keep challenging myself to grow, learn, improve
8. Compassion: to act with kindness towards those who are suffering
9. Connection: to engage fully in whatever I am doing, and be fully present with others
10. Contribution: to contribute, help, assist, or make a positive difference to myself or others
11. Conformity: to be respectful and obedient of rules and obligations
12. Cooperation: to be cooperative and collaborative with others
13. Courage: to be courageous or brave; to persist in the face of fear, threat, or difficulty
14. Creativity: to be creative or innovative
15. Curiosity: to be curious, open-minded and interested; to explore and discover
16. Encouragement: to encourage and reward behaviour that I value in myself or others
17. Equality: to treat others as equal to myself, and vice-versa
18. Excitement: to seek, create and engage in activities that are exciting, stimulating or thrilling
19. Fairness: to be fair to myself or others
20. Fitness: to maintain or improve my fitness; to look after my physical and mental health and wellbeing
21. Flexibility: to adjust and adapt readily to changing circumstances
22. Freedom: to live freely; to choose how I live and behave, or help others do likewise
23. Friendliness: to be friendly, companionable, or agreeable towards others
24. Forgiveness: to be forgiving towards myself or others
25. Fun: to be fun-loving; to seek, create, and engage in fun-filled activities
26. Generosity: to be generous, sharing and giving, to myself or others
27. Gratitude: to be grateful for and appreciative of the positive aspects of myself, others and life
28. Honesty: to be honest, truthful, and sincere with myself and others
29. Humour: to see and appreciate the humorous side of life
30. Humility: to be humble or modest; to let my achievements speak for themselves

A Quick Look at Your Values – page 2

31. Industry: to be industrious, hard-working, dedicated
32. Independence: to be self-supportive, and choose my own way of doing things
33. Intimacy: to open up, reveal, and share myself -- emotionally or physically -- in my close personal relationships
34. Justice: to uphold justice and fairness
35. Kindness: to be kind, compassionate, considerate, nurturing or caring towards myself or others
36. Love: to act lovingly or affectionately towards myself or others
37. Mindfulness: to be conscious of, open to, and curious about my here-and-now experience
38. Order: to be orderly and organized
39. Open-mindedness: to think things through, see things from other's points of view, and weigh evidence fairly.
40. Patience: to wait calmly for what I want
41. Persistence: to continue resolutely, despite problems or difficulties.
42. Pleasure: to create and give pleasure to myself or others
43. Power: to strongly influence or wield authority over others, e.g. taking charge, leading, organizing
44. Reciprocity: to build relationships in which there is a fair balance of giving and taking
45. Respect: to be respectful towards myself or others; to be polite, considerate and show positive regard
46. Responsibility: to be responsible and accountable for my actions
47. Romance: to be romantic; to display and express love or strong affection
48. Safety: to secure, protect, or ensure safety of myself or others
49. Self-awareness: to be aware of my own thoughts, feelings and actions
50. Self-care: to look after my health and wellbeing, and get my needs met
51. Self-development: to keep growing, advancing or improving in knowledge, skills, character, or life experience.
52. Self-control: to act in accordance with my own ideals
53. Sensuality: to create, explore and enjoy experiences that stimulate the five senses
54. Sexuality: to explore or express my sexuality
55. Spirituality: to connect with things bigger than myself
56. Skilfulness: to continually practice and improve my skills, and apply myself fully when using them
57. Supportiveness: to be supportive, helpful, encouraging, and available to myself or others
58. Trust: to be trustworthy; to be loyal, faithful, sincere, and reliable
59. Insert your own unlisted value here:
60. Insert your own unlisted value here:

Once you've marked each value as V, Q, N (Very, Quite, or Not so important), go through all the Vs, and select out the top three that are most important to you *in this domain of life, at this point in time*. The next step is to start looking at ways to live these values, in this area of life; things you can say and do, guided by these values.

Values instructions:

Cross out the boxes until you have the **three** most important left. In the space below write down a goal that would bring one of those values to life over the next week.

Having a life filled with novelty and change	Teaching others	Being at one with God	Being wealthy	Showing respect to partners and elders	Helping others
Maintaining the safety and security of my loved ones	Meeting my obligations	Being physically fit	Eating healthy food	Acting consistently with my religious beliefs	Being loyal to friends and family
Having a life filled with adventure	Being admired by many people	Making sure to repay favors and not be indebted to people	Having an exciting life	Being curious, discovering new things	Being safe from danger
Figuring things out, solving problems	Being self-disciplined and resisting temptation	Engaging in sporting activities	Showing respect for tradition	Connecting with nature	Creating beauty (in any domain)
Building and repairing things	Promoting justice and caring for the weak	Being sexually desirable	Caring for others	Having a sense of accomplishment and making a lasting contribution	Striving to be a better person
Being competent and effective	Having influence over people	Accepting others as they are	Being honest	Having relationships involving love and affection	Enjoying music, art, or drama
Researching things	Engaging in clearly defined work	Working with my hands	Being in charge	Being ambitious and hard working	Acting with courage
Designing things	Competing with others	Being self-sufficient	Being creative	Organizing things	Gaining wisdom



Committed Action

- ▶ Processes:
 - ▶ Link actions that move toward values
 - ▶ Identify concrete behavioral changes and develop exercises and steps to achieve them
- ▶ Common Challenge:
 - ▶ Inaction, impulsivity, avoidance
- ▶ Examples
 - ▶ Goal setting/SMART Goals
 - ▶ Specific, Meaningful, Adaptive, Realistic, Time-Bound
 - ▶ Less is more: *“What is the smallest step you could take?”*
 - ▶ Anything is more: *“What **is** something you are willing to do this week?”*
 - ▶ Demonstrate public commitment for accountability

SMART GOALS

Goal Setting Worksheet

Step 1: A key focus in ACT is setting our goals guided by our values. Therefore, Step 1, before any goal setting, is to clarify what value(s) is (are) underlying your goals.

