



# WTF: What's the function? - How Applied Behaviour Analysis Can Enrich Transactional Analysis Practice

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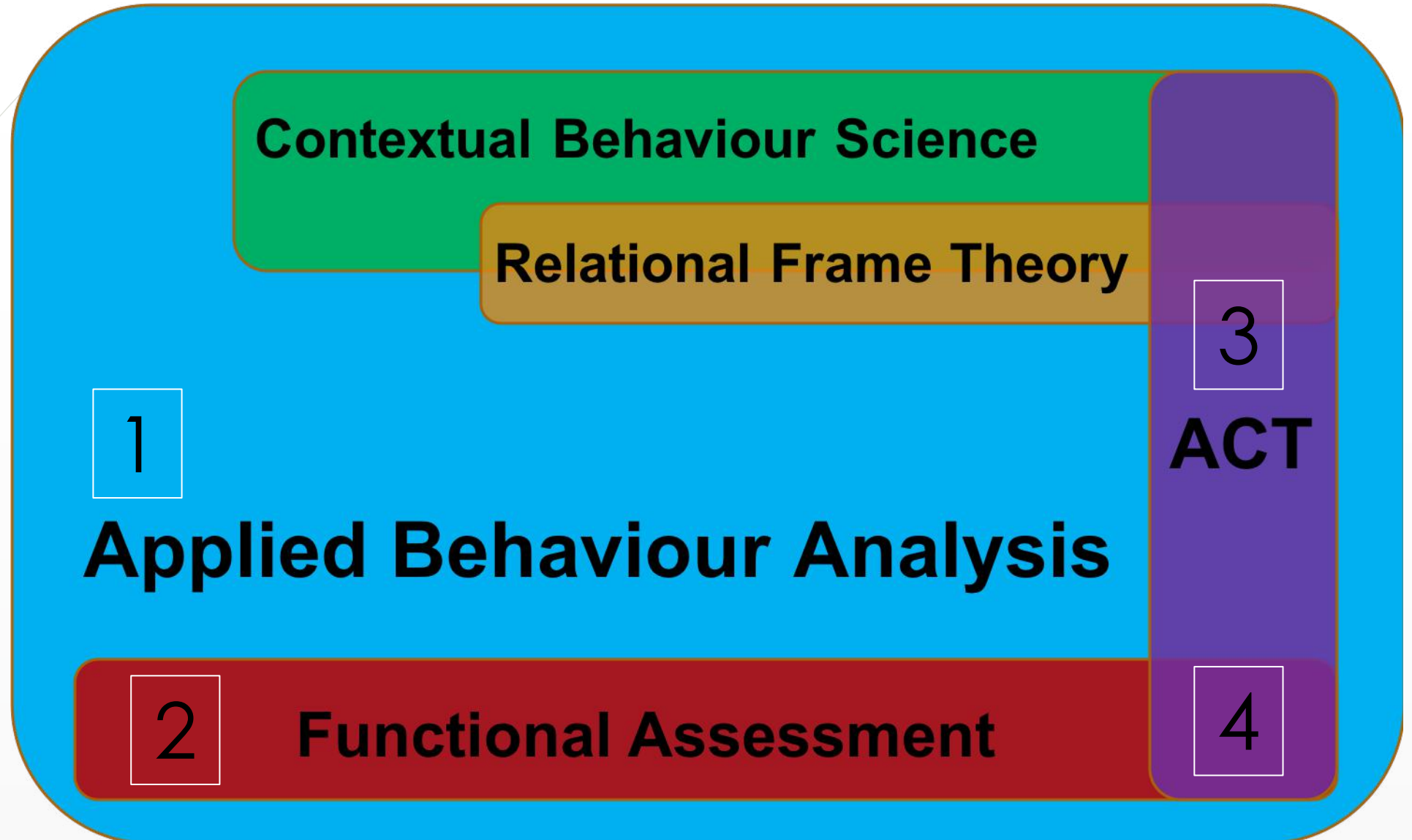
# About me

- BCBA
- Focus on facilitating socially significant behaviour change – social, academics, challenging behaviour, emotional, daily living skills
- Work directly with children, parents, teachers, schools, other professionals
- Trained at The Link Centre
- Private practice – Exeter
- UKATA research committee



YOU DON'T HAVE TO FEEL RELAXED AND FEARLESS ON THE INSIDE  
TO DO WHAT MATTERS TO YOU  
YOU CAN HAVE FEELINGS OF ANXIETY AND DO IT ANYWAY

# What's the plan?



**Contextual Behaviour Science**

**Relational Frame Theory**

**1**

**Applied Behaviour Analysis**

**Functional Assessment**

**ACT**

# What is Applied Behaviour Analysis?

- Scientific
- Contextual/environmental
- Systematic applications
- Individualised
- Data-driven
- Establish and enhance socially significant behaviours
- Applications:
  - Autism and IDD, Sports, Organisational behaviour management, Gerontology, ABI, Education, Sustainability, Behavioural Pediatrics, Prevention/intervention in Child maltreatment, Health and fitness, Treatment of Substance abuse disorders, Coaching, Psychotherapy/counselling, Animal training



# 7 dimensions of ABA (Baer, Wolf & Risley, 1968)

1. Applied  
Socially significant behaviours are selected
2. Behavioural  
Observable and measurable behaviours are targeted
3. Analytic  
Decisions are data based
4. Effective  
Interventions are monitored to evaluate the impact on the target behaviour
5. Technological  
Procedures are described clearly and concisely so that others may implement accurately
6. Conceptually Systematic  
Interventions consistent with principles demonstrated in the literature
7. Generalization  
Skills/behaviour occur in environments other than where they were discretely taught

# Behaviour – what is it?

- ▶ ANYTHING that a whole being DOES
- ▶ Has to pass the dead man's test



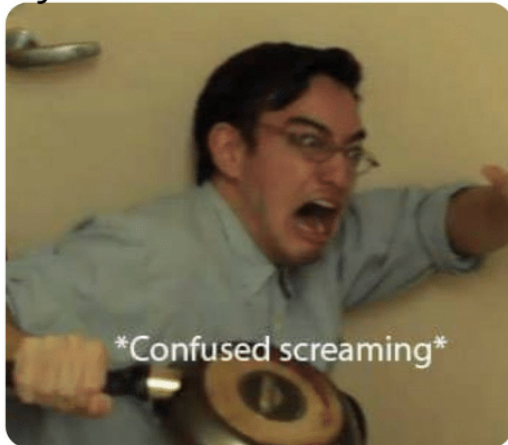
# Learning our ABCs



Antecedent → Behaviour → Consequence

me: \*forgets to put on my seatbelt\*

my car:







Always scared





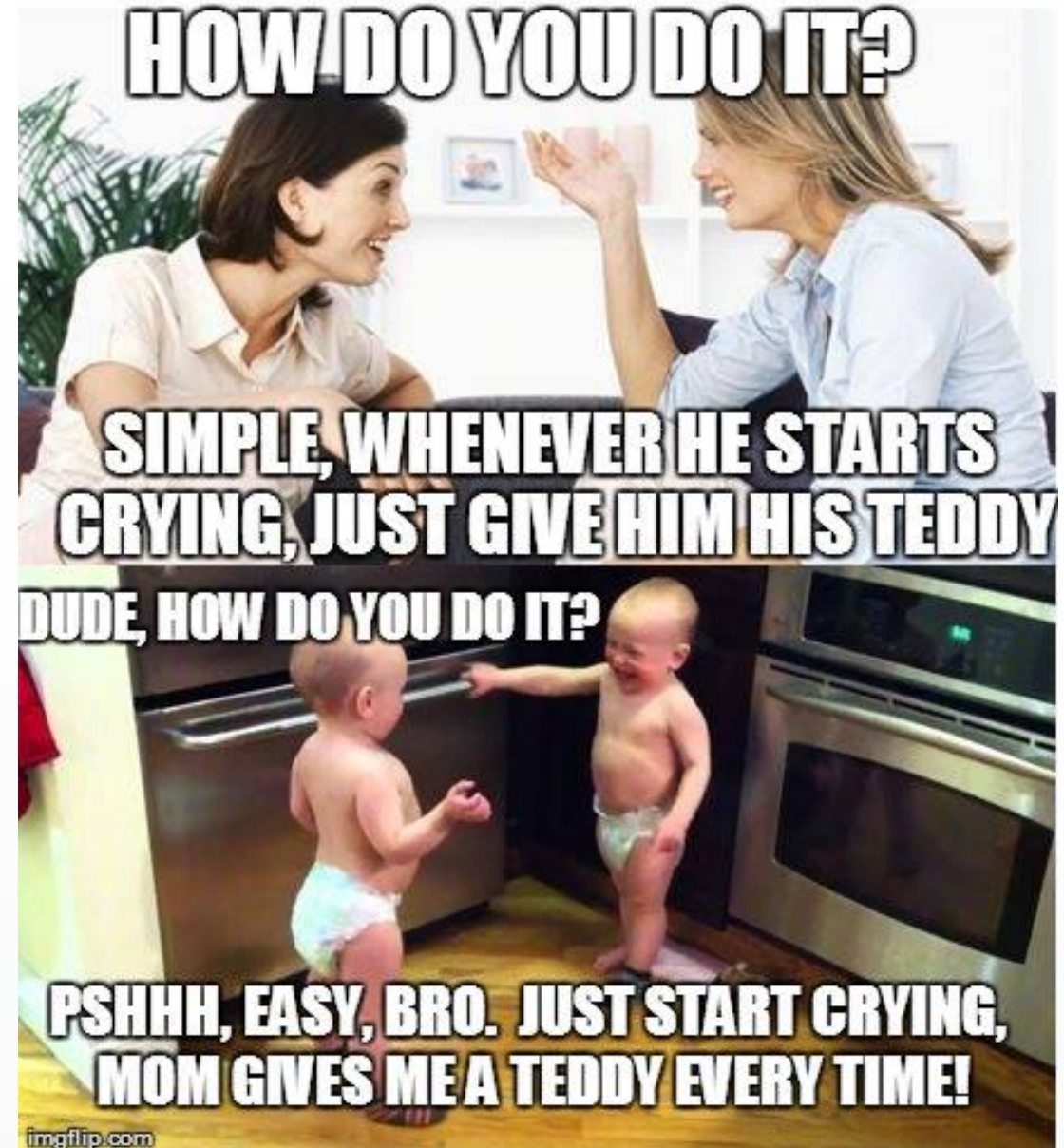
# Note on Consequences

- Consequences are defined by **environmental change** (what is added or removed following behaviour) and the affects that environmental change has on **future behaviour**
- We only know the effects consequences have on behaviour by **observing, measuring and analysing** an INDIVIDUAL'S behaviour and events surrounding behaviour – skills for self-analysis too

	Add	Remove
Increase behaviour	Something pleasant (positive reinforcement) 	Something unpleasant (negative reinforcement) 
Decrease behaviour	Something unpleasant (positive punishment) 	Something pleasant (negative punishment) 

# Note on Consequences

- ▶ When other people are involved there is often a complex web of antecedents and consequences



# How do we make a small enough, successful behaviour change that gains positive reinforcement?

- ▶ Targeting Pivotal behaviours
- ▶ Targeting Behavioural Cusps
- ▶ Looking at motivators
- ▶ Establishing effort vs reward hierarchy
- ▶ Shaping
- ▶ Teaching pre-requisite skills required to access that behaviour
- ▶ Breaking the long-term goal into lots of small ones (task analysis)



**Contextual Behaviour Science**

**Relational Frame Theory**

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**2**

**Functional Assessment**

# Functional Assessment

- ▶ When we talk about the “function” of a behaviour, we mean “the effect it has” or “what it achieves” in a particular context
- ▶ Functional assessment: interviews, observation (ABC charts) and testing (functional analysis)
- ▶ A functional analysis involves making systematic changes to the environment to test the effects of different conditions on the target behaviour(s)
  - ▶ How can we turn a behaviour on (antecedent) and off (consequence)

# Functions of Behaviour from functional analysis

(Iwata, 1994)

- Medical
- Sensory (automatic)
- Attention
- Escape/avoidance
  - Demand
  - Social
- Tangible



# Interview-Informed Synthesized Contingency Analysis

(IISCA; Hanley, Iwata, & McCord, 2003)

- Reinforcement contingencies are rarely delivered in isolation in homes and schools. When the interviews suggest that the contingencies are experienced simultaneously, we simply arrange for them to be experienced simultaneously in the analyses, thus the emphasis on synthesized contingencies.
- The specific **contingencies** are assessed, and materials used in the sessions are derived from the interviews, thus the analysis is *interview informed*.
- Involves the *rapid alternation of two conditions*, one in which the synthesized contingency suspected of influencing problem behaviour is arranged (referred to as a test condition) and one in which it is not (referred to as a control condition)

# Some things to wonder...

- ▶ Why do we keep doing something, even if the outcome is demonstrably bad/aversive?
- ▶ Why do we think all those negative thoughts all the time?
- ▶ What function is reinforcing our thoughts and behaviours?
- ▶ What might be the hypothesised function(s) of our behaviour?
- ▶ What happens when we try to stop that behaviour?
- ▶ Is there an 'ultimate function'?





