

Cultivating Psychological Flexibility

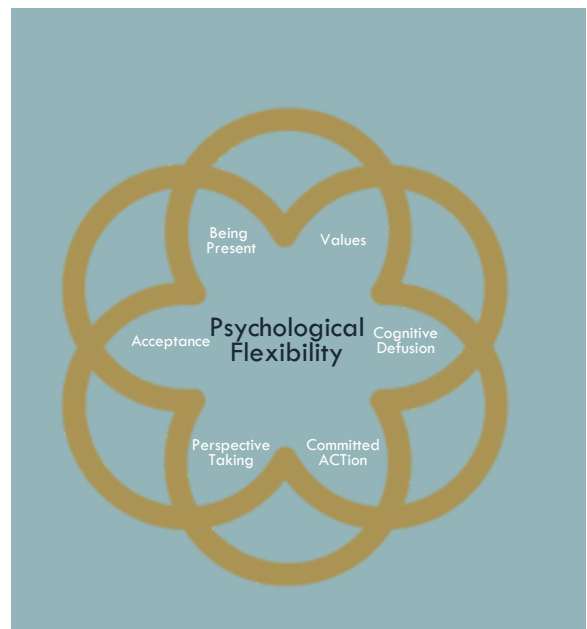
6 core processes to help you flourish in your daily life.

Today's Experience

What is Psychological Flexibility?

The 6 ACT Processes

- Being Present
- Values
- Acceptance
- Cognitive Defusion
- Perspective Taking
- Committed ACTION





But wait!
Can I get the slides?



www.actdailyjournal.info/honestkitchen

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Who am I?

DIANA HILL, PH.D.

Psychologist

Psychological flexibility guide. I am to help people grow values-rich lives

Human

Mom, friend, daughter, yogini, guardian of Tula, Marshmallow, 8 hens and 50K bees



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Intake:

Nice to meet you. What is it that you care about that brought you here?



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Painting the Golden Gate Bridge



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Stuck in the same spots?

Forget to take in the view?

Wonder if you're cut out for the job?

Don't know what direction to head?



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Burned-Out?

- Cynicism
- Exhaustion
- Irritability
- Difficulty concentrating
- Lack satisfaction
- Disillusioned
- Coping with food, drugs, alcohol
- Sleep disturbances
- Reduced performance
- Headaches, stomach or bowel problems, or other physical complaints



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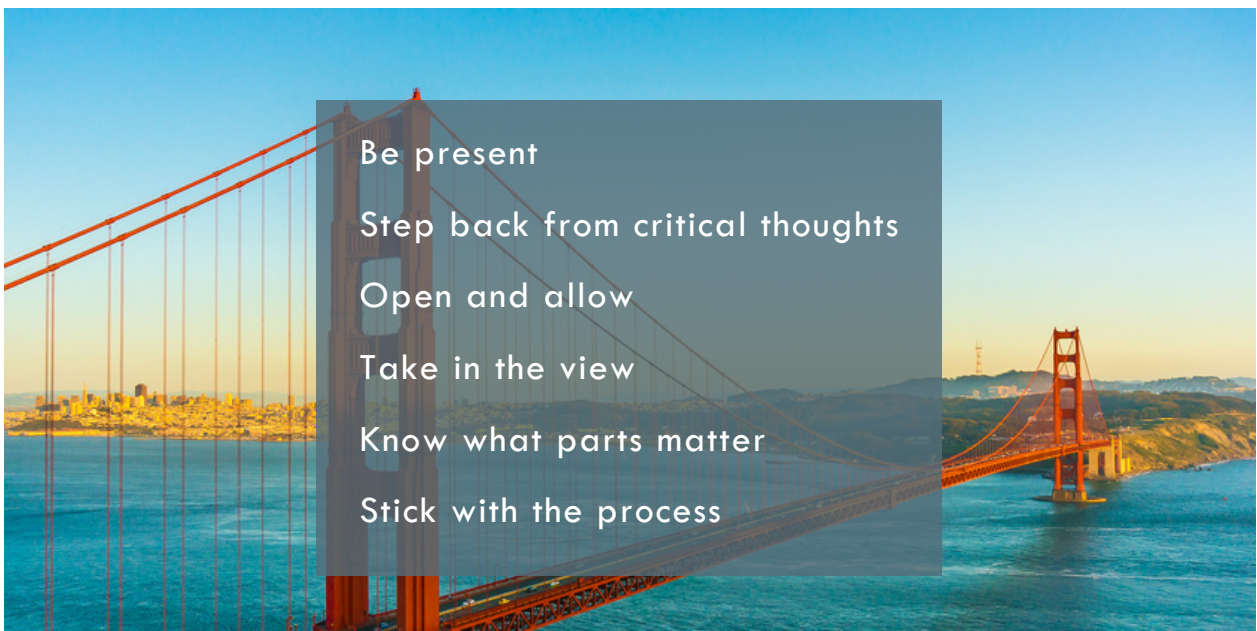