Step 1: My value(s) underlying these goals are:

When it comes to setting goals, make sure you set a SMART goal. There are different versions of this acronym. In my version, SMART stands for:

- **Specific:** specify the actions you will take, when and where you will do so, and who or what is involved. *Example of a vague or non-specific goal: "I will spend more time with my kids." A specific goal: "I will take the kids to the park on Saturday to play baseball." A non-specific goal: "I will be more loving towards my wife." A specific goal: "I will ring my wife at lunchtime and tell her I love her."*
- **Meaningful:** The goal should be personally meaningful to you. If it is genuinely guided by your values, as opposed to following a rigid rule, or trying to please others, or trying to avoid some pain, then it will be meaningful. If it lacks a sense of meaning or purpose, check in and see if it is really guided by your values.
- **Adaptive:** Does the goal help you to take your life forwards in a direction that, as far as you can predict, is likely to improve the quality of that life?
- **Realistic:** The goal should be realistically achievable. Take into account your health, competing demands on your time, financial status, and whether you have the skills to achieve it.
- **Time-bound:** to increase the specificity of your goal, set a day, date and time for it. If this is not possible, set as accurate a time limit as you can.

*Also, make sure it's a live person's goal, not a dead person's goal. (If you can't remember what that means, re-read Chapter 27 of *The Happiness Trap*.)*

Step 2: Write down a graduated series of goals, starting from tiny simple goals that can be achieved right away, to long term goals that may not be achieved for months or years.

Step 2: Some of My Goals Are:

- **An Immediate Goal** (something small, simple, easy, I can do in the next 24 hours)

- **Short Term Goals** (things I can do over the next few days and weeks)

- **Medium Term Goal(s)** (things I can do over the next few weeks and months)

- **Long Term Goal(s)** (things I can do over the next few months and years)

Case Conceptualization

What does the client want from therapy/coaching? What does he/she describe as the main problem(s)?

Are there any external barriers (as opposed to psychological barriers) to a rich and full life - e.g. legal, social, medical, financial, occupational problems that will require active problem solving and/or skills training?

UNWORKABLE ACTION
What is the client doing that makes his life worse, or keeps her stuck, or worsens his problems, or inhibits her growth, or prevents healthy solutions, or worsens health, or damages relationships etc?

What people, places, events, activities, situations and challenges is the client avoiding or escaping (e.g. withdrawing from, quitting, procrastinating, or staying away from)?

FUSION: (Include examples of specific thoughts, as well as of processes such as worrying, etc.)
PAST & FUTURE: (rumination, worrying, fantasizing, blaming, predicting the worst, reliving old hurts, idealizing the past or the future, flashbacks, 'if only ...', why did it happen? etc.)

SELF-DESCRIPTION: (self-judgments, self-limiting ideas about 'who I am' or 'what I can and can't do')

REASONS: (reasons the client gives for why she can't, won't or shouldn't change, or why his life can't be improved)

RULES: (about how myself, others, life should be: look for key words such as: 'should', 'have to', 'must', 'ought', 'right', 'wrong', 'always', 'never', 'can't because', 'won't until', 'shouldn't unless' etc)

JUDGMENTS: (mostly these will be negative, but sometimes positive; may be about anyone or anything: other people, oneself, one's job, one's body, one's thoughts and feelings, the past, the future, or even life itself)

OTHER: (any other unhelpful cognitions: beliefs, ideas, attitudes, assumptions, etc. Include anything the client says that upsets, annoys, confuses or scares you, or makes you feel stuck.)

EXPERIENTIAL AVOIDANCE: (Private experiences the client is trying to avoid, get rid of, or is unwilling to have)

THOUGHTS/IMAGES/MEMORIES: _____ FEELINGS/ SENSATIONS/URGES: _____

VALUES & COMMITTED ACTION
IMPORTANT LIFE DOMAINS: (What domains of life seem most important to this client - e.g. work, study, health, parenting, intimate relationship, friends, family, spirituality, community, environment)?

VALUES: (What values seem important within those domains?)

GOALS & ACTIONS: (What values-congruent goals and activities does the client: a) already have; and b) want to pursue?)

NEED FOR SKILLS-TRAINING: (What important skills does the client lack or fail to use e.g. problem solving, goal setting, self-soothing, assertiveness, communication, conflict resolution, time management, relaxation, empathy?)

NEED FOR TRAINING ATTENTION SKILLS: Does the client have the ability for 'task-focused attention': to maintain, shift, broaden, or narrow the focus of attention as required for the task at hand?

RESOURCES: (What strengths, skills and personal resources does the client already have, that could be utilized? What external resources could potentially be accessed?)

MY PERSONAL BARRIERS: (What difficult thoughts and feelings show up for me?)

BRAINSTORM: What questions, exercises, worksheets, metaphors, tools, techniques and strategies can I use in the next session? What sort of skills-training may be required? Is practical problem-solving required for external barriers?



For your review

Favorite Resources

- ▶ [Act Mindfully](#)
- ▶ ACT Made Simple
- ▶ The Happiness Trap (text and illustrated versions) – Russ Harris
- ▶ The Worry Trap – Chad LeJeune
- ▶ ACT with Love – Russ Harris
- ▶ Get Out of Your Mind and into Your Life – Steven Hayes
- ▶ Association for Contextual and Behavioral Science

Today's References

- ▶ Strosahl, K., Robinson, P., & Gustavsson, T. (2012). Brief Interventions for Radical Change
- ▶ Harris, R. (2009). ACT Made Simple: An Easy-To-Read Primer on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy.



Questions?

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