# Extinction

- ▶ When we stop providing reinforcement for a previously reinforced behaviour



# Extinction Burst

- Increase frequency, duration, magnitude and variation
- Doesn't destroy original learning – generates new learning which is context specific
- Spontaneous recovery (rapid reacquisition effect)
- Need to teach a suitable alternative
- Or risk reinforcing the bigger behaviour



# Extinction Burst

- So, what if our uncomfortable and painful thoughts, feelings and memories are like this boy with his trumpet?
- Does walking away, pretending not to listen to the extraordinary noise, trying not to show your upset stop him playing?
- What if it felt like that boy could escalate to such a level that he made you fear for your life with clever words, and twisted examples and rationales of why he's right?



**DON'T think about...**

**UNICORNS!**



YOUR LEG

GLOBAL  
WARMING

POLITICS

HOW YOU'RE  
GOING TO GET  
HOME

HAPPINESS

WHO YOU'RE  
GOING TO TALK TO  
AT TEA BREAK



# DON'T think about...

ALL YOUR DON'TS

WHITE ELEPHANTS

UNICORNS!

WHAT YOU'RE  
GOING TO  
HAVE FOR  
DINNER

THAT MOMENT 20 YEARS AGO IN  
CLASS WHERE YOU SAID  
SOMETHING SILLY AND NO-ONE  
LAUGHED

THE PERSON WHO  
CALLED YOU  
SOMETHING MEAN

YOUR FAVOURITE ICE CREAM

**Contextual Behaviour Science**

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**3**

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# Script learning (Widdowson, p.275, 2009)

IF...

Learning =

Experience → feeling → fantasy → fact

THEN...

Unlearning =

Decontamination ← Decontamination ← Deconfusion ← Deconfusion

# What is ACT?



- ▶ One of the main aims in ACT is to help people *develop broader, more flexible repertoires of behaviour* in the presence of events that normally tend to cue rigid, self-defeating behaviours.
- ▶ Accept what is out of your personal control and commit to action that improves and enriches your life.
- ▶ Connections with Relational Frame Theory, Contextual Behaviour Science, and Third-Wave CBT
- ▶ New research on how thoughts are made and understood



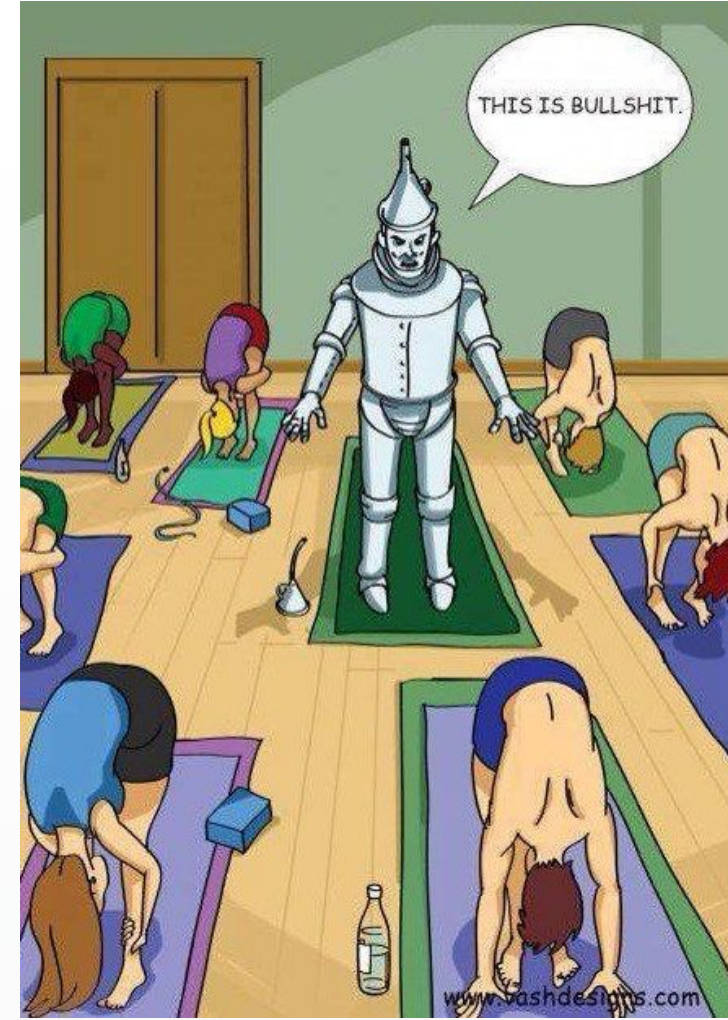
# Cognitive Flexibility

- Reframing
- Flexible perspective taking
- Compassion (for self and others)
- Flexible goal setting, problem solving, planning and strategizing
- Conceiving your mind as a coach, guide, friend



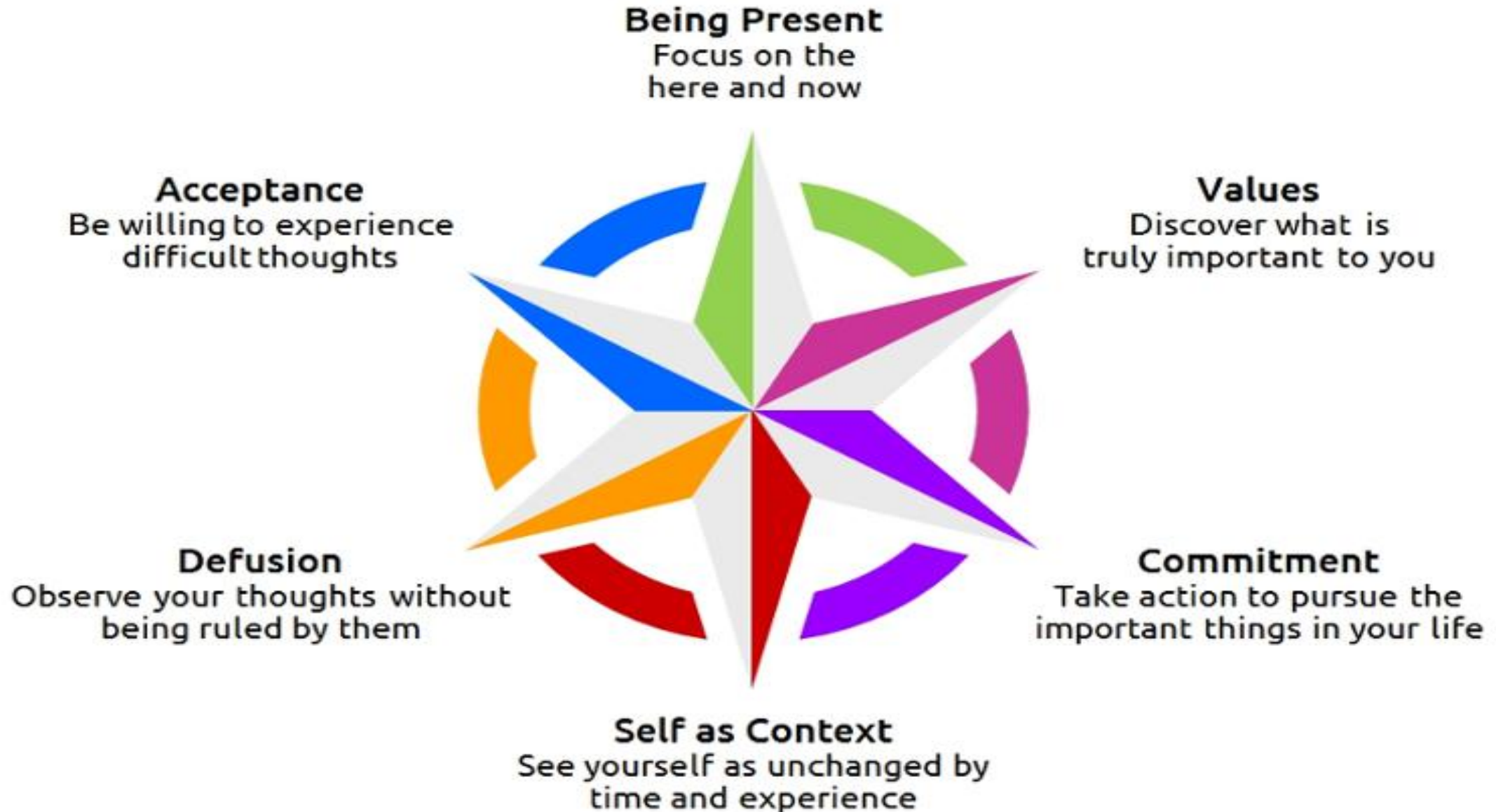
# How flexible are you?!

- You have a BRICK - write down as many uses as you can think of.



# Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

(Hayes, et al, 2006; Hayes, Strosahl & Wilson, 2009)

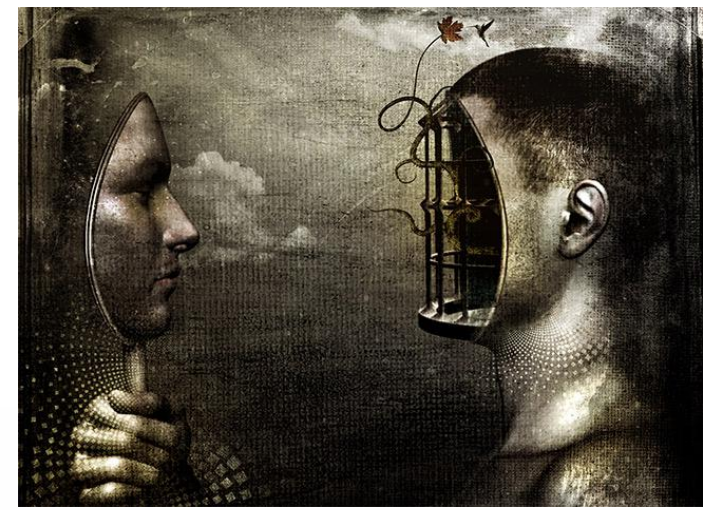




**Self as Context**  
See yourself as unchanged by  
time and experience

# Self-as-Context

- ▶ A transcendent sense of self: a consistent perspective from which to observe and accept all changing experiences.
- ▶ It is a process, not a thing: an awareness of awareness itself: 'pure awareness'
- ▶ You and your noticing you



# Self-as-Context Exercises

- ▶ Sky and weather
- ▶ Chessboard - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dz\\_nexLqY\\_8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dz_nexLqY_8)
- ▶ Field – mouse and hawk
- ▶ Your mind is the world's greatest documentary maker
- ▶ Rewriting your story
- ▶ Telling the truth
- ▶ Leaves on a stream
- ▶ “And who is noticing that?”
- ▶ Notice your noticing:
  - ▶ “As you notice X, be aware you're noticing.”
  - ▶ “There's X and there's a part of you noticing X”
  - ▶ “X changes all the time, coming and going – but the part of you that notices X is always there” (To highlight the continuous unchanging aspects of SAC)
  - ▶ “X is a part of you; but it's nowhere near the whole of you; there's so much more to you than X” (with private experiences - thoughts, feelings, memories, sensations, urges)

# The sky and weather



# The sky and weather

The observing self is like the sky, while thoughts, sensations, and images are like the weather. The weather constantly changes throughout the day. And whatever it is, the sky always has room for it. No matter how bad the weather, no matter how violent the thunderstorm, no matter how severe the sun, the sky cannot be damaged in any way. Even hurricanes and tsunamis, which may wreak death and destruction on the land—even they are unable to hurt the sky. And of course, as time passes, the weather will change again and again, while the sky remains as pure and clear as ever.