What If...

You could start living a rich and meaningful life today?



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- Be present
- Step back from critical thoughts
- Open and allow
- Take in the view
- Know what parts matter
- Stick with the process



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How do you want
to paint the bridge of your life?



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THE ONE GUARANTEE

Life is unpredictable and
uncomfortable.



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"You're even more likely to experience discomfort when you engage in activities that matter to you."

— Hill & Sorensen,
ACT Daily Journal



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Question: How can we manage the continued uncertainty of the pandemic?



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"The ability to feel and think with openness, to attend voluntarily to your experience of the present moment and to move your life in directions that are important to you."

- Steven Hayes, 2020



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"Being able to do what matters no matter what."

- Benji Schoendorff, 2021



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What is Psychological Flexibility?

SIMPLY PUT: ACT

ALLOW.

be courageous, willing and open

CARE.

orient toward what's important to you

TAKE A STEP.

make a small move in the direction of what you care about



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Benefits of Psychological Flexibility

Mental Health

anxiety and stress, depression, substance use, chronic pain, insomnia, self-compassion

Relationships

perspective taking, empathy, intimacy, compassion, effective parenting, prosocial action

Performance

work performance, athletic performance, health behaviors, your chess game

Resilience and Growth

distress tolerance, grief, burn-out, post traumatic growth



Sources: Contextualscience.org; Hayes (2020)

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Psychological Flexibility During COVID



Source: Special Issue of Journal of Contextual Behavioral Psychology

Psychological Flexibility During COVID



GREATER FAMILY COHESION

LESS SPILLOVER EFFECTS OF STRESS ON KIDS

LOWER DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

LOWER INSOMNIA

Source: Special Issue of Journal of Contextual Behavioral Psychology

6 CORE PROCESSES OF ACT
Dr. Steven Hayes

**What is the 20%
that does the
80%? What are
the processes**

 Diana Hill PhD

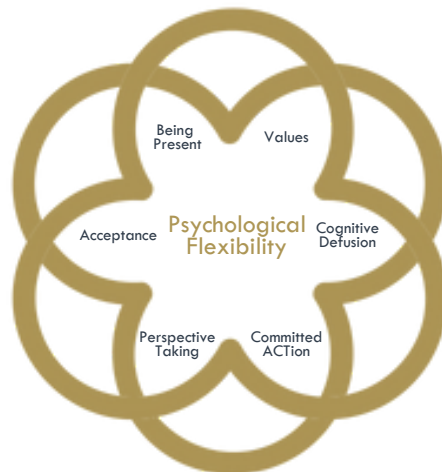
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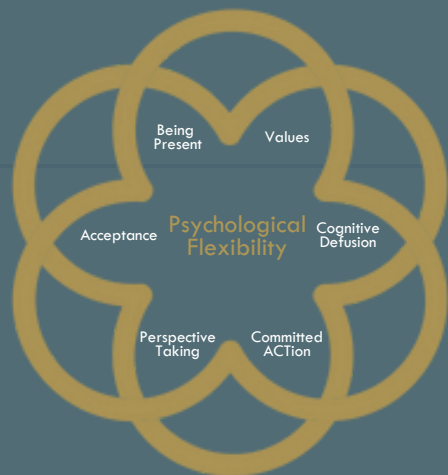


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The 6 ACT Processes



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Being Present

live in the now
make intentional deliberate choices
aware of thoughts, emotions, behaviors



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Being Present: Where and with whom would you like to be more present in your life?



