

EXERCISE: Acceptance

Use **Worksheet 10.3** to help you work toward acceptance of situations like the ones discussed earlier.

WORKSHEET 10.3. Acceptance

Identify one external situation (e.g., family, work, health, relationship) in which you think developing greater acceptance might be helpful. Consider situations that can't be easily changed or solved. Alternatively, write down some internal experiences (thoughts or moods) that recur often and negatively affect your mood.

Situation:

Thoughts:

Moods:

Try out one or more of the following paths to acceptance. It is not necessary to try each path for each situation, thought, or mood. Over time, as you practice acceptance, you might want to try each of these approaches at least once to see if they are helpful.

1. Observe your thoughts and moods (about the situation you have written down above) without judging, criticizing, or trying to change them. Just watch them as they occur. Be curious rather than critical. Try to make these observations for a few minutes each day for a week. This is much more difficult than it may appear. It is OK to notice if you become frustrated, distracted, bored, or judgmental. When you notice these things, just gently turn your attention back to the original thoughts and moods that you are observing.
2. Think about the bigger picture. What are the benefits of accepting this rather than being distressed? Are you focusing on only the negative parts of this experience and not recognizing other dimensions? Are there aspects to the situation that counterbalance the negative parts? If you can accept the parts that distress you, will you be able to enjoy or appreciate the rest of your experience more easily?
3. Sometimes paying too much attention to our distress prevents us from reaching our goals or living according to values that are important to us.
 - a. In this situation, is there some value or goal that is more important and meaningful to you than your distress? If so, write that value or goal here: _____
 - b. Think about how important that value or goal is for you.
 - c. How can you use *Mind Over Mood* skills to help you manage your distressing situation, thought, or mood, so you can approach or reach your values or goals? _____
 - d. Can you move in the direction of your values and goals while accepting the distress that you are experiencing?

Whether you followed the first, second, or third path to acceptance, write down what you have learned from this exercise: _____