# Chessboard



# Chessboard – Script from [http://josephciarrochi.com/ACTOZ/qu4\\_pg2.html](http://josephciarrochi.com/ACTOZ/qu4_pg2.html)

Think of your thoughts and feelings as chess pieces on a chessboard. Think of the white pieces as the thoughts and feelings you want (e.g., "confidence", "happiness", "self-esteem"), and the black pieces as the thoughts and feelings you don't want (e.g., "anxiety", "fear", "self-doubt", "hopelessness"). If you prefer, you can think of the black pieces as the desired thoughts and feelings, and the white pieces as the undesired ones.

One thing we humans do is try to defeat the black pieces. We want to get rid of our negative thoughts and feelings. So we go to war. At difficult times in our lives, it looks like we're losing—the black pieces knock most of the white pieces off the board. At other times it may look like we are winning. We knock many of the black pieces off the board.

But look closely at your experience. What happens when you knock those black pieces off the board? Do they stay off forever, or do they come back sooner or later? Or do you find sometimes that new black pieces take the place of some of the old ones? It's like a war that rages forever, with no end in sight.

The problem is, when we wage this war, we wage it against ourselves. When we battle the black pieces, we battle a part of our experience, a part of ourselves. We literally set up a situation where, in order to get on with life, large parts of our actual experience must disappear forever. This war carries a heavy cost. We can become absorbed with our internal struggles, and disconnected from the outside world and the things in life that matter most to us. We can become so absorbed with our internal struggles that we don't "see" the outside world.

But what if it's possible to let go of the fight? What if you are the chessboard in this metaphor? Regardless of how the war between the black pieces and white pieces turns out, is the chessboard affected or damaged in any way? Or is the chessboard simply an arena where match after match can play itself out—and the board remains solid and intact, ready for whatever comes next.

Remember, there is a distinction between your thoughts and your observer self. Think of the observer as being the chessboard—as being you. Think of your thoughts and feelings as being the chess pieces. The chess board carries the pieces, but it is not equal to the pieces. Similarly, you carry your difficult thoughts, you observe those thoughts, but you are not equivalent to those thoughts.

# Self-as-Context Exercises

- ▶ Sky and weather
- ▶ Chessboard - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dz\\_nexLqY\\_8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dz_nexLqY_8)
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**Self as Context**  
See yourself as unchanged by  
time and experience

# Contacting the Present Moment



- Conscious awareness of your experience in the present moment enables you to perceive accurately what is happening
- Gives you important information about whether to change or persist in behaviour
- Enables you to 'catch' cognitive fusion 'in flight'
- Allows you to engage fully in what you are doing

# Present Moment Exercises

- Dropping the anchor
- Now I'm...noticing that I'm thinking/feeling that...
- Mindfulness

# Mindfulness vs Distraction

- ▶ Notice how the script keeps referring to the pain that is present. The formula is:
  - ▶ Notice your pain/feelings/emotional storm
  - ▶ And notice A, and B, and C
  - ▶ Notice your pain/feelings/emotional storm
  - ▶ And notice D, E, F
  - ▶ Notice there is something very painful here, **and** A,B,C,D,E, F
- ▶ If we fail to keep acknowledging the presence of the pain/feelings/emotional storm, this will almost certainly turn into a distraction technique rather than a mindfulness technique

**Dropping the Anchor** – Script from Russ Harris: [www.actmindfully.com.au](http://www.actmindfully.com.au) – he also has loads of free resources and pre-recordings which can be shared





# Dropping the Anchor

- Expand awareness
- Exert self-control over physical action



# Present Moment Exercises

- Dropping the anchor
- Now I'm...noticing that I'm thinking/feeling that...
- Mindfulness

## **Being Present**

Focus on the  
here and now

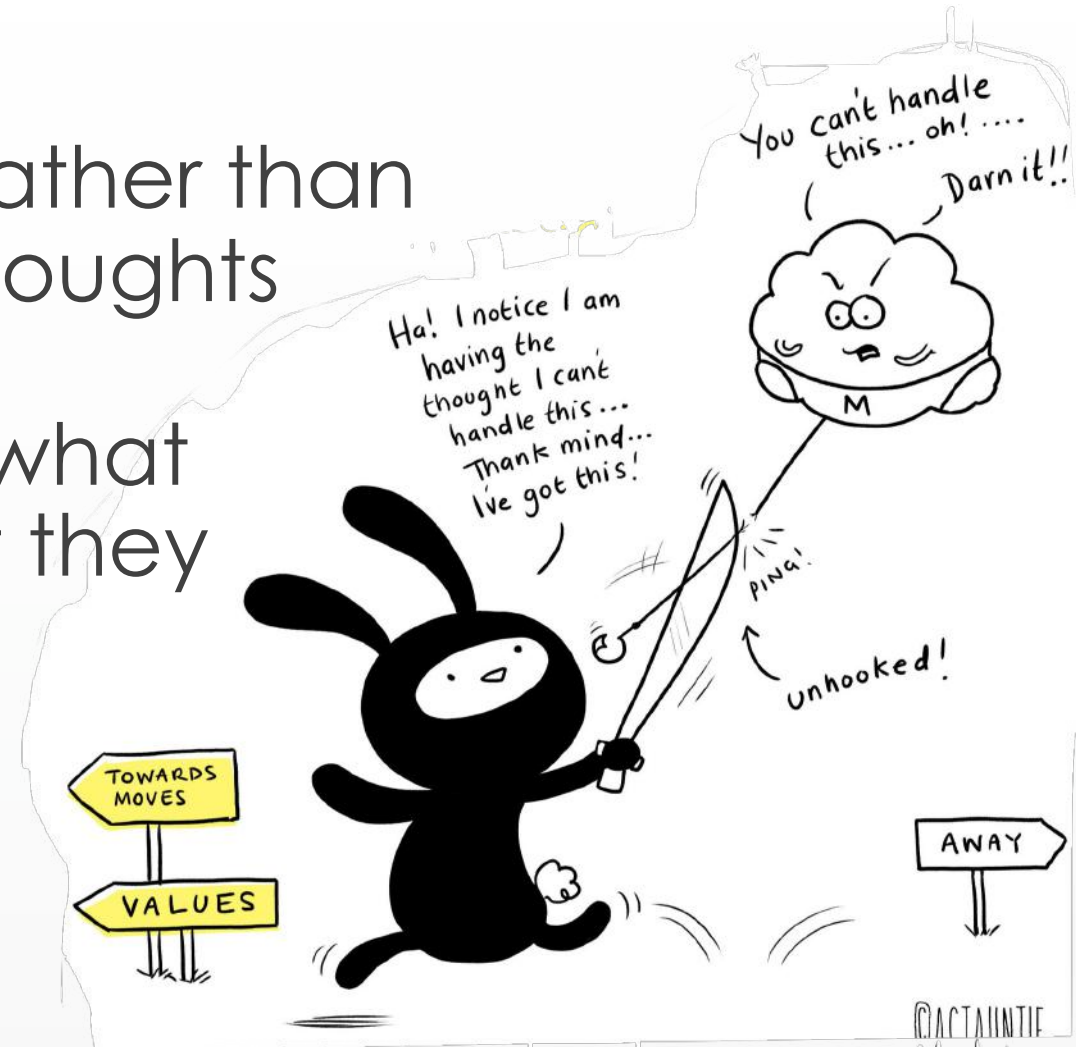


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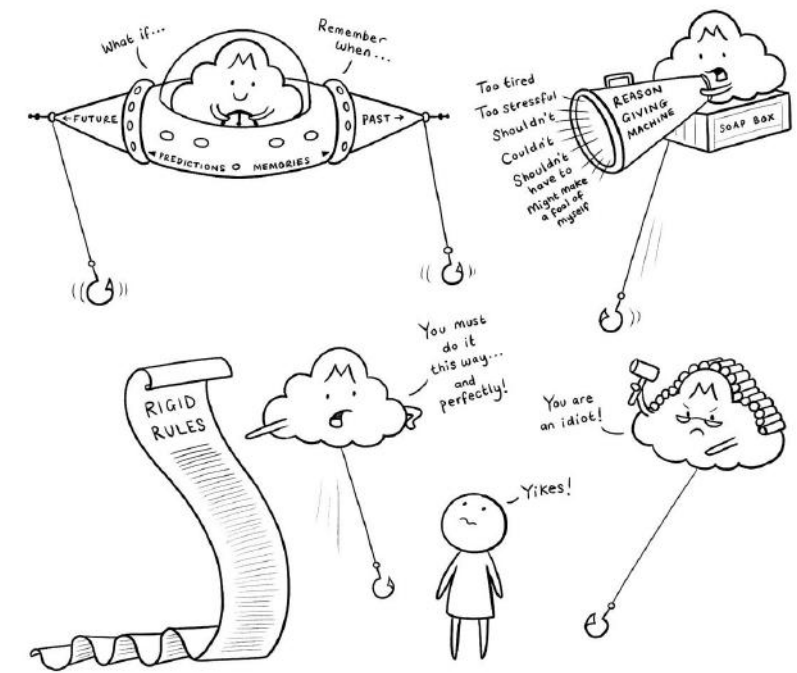
# Defusion

- ▶ Looking *at* thoughts, rather than *from* thoughts
- ▶ Noticing thoughts, rather than being caught up in thoughts
- ▶ Seeing thoughts as what they are, not as what they seem to be



# Defusion Exercises

- ▶ Repetition
- ▶ Say thoughts in ultra-slow motion, or silly voice; or sing them aloud
- ▶ Hear thoughts sung to Happy Birthday – or other tunes
- ▶ Hear thoughts in silly voices
- ▶ See thoughts on a computer/TV screen – change font, case, colour (+/- bouncing Karaoke ball)
- ▶ Paper thoughts
- ▶ I notice that I'm having the thought that .....
- ▶ Naming the story
- ▶ I'm having the thought that...
- ▶ Giving thoughts a shape/character



PRACTICE RECOGNISING WHEN YOUR MIND IS HOOKING YOU  
AND NOTICE WHAT IT IS HOOKING YOU WITH



The Happiness Trap  
© Russ Harris 2018  
Illustrations by Louise Gardner

- ▶ Pop-up thoughts (children should be seen and ....)
- ▶ Radio doom & gloom
- ▶ Social sharing
- ▶ Thank your mind
- ▶ Disobey on purpose
- ▶ Is this useful/workable?

# Playing with words

- ▶ Imagine an orange...
- ▶ The taste, the smell, the texture
- ▶ Notice your mouth is probably starting to salivate, and you can almost smell and taste the sweetness, and feel what it's like to peel the orange
- ▶ Sit with that
- ▶ Now, I want to you say the word orange in your normal voice again and again and again until I say
- ▶ Now say it really high pitched, now deep, now slowly, now really fast, now backwards, now spell it out, now imagine the word written in text...lets change the font, and the colour and the size.
- ▶ Does the orange feel as real now?
- ▶ Now let's choose a phrase like....I'm unlovable

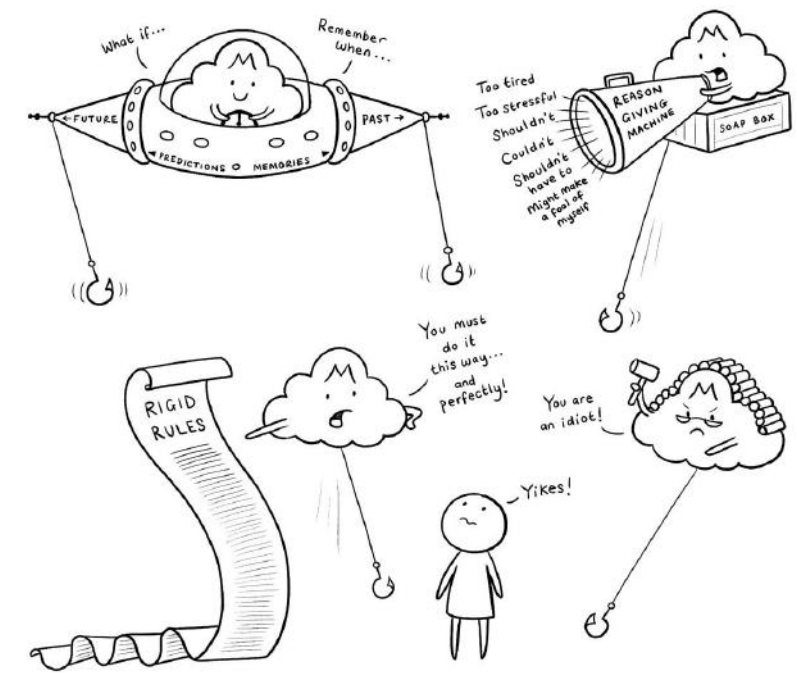


# Paper thoughts

- ▶ Choose a situation you notice that is difficult for you
- ▶ Let your mind focus on all the thoughts and feelings that spiral before, during and after this situation
- ▶ Let's take a few minutes to write all these down – however you like to see it
- ▶ Now imagine in front of you, you have all your friends and family and fun things, and things you want to do, and things you need to do like chores, and the neutral things and the problems you face every day
- ▶ Hold the paper in front of your face and allow yourself to be hooked by these thoughts
- ▶ What's it like trying to engage in, or with your world now?
- ▶ What could you do differently with those thoughts? (hold them lightly on your lap)
- ▶ Now, turn the paper over. If these thoughts and this situation was a chapter in your book of life, what might you call it?
- ▶ Let's write it in the middle of the page
- ▶ Now, let's write: "AHA! I'm noticing that I'm thinking about the...Story!" around it
- ▶ Ok, let's get hooked again...and when you feel yourself spiraling, turn the page over and read the back.
- ▶ What's it like? What comes up for you to see it as a story? Is it easier or harder to unhook?