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Question: It seems like people are more on edge. How can we ensure that we stay grounded when faced with other people's frustrations.



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“Between stimulus and response there is a space.
In that space is our power to choose our
response. In our response lies our growth and our
freedom.”

-Victor Frankl



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Let's Practice



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Being Present Practice

TWO EYES IN

Notice the world inside you (thoughts, emotions, sensations)

TWO EYES OUT

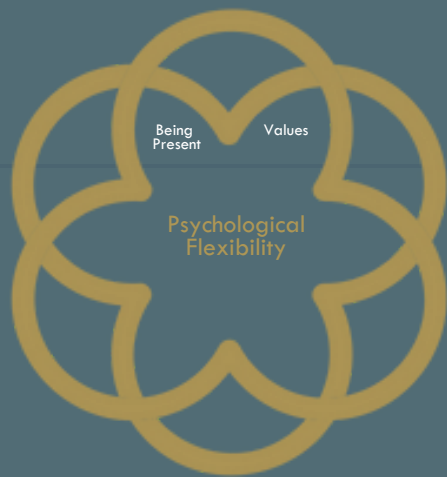
Notice the world outside you (people, places, things)

ONE EYE IN + ONE EYE OUT

Stay aware of what is happening inside, while engaging with the world outside



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Values

qualities of how we live our life
acting in ways that feel consistent with the
type of person we want to be in the world



WHAT ARE VALUES?

Qualities of how we live our life

Acting in ways that feel consistent with
the person we want to be in the world



WHAT ARE VALUES?

This not That

ABOUT MEANING

COMFORT AND PLEASURE



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MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT

deeper form of satisfaction
positive moods
feeling enriched
sense of being part of something greater
longevity

Smith (2017); Huta Ryan (2020); Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004); Buettner (2008)



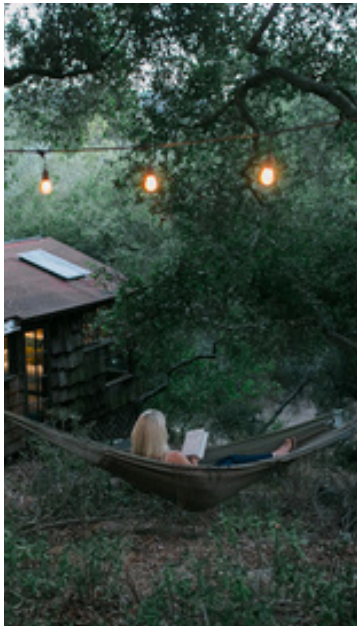
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MEANINGFUL MOMENTS



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MEANINGFUL MOMENTS

At the end of the day,
what was most meaningful to
you about your day?



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WHAT ARE VALUES?

This not That

ABOUT MEANING

COMFORT AND PLEASURE

MAKE YOU VULNERABLE

PROTECT YOU FROM PAIN



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"You hurt where you care and
you care where you hurt ."

— Steven Hayes, Psychologists Off the Clock podcast



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WHAT ARE VALUES?

