

Radical Acceptance

DBT Skills Group – Topic 3

Radical Acceptance Overview

- Changing reality requires us to first accept reality as it is.
- Radical acceptance means accepting, fully and completely, without judgement.
- This includes accepting things that hurt, that are awful, that are painful/embarrassing/unfair.
- By accepting things that we can't change in this moment, we free ourselves to explore what we can change for the future.
- RA is a practice. It is something that you need to work on regularly, but mastering this is, IMO, a key to happiness.

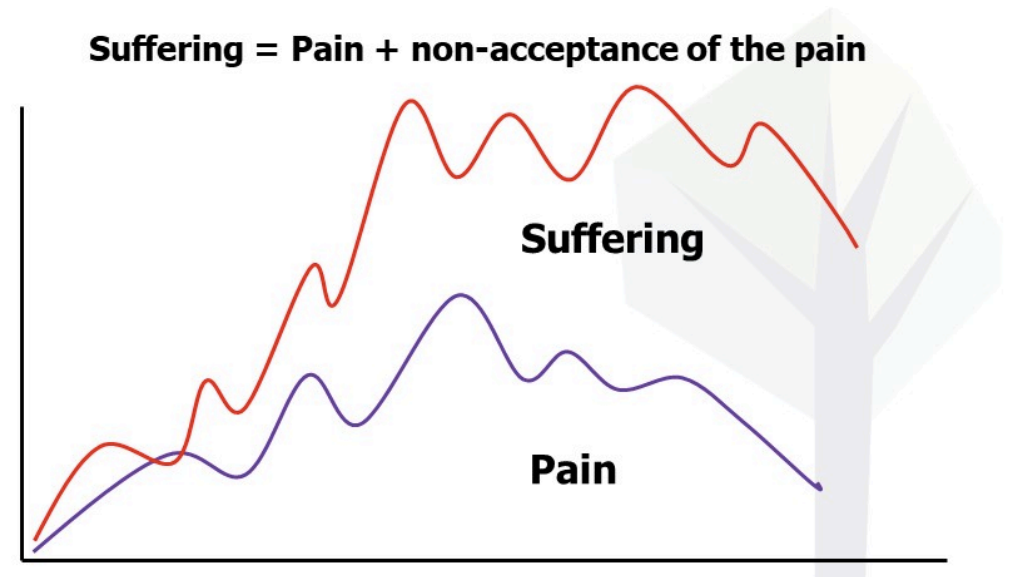


Radical acceptance rests on letting go of the illusion of control and a willingness to notice and accept things as they are right now, without judging.

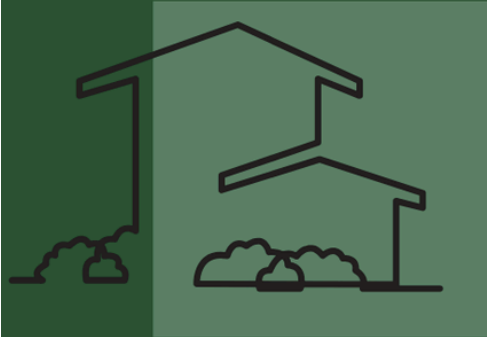
Marsha Linehan
DBT Founder

What is radical acceptance?

- Radical means all the way, complete and total.
- RA is accepting your current situation (reality) in your mind, your heart, and your body.
- “It’s when you stop fighting reality, stop throwing tantrums because reality is not the way you want it, and let go of bitterness.” – Marsha L.



RADICAL ACCEPTANCE



QUARANTINE

this sucks. I cant concentrate on my work. the grocery store is out of my favorite snack. i'm so sick of being stuck inside. i cant do this any longer! is this going to ruin my entire summer? when will this be over??



QUARANTINE

this sucks, but i'm doing my best and taking it one day at a time.

”Radical Acceptance” does not mean...

- Accepting that what happened was OK or fair, or that what someone else did or did not do was OK, justified, or reasonable.
- Saying that what happened does not matter, does not affect you, and that it did not shape you and how you experience the world.
- “Letting go” of love or grief for people, things, relationships, abilities we may have lost.
- Denying the validity or legitimacy of our emotions (all of them).
- Forgetting what happened.

What do we need to learn to accept?

- Reality is as it is (the facts about the past and the present are the facts, even if you don't like them).
- There are limitations on the future for everyone (but only realistic limitations need to be accepted).
- Everything has a cause (including events and situations that cause you pain and suffering). We may not be able to ever understand why things happened.
- Life can be worth living even with painful events in it.

Also:

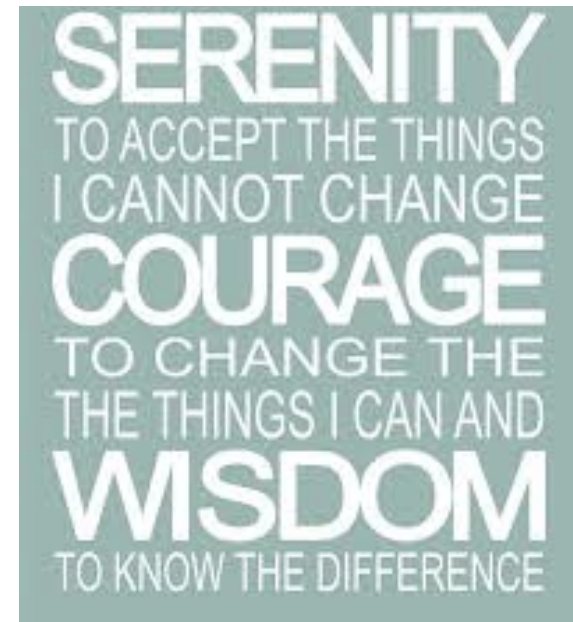
- We have power to improve our lives. We can only use this power if we accept that we have both power and responsibility, but there are limits to this power.
- We can have a role in something that occurred. It does not mean it is our fault.
- Our current situation (physical, emotional, occupational, relationships) does not define us or our future.

Radical Acceptance and serenity

- Guilt and “sleuthing” are anchors that keep us stuck in grief and regret.
- Raging over what isn’t fair or what isn’t working keep us from accepting our power to change our lives in the future.
- The serenity prayer is an example of “dialectical” thinking, holding truth of two opposite ideas.

No power
No responsibility
Not my fault
“I’m helpless”

Truth
Serenity



All powerful
Need to be perfect
All my fault
“Never good enough”

Pair discussion:

What is something that you would like to work on accepting more fully?

If you could “radically accept” this, what would it allow you to focus on that is under your control?