# Defusion Exercises

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## Being Present

Focus on the  
here and now



## Defusion

Observe your thoughts without  
being ruled by them

## Self as Context

See yourself as unchanged by  
time and experience

# Acceptance

- ▶ Acknowledge – Allow – Accommodate
- ▶ Actively contacting psychological experiences directly, fully, and without needless defence
- ▶ Willingness
- ▶ Not resignation or tolerance
- ▶ Opening yourself fully to experience, as it is, not as your mind says it is
- ▶ Useful for deliberately putting into situations which create difficult emotions as exposure work



# Acceptance

- ▶ Previous CBT/exposure studies have misunderstood the impact & process of thinking/feeling/behaving changes
- ▶ Successful exposure therapy implicitly suggested it is the FUNCTION of sensations that was the problem (i.e., what they cause us to do – such as running from them) (Hayes, 2019)
- ▶ So, it is not fear itself, or its associated sensations and thoughts that cause our problems, but our relationship to these experiences that does the damage

joulssance



Liam O'Brien  @VoiceOfOBrien · 2h  
Widogast.

Ian Laking @IHLaking  
therapist: you need to open up more  
me: i can't  
therapist: why not  
me: let me visualise it for you



24 168 1,592

i love one (1) disaster wizard



curlicuecal

It's a good metaphor tho, because the situation is never going to get better if you don't eventually pull the door. And afterwards, no matter what the damage was, you'll have a working cabinet, whatever plates you could salvage, and a place to start putting new plates.

# Acceptance

- ▶ Practice putting ourselves in a situation where we are no longer in control in the normal sense – something like jumping
- ▶ Decide what level we can manage jumping from
- ▶ Gradual increase (shaping)
- ▶ What I can't do:
  - ▶ Stay in control all the time
- ▶ You never know when life is going to ask you to jump from a bridge but you can practice preparing for the landing by showing willingness



# Acceptance Exercises

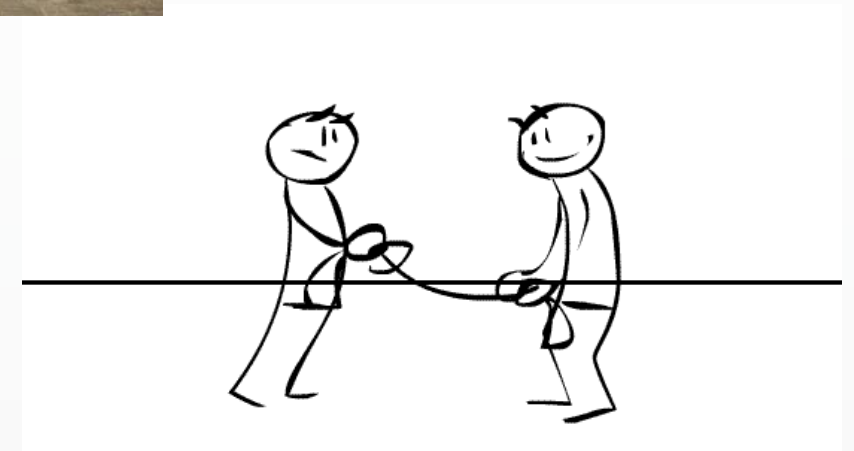
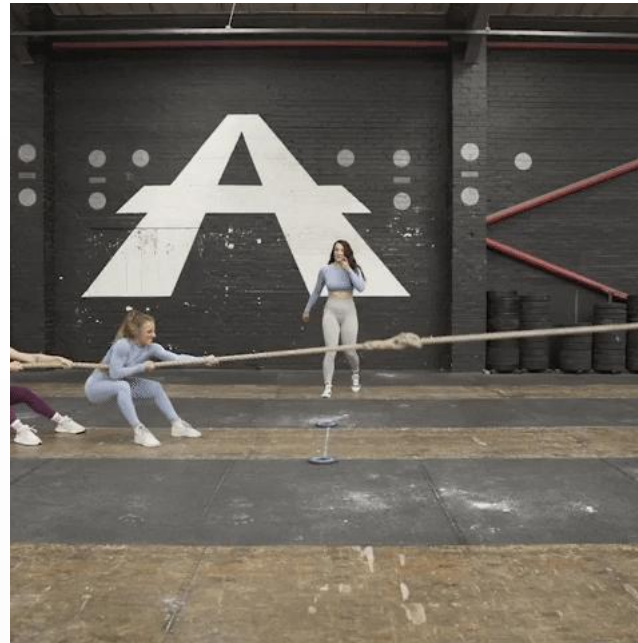
- ▶ Quicksand
  - ▶ Drop the rope
  - ▶ Pick the strongest sensation; observe it like a scientist – non-judgmentally, without trying to interfere; accept it; repeat with next sensation etc
  - ▶ This is a feeling of \_\_ and I'm evaluating it as\_\_
  - ▶ Observe, breathe, expand and allow
- ▶ You don't have to like it, want it, or approve of it – simply ...
    - ▶ ... allow it to be there (simply because it already is) ... give it permission to be where it already is
    - ▶ ... let go of struggling with it
    - ▶ ... stop fighting with it
    - ▶ ... make peace with it
    - ▶ ... make room for it
    - ▶ ... soften up around it
    - ▶ ... let it be
    - ▶ ... breathe into it
    - ▶ ... stop wasting your energy on pushing it away

# Quicksand (Russ Harris, 2007)



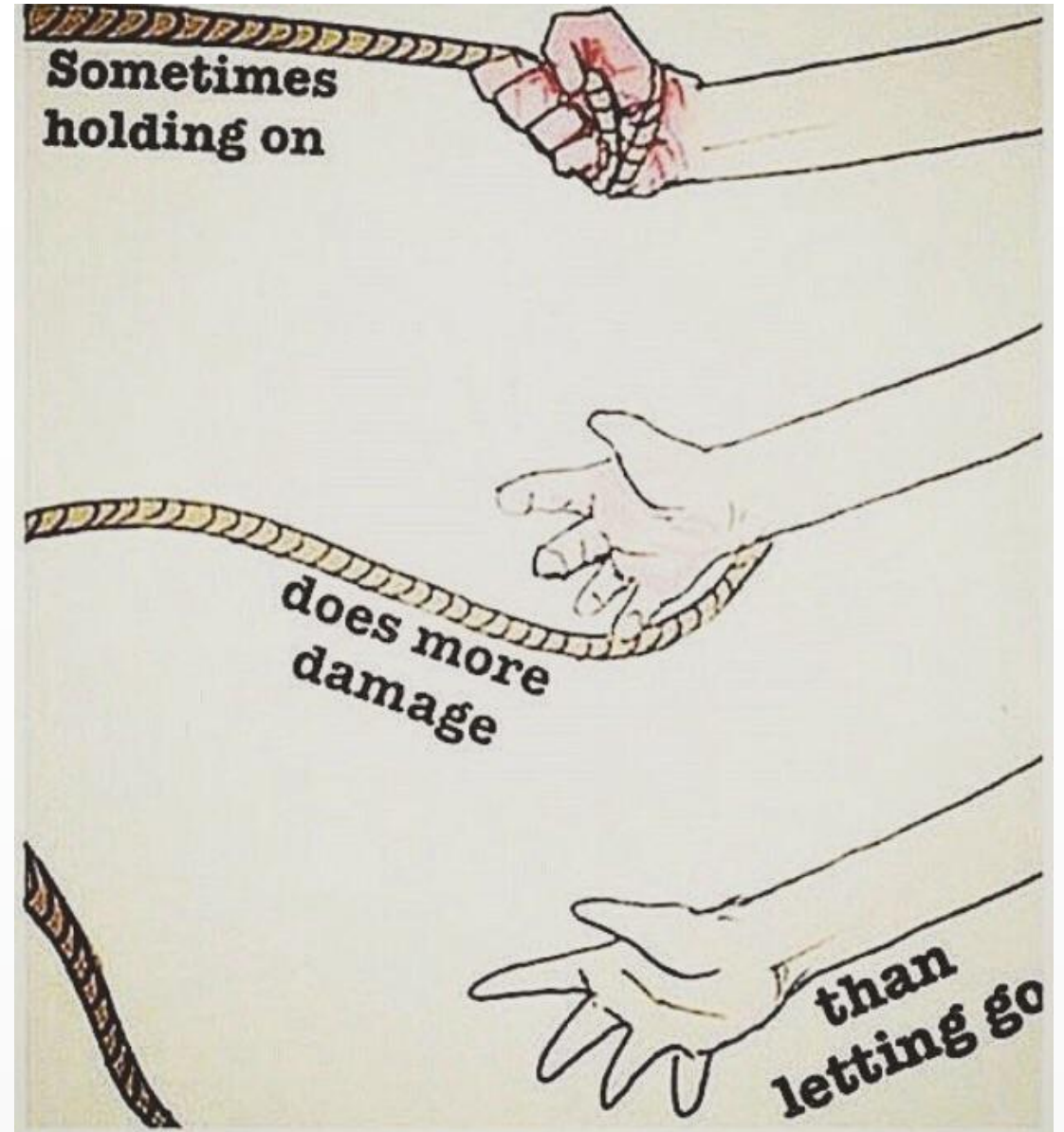
- ▶ Have you ever seen one of those old movies where the bad guy falls into a pool of quicksand, and the more he struggles, the faster it sucks him under? If you should ever fall into quicksand, struggling is the worst thing you can possibly do. What you're supposed to do is lie back, spread your arms, and lie as still as possible, floating on the surface. (Then whistle for your horse to come and rescue you!) Acting effectively in this situation is tricky, because every instinct tells you to try to escape; but if you don't stop struggling, pretty soon you'll sink beneath the surface. Sure, it's not exactly fun to be floating on quicksand, but it beats the hell out of drowning in it!
- ▶ The same principle applies to difficult feelings: the more we try to fight them, the more they smother us.

# The Tug-of-War (Steven Hayes, 2019)



# Drop the rope

- What are you in a Tug-of-war with?