This not That

ABOUT MEANING

COMFORT AND PLEASURE

MAKE YOU VULNERABLE

PROTECT YOU FROM PAIN

DYNAMIC AND EVOLVING

END POINTS



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Towards and Away

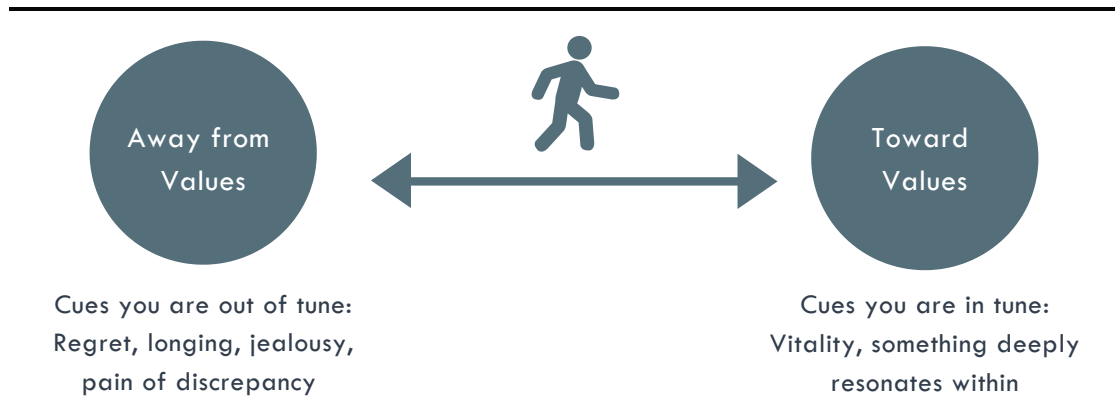
EVERY MOMENT IS A CHOICE POINT



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Tuning In To Tune-Up

WE ALL GET OUT OF TUNE



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Choice Point

TUNE IN:

What matters most right now? Am I acting in line with the type of leader I want to be?

TUNE UP:

What adjustments can I make right now to turn towards my values?



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WHAT ARE VALUES?

This not That

ABOUT MEANING

COMFORT AND PLEASURE

MAKE YOU VULNERABLE

PROTECT YOU FROM PAIN

DYNAMIC AND EVOLVING

END POINTS

PERSONAL AND CHOSEN

MORALS AND SHOULD



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WHAT ARE VALUES?

This not That

ABOUT MEANING

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MAKE YOU VULNERABLE

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DYNAMIC AND EVOLVING

END POINTS

PERSONAL AND CHOSEN

MORALS AND SHOULD

INHERENTLY REWARDING

GOLD STARS



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WHAT ARE VALUES?

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PERSONAL AND CHOSEN

MORALS AND SHOULD

INHERENTLY REWARDING

GOLD STARS

PATTERNS OF BEING

DOMAINS



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DOMAINS



VALUES

Family
Friends
Spirituality
Health
Leisure

Work/Education
Environment/Community
Creative Expression
Physical Self-Care
Romantic Relationships

Compassionate
Courageous
Curious
Fair
Funny

Generous
Hardworking
Responsible
Humble
Independent

Loving
Loyal
Kind
Open



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Values Practice

Pick a domain that's a little out of tune...

- | | |
|--------------|------------------------|
| Family | Work/Education |
| Friends | Environment/Community |
| Spirituality | Creative Expression |
| Health | Physical Self-Care |
| Leisure | Romantic Relationships |



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On a scale from 0-10
How important is this domain to you?



Adapted from the Valued Living Questionnaire (Wilson et al., 2010)

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On a scale from 0-10

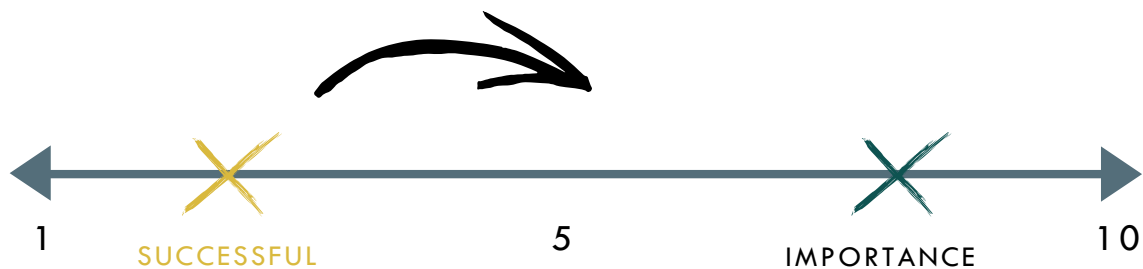
How successful are you at living your values in this domain?