# Acceptance Exercises

- ▶ Quicksand
  - ▶ Drop the rope
  - ▶ Pick the strongest sensation; observe it like a scientist – non-judgmentally, without trying to interfere; accept it; repeat with next sensation etc
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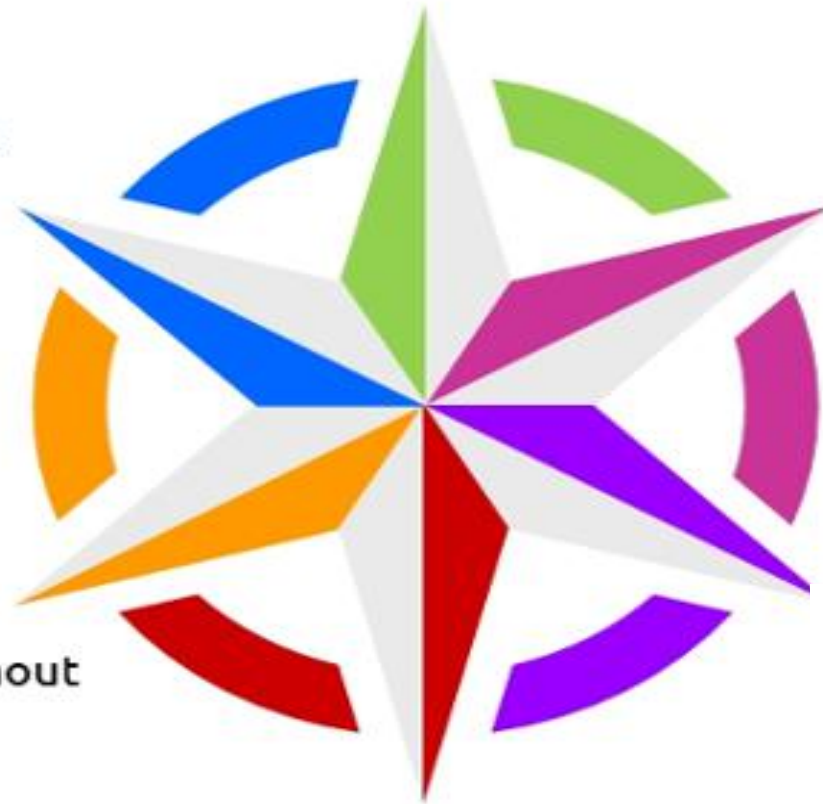
## Being Present

Focus on the  
here and now

**Acceptance**  
Be willing to experience  
difficult thoughts

**Defusion**  
Observe your thoughts without  
being ruled by them

**Self as Context**  
See yourself as unchanged by  
time and experience



# Values

- Chosen life directions
- Provide motivation & inspiration
- Provide guidance for your actions
- Give life meaning
- Give a sense of abundance
- Are different to goals
- Turns pain into purpose



It's never too late to choose to steer a new course  
Choose your values and take ACTION!

©ACT Auntie

# Values Exercises

- How do you want to act/behave in the world/ towards others/ towards yourself?
- Funeral / Tombstone / Old man looking back/ Celebration dinner/ Obituary
- Magic wand – people will always like you...what do you do/act as?
- Role models
- Lists/Values cards

**Love**  
 To act lovingly or affectionately toward myself or others

**Obstacles**  
 What obstacles might interfere with your action plan?  
 Needs of others?  
 Negative reactions of others?  
 Time restrictions?  
 Health problems?  
 Financial issues?  
 Competing goals?  
 Others?  
 For each obstacle, create another action plan. If it happens, what steps will you take to deal with it?

**Persistence**  
 To continue resolutely with your task or challenge, despite problems, fears and difficulties

**Setting Goals**  
 What will you do in the next:  
 • 24 hours?  
 • Week?  
 • Two weeks?  
 • Month?  
 • Year?  
 • Decade?

**Acceptance**  
 To be open to and allowing of things I dislike or don't want - in myself, others, and the world around me

**Compassion**  
 To act kindly toward myself and/or others when in pain

**Excitement**  
 To seek out, create or engage in activities that are exciting, novel or stimulating

**Expansion**  
 To live by these values, what will you need to make room for?  
 Emotions & Feelings?  
 Anxiety, fear, anger, sadness, disgust, nervousness, boredom, guilt, vulnerability, others?  
 Physical Sensations?  
 Sorely hands, tight chest, racing heart, churning stomach, others?  
 Unhelpful Thoughts?  
 Painful Memories?  
 Difficult Urges?

**Living Your Values**  
 When you are living by these values, how will you:  
 • Treat yourself?  
 • Treat others?  
 • Treat your body?  
 • Treat your work/education?  
 • Treat your interests/hobbies?  
 • Treat the world around you?

**Unhelpful Stories**  
 Does your mind tell you any of these unhelpful stories to talk you out of your goals?  
 I'm not good enough  
 It's too hard/ I can't do it  
 I'm too tired/stressed/busy  
 I've got no willpower/discipline  
 I feel too X (e.g. scared)  
 I don't feel Y (e.g. confident)  
 It'll go badly/ I'll fail  
 Others won't like it  
 Other things will get in the way  
 It's too late/ it's too little  
 There's no point  
 Other unhelpful stories?

# What are your values and motivators?

- If you had all the money and possessions in the world so that you could do anything and be anything, what would you do?
- If you had enough to live by but no money, no possessions, no extravagant food and nothing material, what would you do?
- Would they be the same?
- What would be different?

# What are your values and motivators?

- What do you really want from this life?
- What do you want your life to stand for?
- What sort of person do you want to be?
- What sort of relationships do you want to build?
- How do you want to act/behave in the world/  
towards others/ towards yourself?
- What do you want to do with your life?

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- ▶ What sort of person do you want to be?
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- ▶ How do you want to act/behave in the world/ towards others/ towards yourself?
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Abundance  
Acceptance  
Accountability  
Achievement  
Advancement  
Adventure  
Advocacy  
Ambition  
Appreciation  
Attractiveness  
Autonomy  
Balance  
Being the Best  
Benevolence  
Boldness  
Brilliance  
Calmness  
Caring  
Challenge  
Charity  
Cheerfulness  
Cleverness  
Community  
Commitment  
Compassion  
Cooperation  
Collaboration  
Consistency  
Contribution  
Creativity  
Credibility  
Curiosity

Daring  
Decisiveness  
Dedication  
Dependability  
Diversity  
Empathy  
Encouragement  
Enthusiasm  
Ethics  
Excellence  
Expressiveness  
Fairness  
Family  
Friendships  
Flexibility  
Freedom  
Fun  
Generosity  
Grace  
Growth  
Flexibility  
Happiness  
Health  
Honesty  
Humility  
Humor  
Inclusiveness  
Independence  
Individuality  
Innovation  
Inspiration  
Intelligence

Intuition  
Joy  
Kindness  
Knowledge  
Leadership  
Learning  
Love  
Loyalty  
Making a Difference  
Mindfulness  
Motivation  
Optimism  
Open-Mindedness  
Originality  
Passion  
Performance  
Personal Development  
Proactive  
Professionalism  
Quality  
Recognition  
Risk Taking  
Safety  
Security  
Service  
Spirituality  
Stability  
Peace  
Perfection  
Playfulness  
Popularity  
Power

Preparedness  
Proactivity  
Professionalism  
Punctuality  
Recognition  
Relationships  
Reliability  
Resilience  
Resourcefulness  
Responsibility  
Responsiveness  
Security  
Self-Control  
Selflessness  
Simplicity  
Stability  
Success  
Teamwork  
Thankfulness  
Thoughtfulness  
Traditionalism  
Trustworthiness  
Understanding  
Uniqueness  
Usefulness  
Versatility  
Vision  
Warmth  
Wealth  
Well-Being  
Wisdom  
Zeal

# Values Exercises

- How do you want to act/behave in the world/ towards others/ towards yourself?
- Funeral / Tombstone / Old man looking back/ Celebration dinner/ Obituary
- Magic wand – people will always like you...what do you do/act as?
- Role models
- Lists/Values cards

**Love**  
 To act lovingly or affectionately toward myself or others

**Obstacles**  
 What obstacles might interfere with your action plan?  
 Needs of others?  
 Negative reactions of others?  
 Time restrictions?  
 Health problems?  
 Financial issues?  
 Competing goals?  
 Others?  
 For each obstacle, create another action plan. If it happens, what steps will you take to deal with it?

**Persistence**  
 To continue resolutely with your task or challenge, despite problems, fears and difficulties

**Setting Goals**  
 What will you do in the next:  
 • 24 hours?  
 • Week?  
 • Two weeks?  
 • Month?  
 • Year?  
 • Decade?

**Acceptance**  
 To be open to and allowing of things I dislike or don't want - in myself, others, and the world around me

**Compassion**  
 To act kindly toward myself and/or others when in pain

**Excitement**  
 To seek out, create or engage in activities that are exciting, novel or stimulating

**Expansion**  
 To live by these values, what will you need to make room for?  
 Emotions & Feelings?  
 Anxiety, fear, anger, sadness, disgust, nervousness, boredom, guilt, vulnerability, others?  
 Physical Sensations?  
 Sorely hands, tight chest, racing heart, churning stomach, others?  
 Unhelpful Thoughts?  
 Painful Memories?  
 Difficult Urges?

**Living Your Values**  
 When you are living by these values, how will you:  
 • Treat yourself?  
 • Treat others?  
 • Treat your body?  
 • Treat your work/education?  
 • Treat your interests/hobbies?  
 • Treat the world around you?

**Unhelpful Stories**  
 Does your mind tell you any of these unhelpful stories to talk you out of your goals?  
 I'm not good enough  
 It's too hard/ I can't do it  
 I'm too tired/stressed/busy  
 I've got no willpower/discipline  
 I feel too X (e.g. scared)  
 I don't feel Y (e.g. confident)  
 It'll go badly/ I'll fail  
 Others won't like it  
 Other things will get in the way  
 It's too late/ it's too little  
 There's no point  
 Other unhelpful stories?



## Being Present

Focus on the  
here and now

## Values

Discover what is  
truly important to you



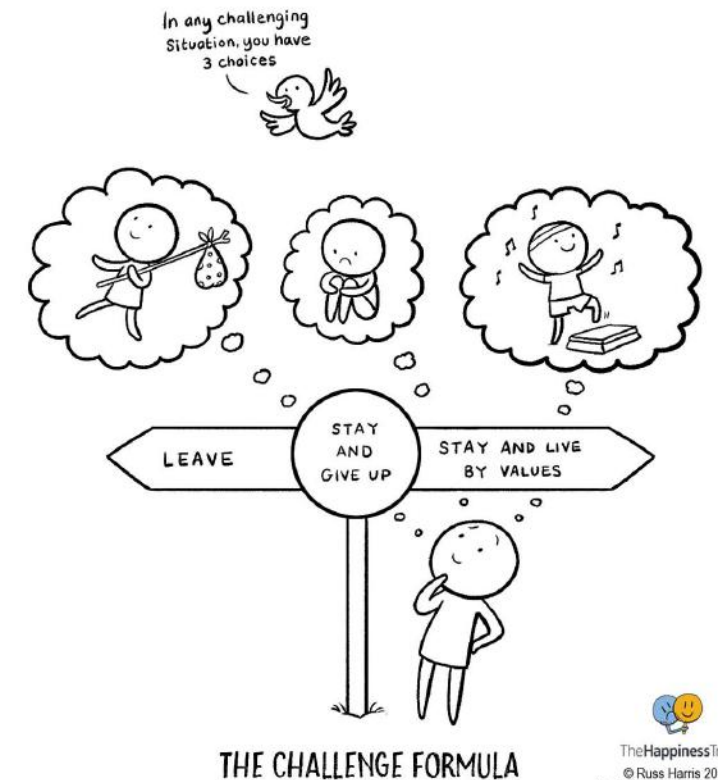
**Acceptance**  
Be willing to experience  
difficult thoughts

**Defusion**  
Observe your thoughts without  
being ruled by them

**Self as Context**  
See yourself as unchanged by  
time and experience

# Committed Action

- ▶ Overt behaviour in the service of values (may require skills training)
- ▶ *Committed* action is: values-guided, effective & mindful
- ▶ I can either:
  - ▶ Leave
  - ▶ Stay and change what can be changed
  - ▶ Stay and rely on current emotional control strategies



# Committed Action Exercises

- ▶ Choice point
- ▶ Do the opposite to what your mind says
- ▶ Just because (I choose to)
- ▶ Goal setting
- ▶ SMART
  - ▶ Specific
  - ▶ Measurable
  - ▶ Achievable
  - ▶ Realistic
  - ▶ Time-Bound

# Don't you dare...

- ▶ Think to yourself, 'I can't scratch my head! I can't scratch my head!' And as you do, lift your arm and scratch your head.
- ▶ Think to yourself, 'I have to stand up! I have to stand up!' And as you do that, stay seated.



# Just because

- Choose an action you are going to do today
- That is true to your values
- And do it.
- Just because!!



# Committed Action Exercises

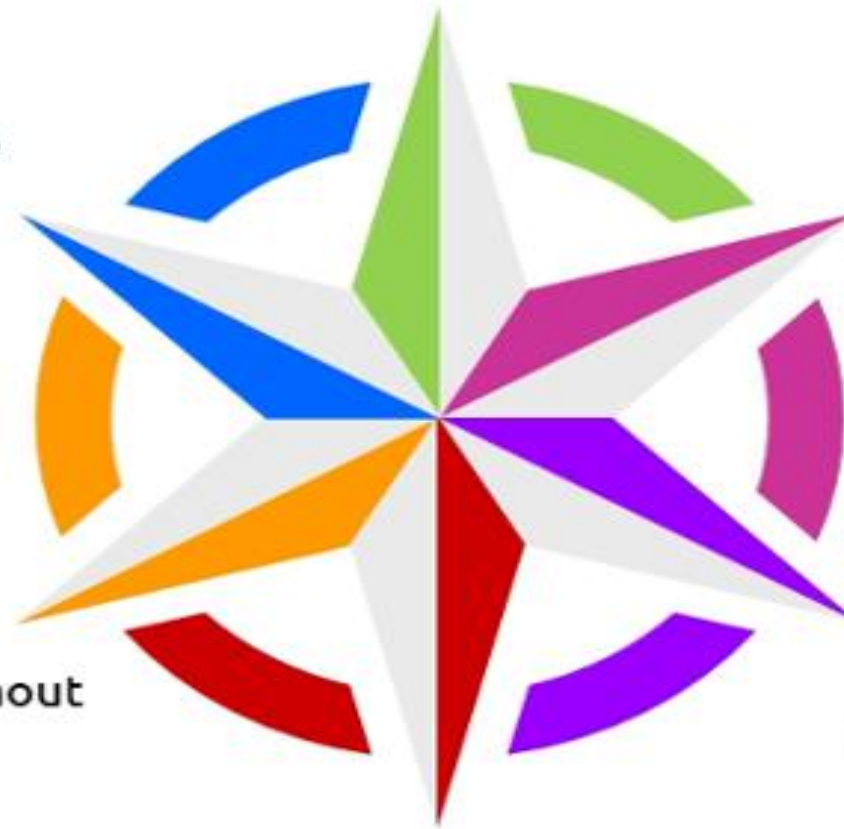
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**Values**  
Discover what is  
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**Defusion**  
Observe your thoughts without  
being ruled by them

**Commitment**  
Take action to pursue the  
important things in your life

**Self as Context**  
See yourself as unchanged by  
time and experience

**Contextual Behaviour Science**

**Relational Frame Theory**

**Applied Behaviour Analysis**

**Functional Assessment**

**ACT**

**4**



# Why is understanding the function of a client's behaviour (that they want to change) relevant?

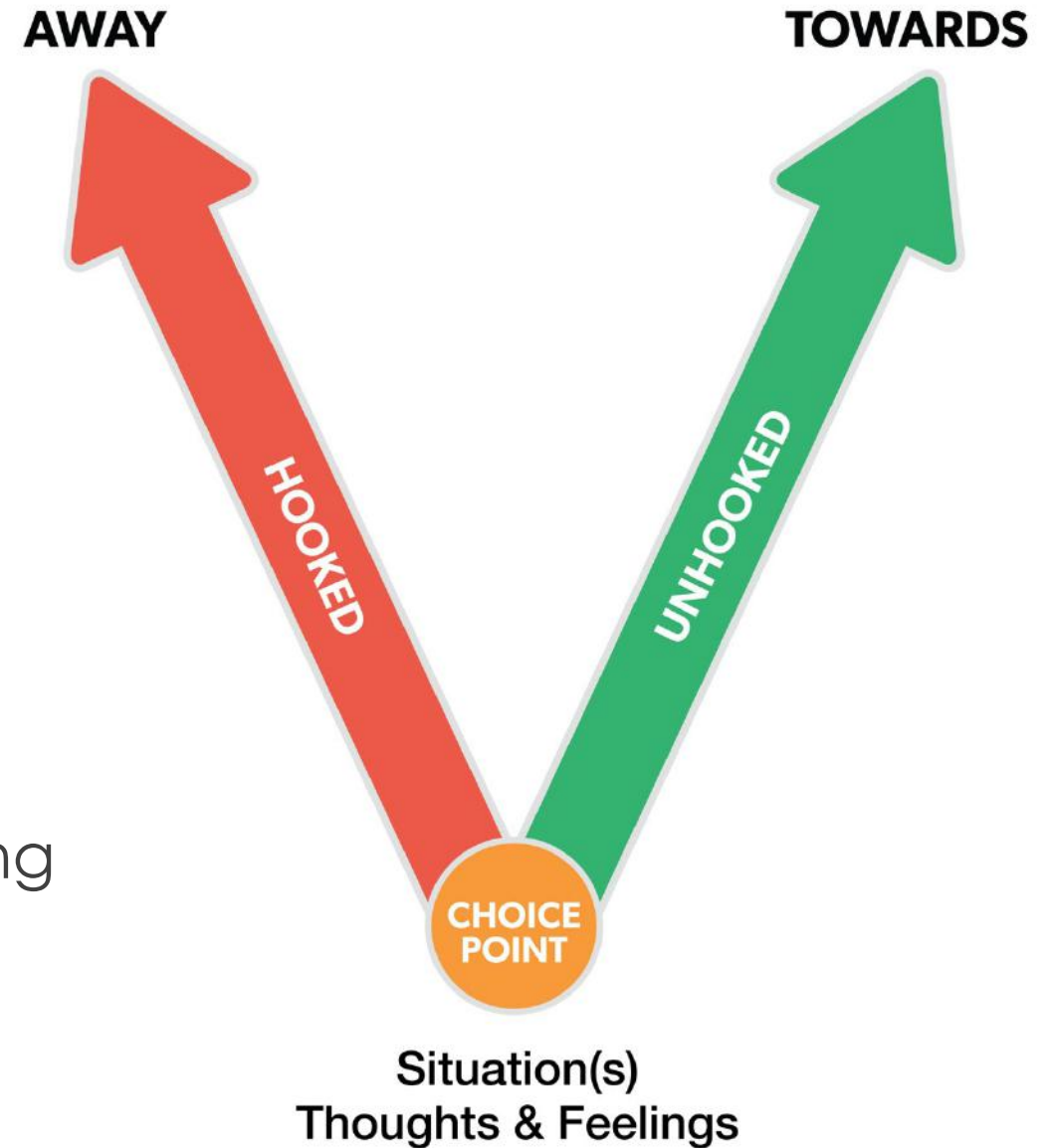
- ▶ If we don't understand WHY a client is repeating a pattern, how can we know the most effective interventions?
- ▶ Recognises the “avoidance” or “access to” behaviours
- ▶ Acknowledges client's experience, and desire for a life with more vitality
- ▶ Critiques current strategies – what is/is not useful or workable
- ▶ Builds self-awareness, perspective-taking and self-analysis without judgement
- ▶ Increases autonomy and gives permission for change
- ▶ Individualised
- ▶ Openly explores wants, desires and needs
- ▶ Helps understand the reinforcement at play



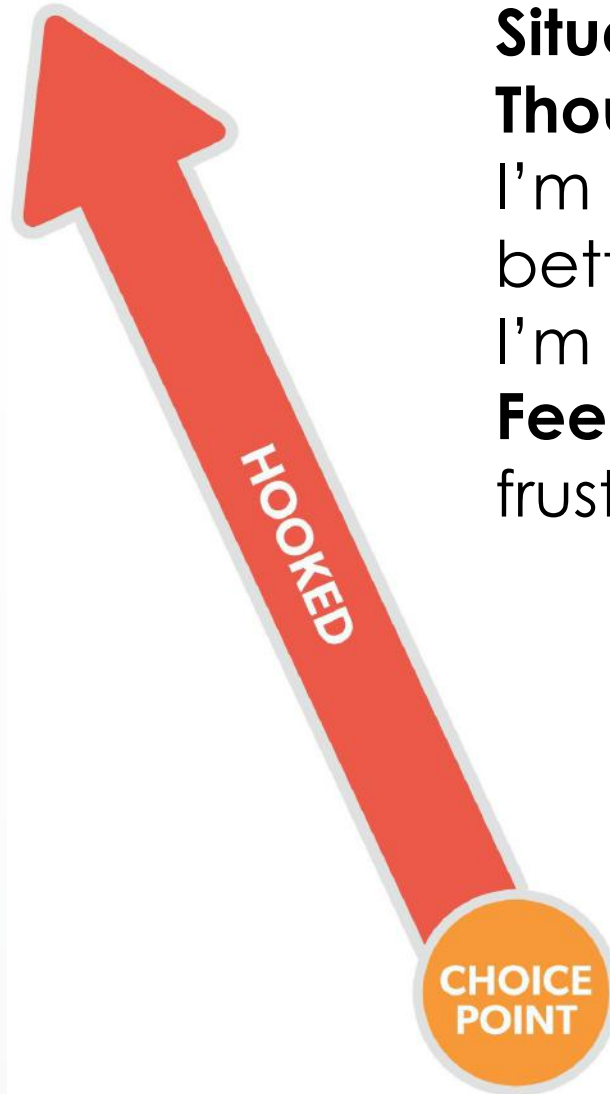
# The Choice Point

Russ Harris, 2017 - adapted from the 'Choice Point' by Bailey Ciarrochi, Harris 2013

- ▶ The choice point includes both *overt* and *covert* behaviour.
- ▶ "Towards" and "away" always refer to the client's perspective, not the therapist's
- ▶ Any behaviour may be towards or away, depending on the situation.



# Situations Thoughts & Feelings (Antecedent)



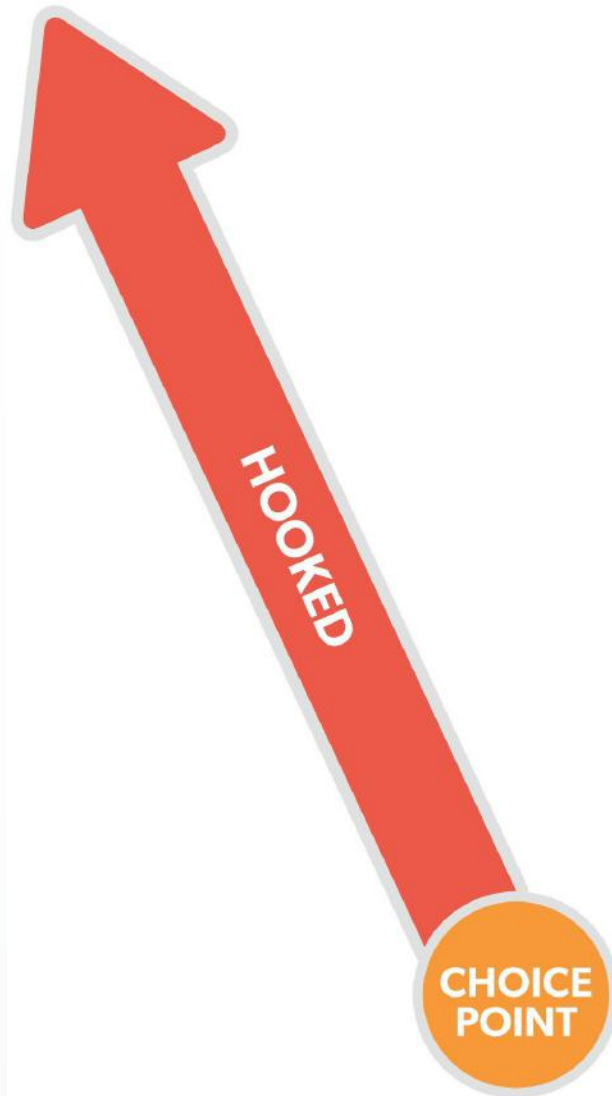
**Situation:** At an event with my sister

**Thoughts:** Everyone likes her better than me, I'm not good enough, why is my sister always better, I'm always second-best, I'm worthless, I'm ugly, I'm stupid

**Feelings:** Anxiety, panic, hopelessness, frustration, anger, shame, guilt, confusion



# Away Moves (Behaviour)



- Ineffective, values-incongruent behaviour
- Often but *not always* due to experiential avoidance.
- May also be due to an attempt at control of internal thoughts and feelings, fusion with reasons, rules, “being right”, “looking good”, seeking pleasure, or making sense. Or any combination of positive or negative thoughts, feelings, emotions, urges, memories.