Adapted from the Valued Living Questionnaire (Wilson et al., 2010)

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What could you do to close the gap?



Adapted from the Valued Living Questionnaire (Wilson et al., 2010)

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Values Practice

TUNE IN:

Notice. What does it sound like and look like when you are in line with your values?

TUNE UP:


How might you live more in tune with your values today?

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Being Present Values
Acceptance Psychological Flexibility

Acceptance

stop struggling with your experience
open up and allow

 Diana Hill PhD



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Most common therapy requests

I want to stop thinking...

I want to stop feeling...

I want to stop remembering...



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I can't help with that. But I can help you...

Let go of fixing, make room for feeling
Choose your actions based on your values
Make important changes in your life
Put your energy into areas that matter to you
Find the gifts in your pain



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Acceptance

DIFFICULT TEAMS

T: Thoughts
E: Emotions
A: Action Urges
M: Memories
S: Sensations

What shows up that is difficult to
think about, feel, or remember?



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Experiential Avoidance

WHAT HAVE YOU TRIED?



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Experiential Avoidance Strategies

NUMBING

Do you overeat, restrict food, drink, use substances, overexercise?

BRACING

Do you tense up, clench your jaw, tighten your belly, hold your breath?

DISTRACTING

Do you fantasize, try and not think, overuse technology, multi-task?

GIVING UP

Do you avoid signing up, isolate, sleep too much, say no, cancel, or hide?

RUSHING THROUGH

Do you overwork, stay constantly busy, strive for more, talk quickly, move quickly through life?

OVERTHINKING

Do you intellectualize, problem solve, ruminate, worry, or overanalyze?



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OVER ONE YEAR LATER...

PANDEMIC STRESS

EATING/MOVEMENT

61% weight changes
53% less physically
active

ALCOHOL

23% report increase
52% parents report
increase

SLEEP

67% sleeping more or
less

HEALTH CARE

47% delayed or
cancelled
appointments

Source: APA Stress in America Survey One Year Later



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Experiential Avoidance Roundabout

When turning away from pain

Also turns you away from values



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Acceptance

Is Not

Approval
Liking It
Being Passive
Allowing for harm,
abuse, oppression
Resigning
Giving up

Is

Willingness
Allowing
Making space
Curiosity
Openness
Letting go
Courage



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“The Uses of Sorrow”
(In my sleep I dreamed this poem)

Someone I loved once gave me
a box full of darkness.
It took me years to understand
that this, too, was a gift.

-Mary Oliver



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Acceptance

What are the gifts inside your
pain?
Are you willing to open the box?



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Acceptance Practice

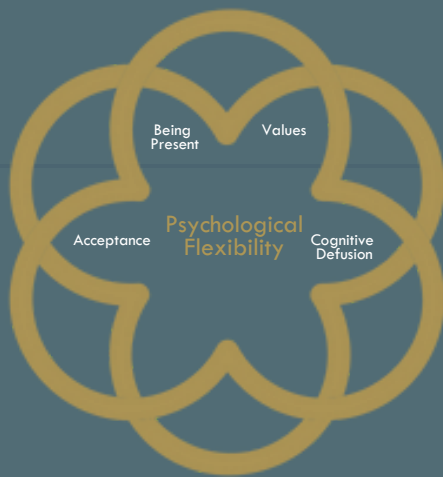
Body: Gently contact and allow

Mind: Get curious, Say 'yes' to what is

Behavior: Take action toward values, even if it's uncomfortable



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Cognitive Defusion

notice your internal chatter
step back from your thoughts



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Cognitive Fusion

HOOKED BY UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS

Self-Criticism

"Shoulds"

Comparisons

Rules

Judgments & Opinions

Being Right



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Question: Some of us have issues "turning off" our brains, especially at night or off work hours. Any tips?