# Tahani's Away Moves



## AWAY:

- Being mean
- Focused on what others think of me (my self-worth depends on them)
- Ignore others' wants and needs
- Compromise
- Have a tantrum
- Say nothing and withdraw
- Work extra hard at something (to the detriment of relationships)
- Compete with my sister
- Act self-centered



# Consequences and workability

- Payoffs
  - Outcomes that convey some sort of benefit
- Costs
  - Outcomes that are in some way negative
- Immediate or Long-term?
- Certain or uncertain?

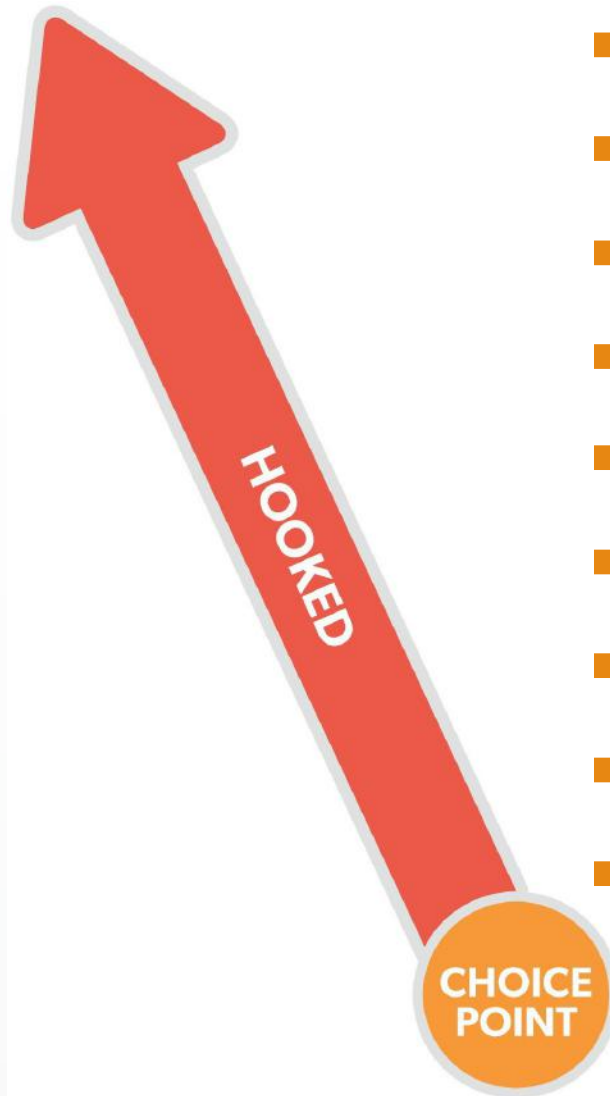


# Payoffs

- Get away from something you don't want (behaviour under aversive control)
- Get access to something you do want (behaviour under appetitive control)



# Tahani's Away Payoffs



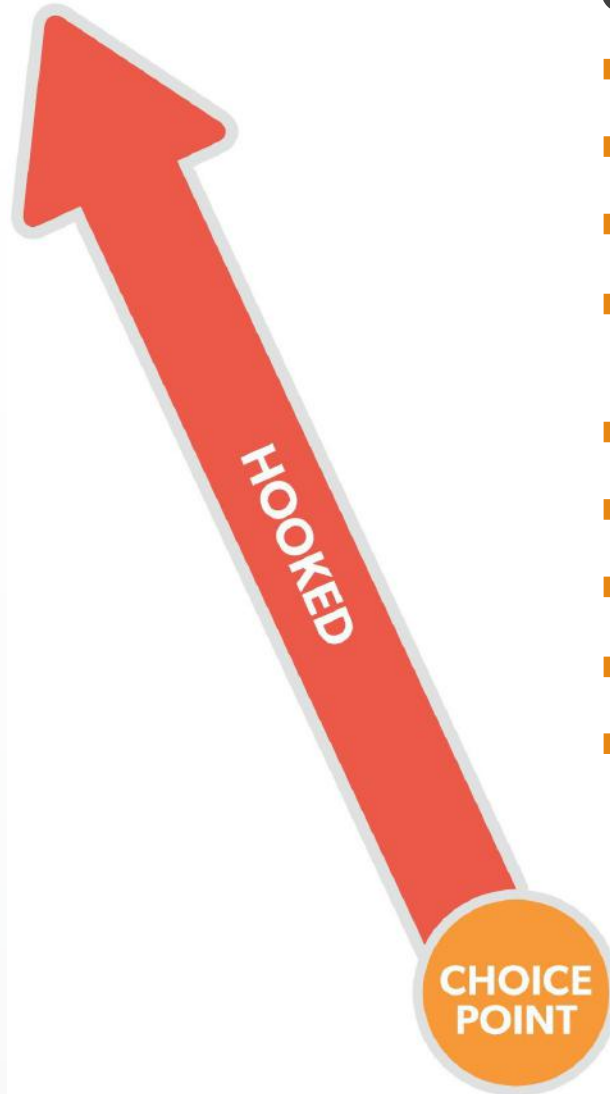
## PAYOFFS:

- Get some attention
- I 'do good'
- I avoid confrontation
- I help other people
- I feel good for helping others
- I get to know the gossip
- People think I'm beautiful
- I do a good job
- I beat my sister





# Tahani's Away Costs



## COSTS:

- ▶ I don't get seen for me
- ▶ It's tiring
- ▶ I get ignored
- ▶ I lose friendships/hurt others (people are angry at me)
- ▶ I don't have time for intimacy
- ▶ No time for self-care
- ▶ I feel lonely
- ▶ I feel hurt
- ▶ Sense of self/who I am is threatened



# Towards Moves



- Unhooked
- Acting effectively
- Behaving like the sort of person we want to be



# Towards Payoffs



- Facilitates motivation
- What are the immediate payoffs of living your values?
- What are the potential longer-term payoffs of achieving your goals?



# Tahani's Towards Payoffs



## PAYOFFS:

- Seen for who I want to be
- Self-worth is not dependent on others
- I still help others
- I feel better (even when sad/mad/bad)
- I make space for deep, meaningful relationships
- I can be proud of myself
- I do what's important to me
- I am who I want to be



# Towards Costs

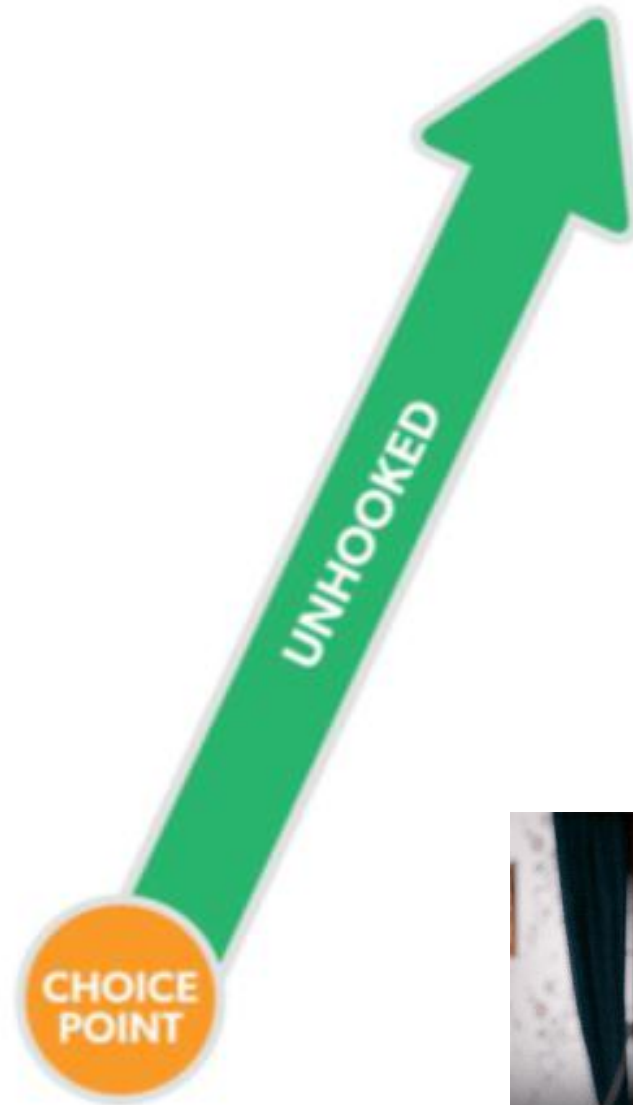


In order to do these towards moves, are you willing to make room for:

- Difficult thoughts and feelings?
- Potential risks?
- The things you may lose or miss out on?



# Tahani's Towards Costs



## COSTS:

- I might get ignored
- Someone might hurt me
- I have to be vulnerable
- I have to stop the drama
- May miss out on a really fun night out
- Might miss the gossip
- Might not get what I desire



# Motivational Analysis

- Through looking at both payoffs and costs, we can address the unworkability of the old behaviour, and build willingness for the new behaviour.



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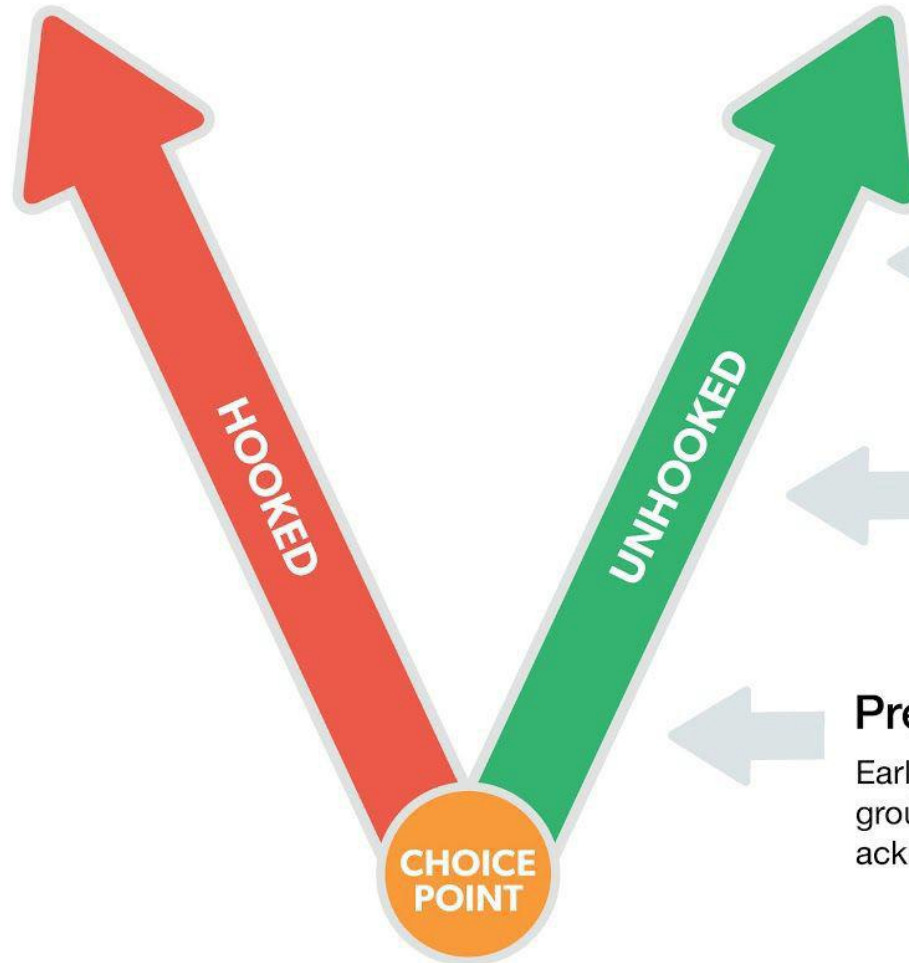




# Unhooking skills

**AWAY**

**TOWARDS**



## **Values committed action**

Connecting with values facilitates unhooking, and vice-versa. Values then guide subsequent action.