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Cognitive Defusion

NOTICE YOUR CROWING MIND

Pick a comparison, should, rule or self criticism that interferes with your life.



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Cognitive Defusion

DON'T TAKE YOUR THOUGHTS SO SERIOUSLY

Type out your unhelpful thought in the chat...with your pinkies!





Cognitive Defusion

GET OUT OF YOUR HEAD AND INTO
YOUR LIFE

Your Mind: Cock-a-doodle-doo!

You: Thank You, Mind!



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Cognitive Defusion Practices

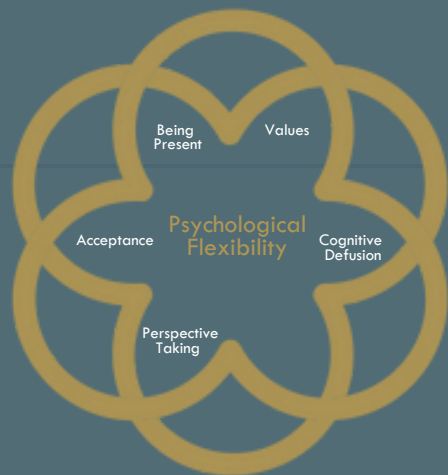
NOTICE YOUR THOUGHTS

DONT TAKE YOUR THOUGHTS SERIOUSLY

GET OUT OF YOUR HEAD AND INTO YOUR LIFE



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Perspective Taking

notice your self-story, connect with a greater whole

 Diana Hill PhD



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Spotting Inflexible Stories

I AM...

YOU ARE...

I NEVER...

YOU NEVER...

I ALWAYS...

YOU ALWAYS...

I DON'T...

YOU DON'T...

I CAN'T...

YOU CAN'T...



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Question: There has been a lot of areas that can divide people (politics, COVID, vaccines etc). What should we do in scenarios where we vehemently disagree with someone but care about the relationship?



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Self-Story Checklist

- MISSING OUT ON HERE AND NOW?
- IGNORING CONTEXT?
- INFLEXIBLE BEHAVIOR?
- CONFIRMATION BIAS?
- LACKING EMPATHY?
- FEELING DISCONNECTED?



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Perspective Taking

I AM...

THEY ARE...



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Perspective Taking

HOW OLD IS YOUR STORY?



MY AGE

MY STORY'S AGE



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Perspective Taking

I AM...SOMETIMES

THEY ARE...SOMETIMES



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Perspective Taking

I AM...SOMETIMES
THEY ARE...SOMETIMES

WE ARE



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Perspective Taking

WE ARE



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Perspective Taking

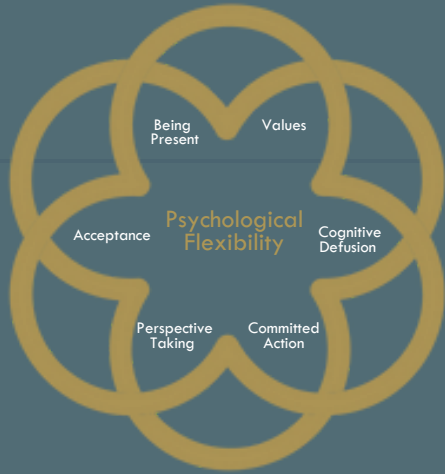
1. NOTICE WHEN YOU ARE CAUGHT IN A STORY AND NAME IT "THAT'S MY BAD EGG STORY."
2. RECOGNIZE CONTEXT
3. LOOK THROUGH DIFFERENT EYES



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 Diana Hill PhD

Committed Action

—
taking action in the direction of your values, even in the face of obstacles

Committed ACTION



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Committed Action

FEELS LIKE THIS



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Committed Action

TAKING ACTION

CONNECTING TO VALUES

EVEN IN THE FACE OF OBSTACLES

(MORAN, 2018)



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Committed Action

LOOKS LIKE THIS



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If all you can do is crawl, start crawling.

-Rumi



Committed ACTION

FOCUS ON ACTION OVER OUTCOME

MAKE SMALL DAILY MOVES

MOTIVATE WITH VALUES



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Committed ACTION

EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION

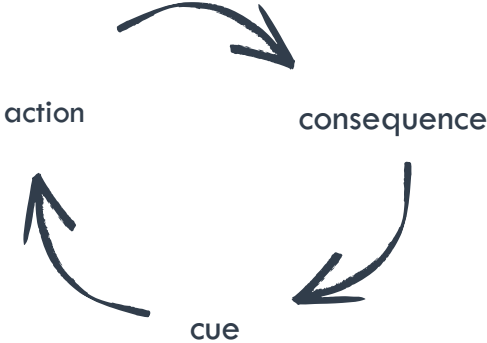


INTRINSIC MOTIVATION



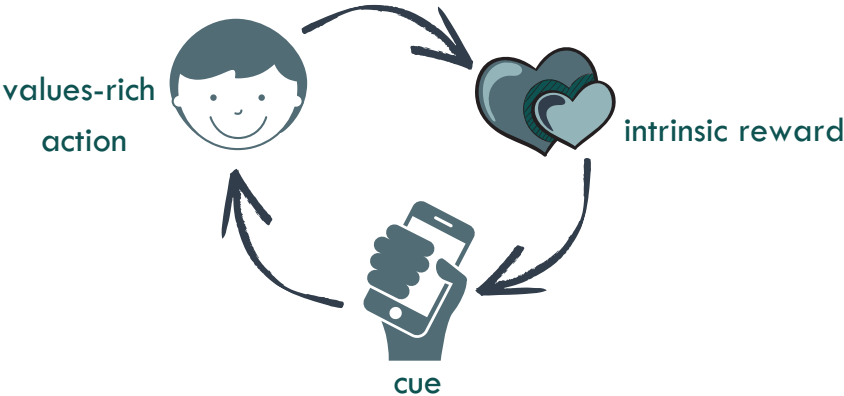
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Daily Habits

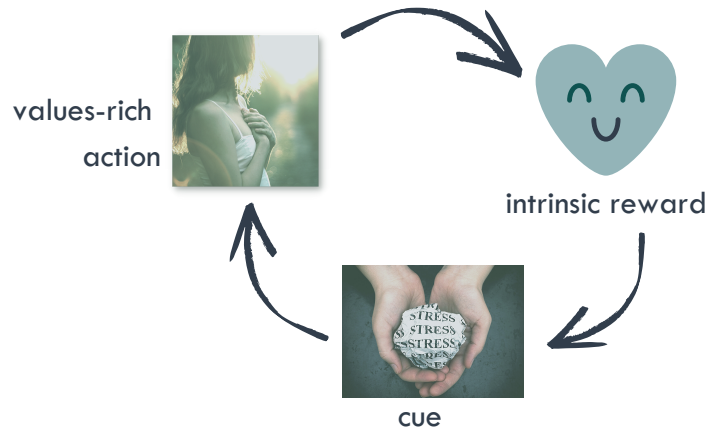


Committed Action

VALUES-RICH DAILY HABITS



Values-Rich Daily Habits



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The 6 ACT Processes



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What is Psychological Flexibility?

SIMPLY PUT: ACT

ALLOW.

be courageous, willing and open

CARE.

orient toward what's important to you

TAKE A STEP.

make a small move in the direction of what you care about



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Resources



ACT DAILY JOURNAL

A LIBERATED MIND

PSYCHOLOGISTS OFF THE CLOCK PODCAST

CONTEXTUALSCIENCE.ORG



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