## **Defusion acceptance**

Later steps in unhooking often include active use of defusion, acceptance and self-compassion skills.

## **Present moment self-as-context**

Early steps in unhooking often include grounding & centering, noticing, naming and acknowledging the thoughts & feelings present.

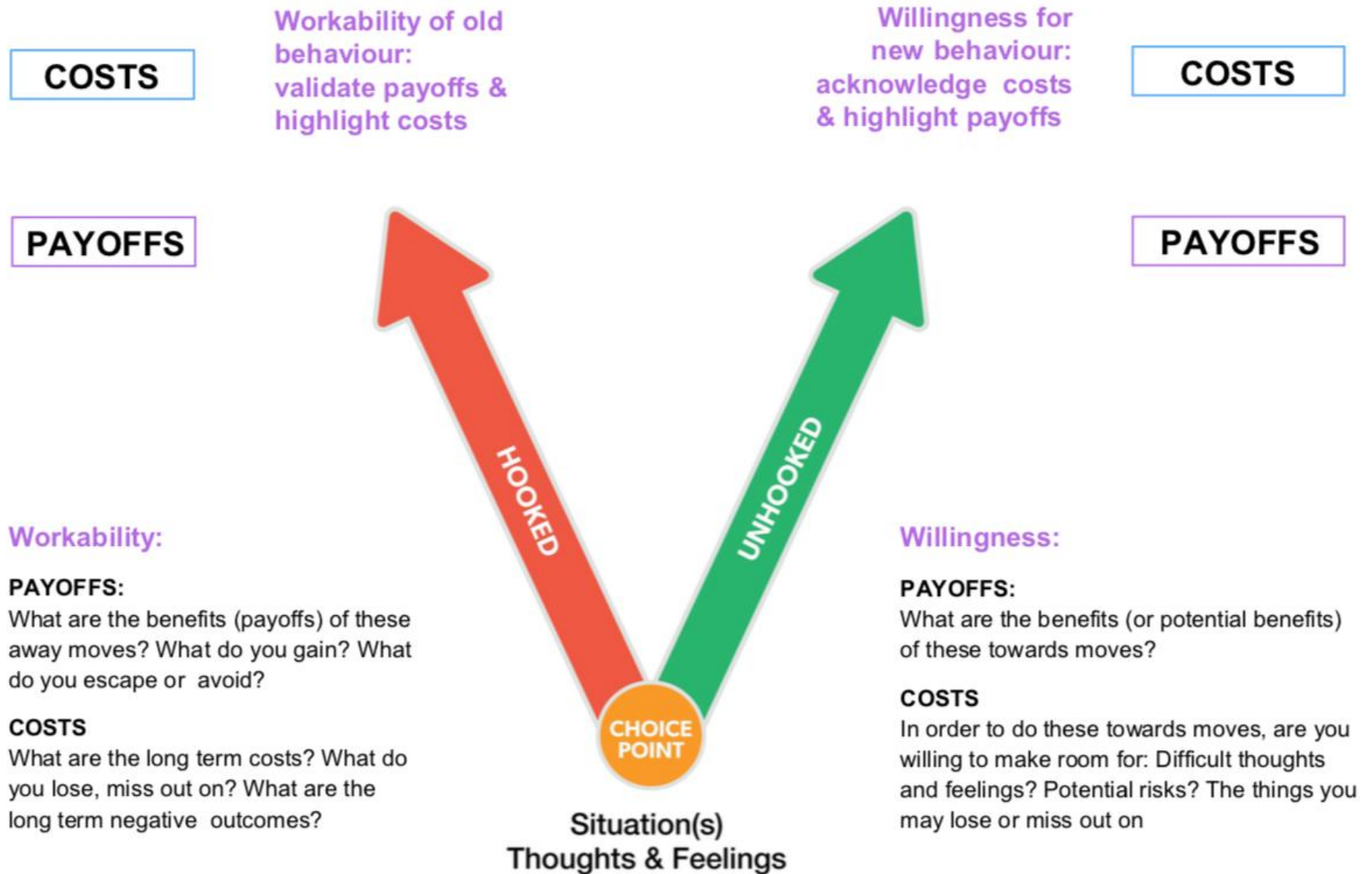
# Compassion (Harris, 2019)

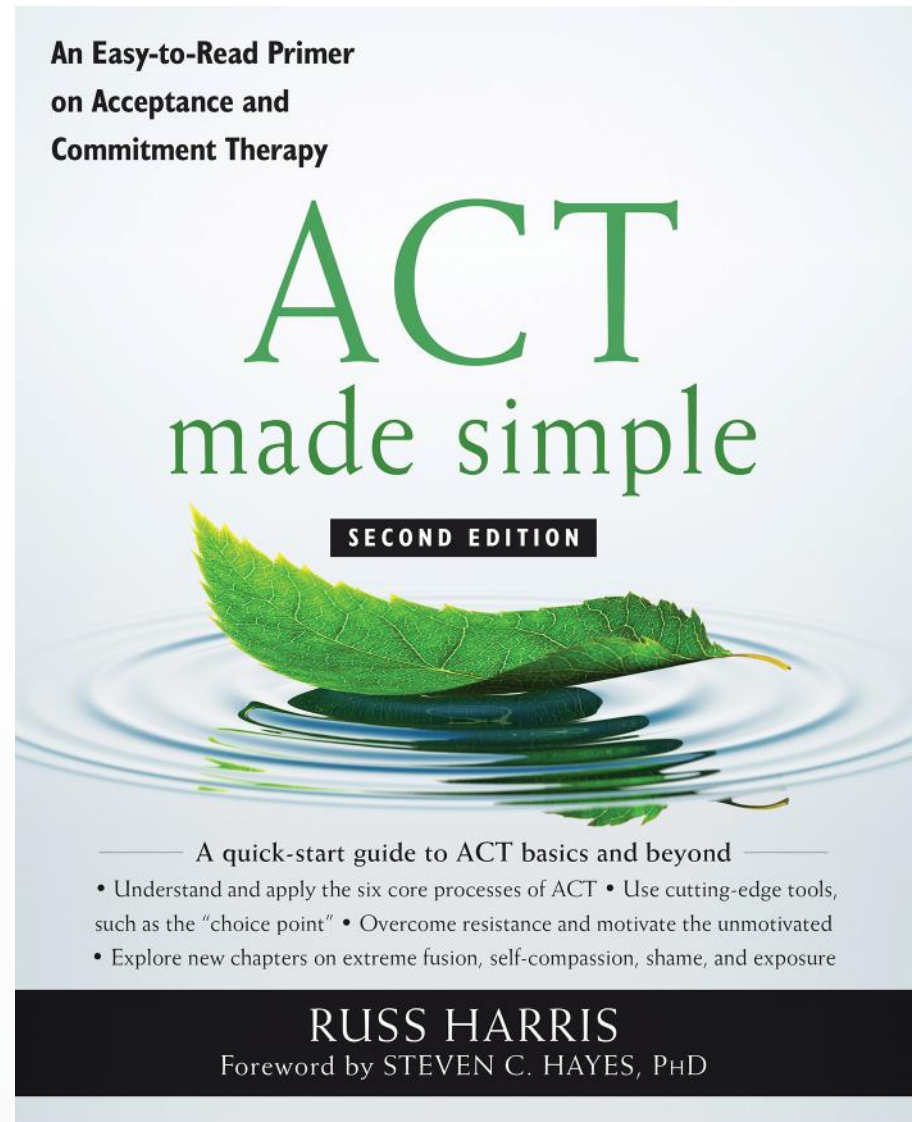
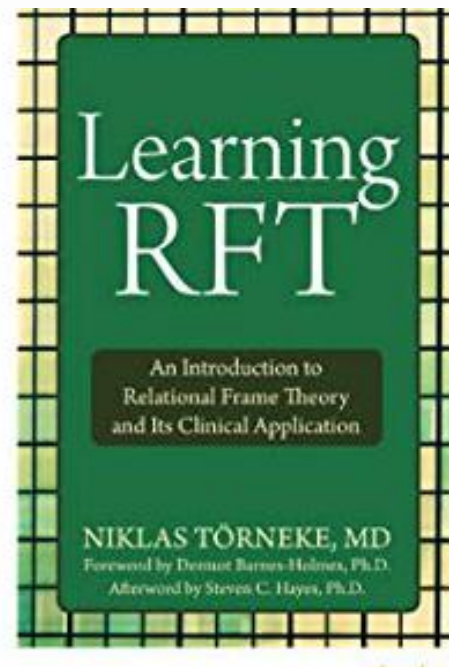
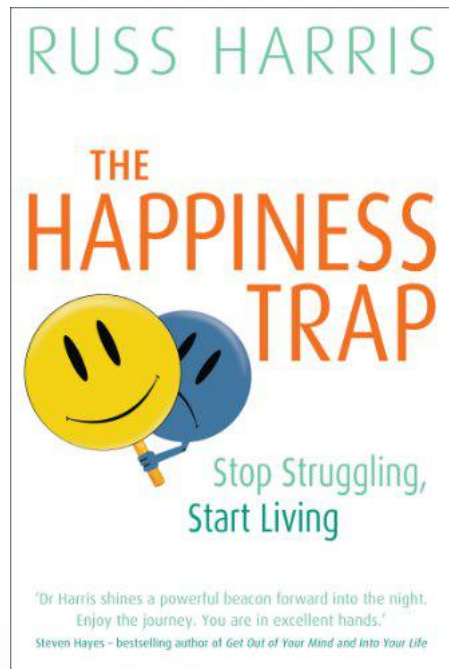
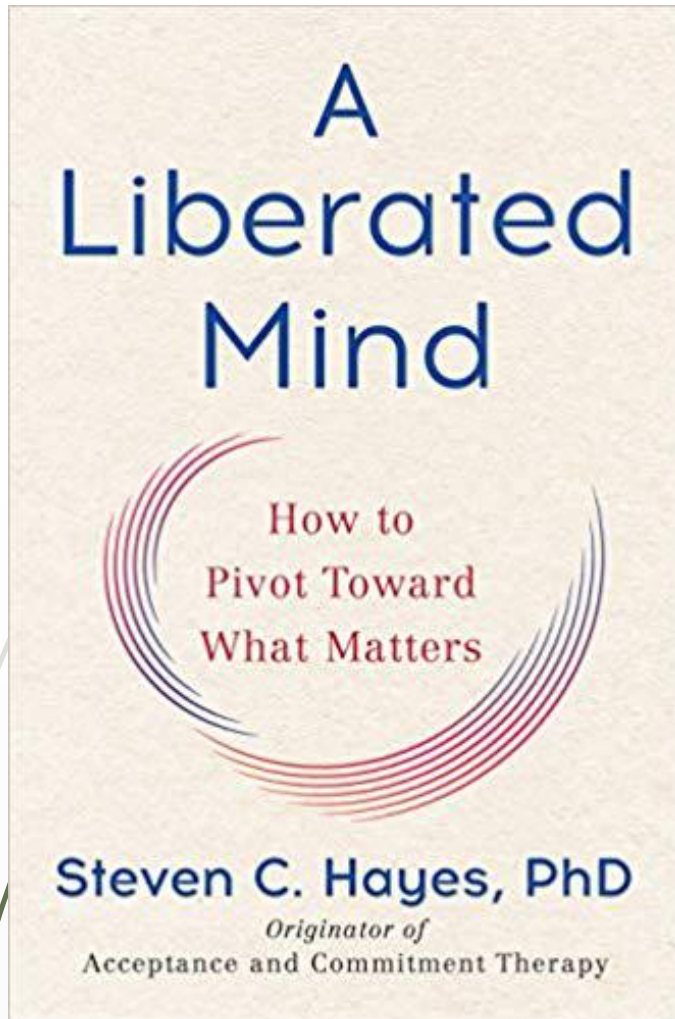
- Acknowledge the wound
- Be human
- Disarm the critic
- Hold yourself kindly
- Make room for your pain
- See yourself in others



*"Nothing beats kindness," said the horse. "It sits quietly beyond all things."*

# Do your own choice point...





# Questions?

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[/celiachamberstherapy](https://www.facebook.com/celiachamberstherapy)



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- ▶ <http://contextualscience.org/>
- ▶ <http://stevenchayes.com/>
- ▶ <http://josephciarrochi.com/ACTOZ/index.html>