

VALUES

The values that really matter to us are a frequent unconscious driving factor in our behavioural choices. Becoming consciously aware of our individual value sets and how they relate to any given situation gives us a lot of power to help make fulfilling decisions consistently.

COMMITMENT TO ACTION

Knowledge of our values alone is not enough. Once we recognize the most relevant values related to a given situation, we need to identify the appropriate actions to enact those values, and commit to those actions. Learning to do this helps to free us of the way intense and unpleasant emotions might otherwise misdirect us, leading to more satisfying and fulfilling lives.



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A flexible approach to emotions

Most of us learn to try to reduce or eliminate our emotions, typically through problem solving. We inadvertently become overly rigid in our approach to our emotions. It's this rigid approach that causes most of our suffering, not the emotions themselves.

Learn to think more flexibly using the Hexagram of Flexible thinking



ACCEPTANCE

Allowing ourselves to continue to experience our emotions, accepting their presence in our lives, while choosing to shift our focus elsewhere.

Been fighting a tug-of-war with your anxiety? If you win, maybe you'll conquer it and be rid of it. If you lose - wow, what a horrible thought. But as long as you're fighting, all your focus is consumed by what you feel. And really, how often do you actually win?

It might be more adaptive at times to learn to let go of the rope instead.



PRESENT FOCUS

People are prone to fixating on the past (e.g. when feeling sad) and on the future (e.g. when feeling anxious). Focusing too much on those causes us to lose awareness of the present moment, which is where we live and have power for change. The same fixation often intensifies feelings connected to those time frames.

Try practicing focusing on these five aspects of the present moment, to help you maintain awareness of the present moment:

- **Emotions**
(What are you feeling right now?)
- **Thoughts**
(What thoughts are running through your head right now?)
- **Behaviours**
(What are you doing right now?)
- **Interpersonal**
(What is happening between you and others right now?)
- **Environment**
(What is happening in your immediate environment?)

DE-FUSION

People are prone to fusing together their perception of who they are with various experiences - what they feel, think and do, what skills they have, their job, etc. Learning to de-fuse identity from these things often makes it easier to accept unwanted experiences.

SELF-AS-CONTEXT

Learning to mindfully recognize ourselves as the context within which all of our emotional, thought and behavioural content occur is a great alternative to the more common place perception of self-as-content (equating who we are with the contents of our experiences). This ability to mindfully notice our emotions without getting overly caught up in them is great for mental health.

You are the solar system. Your emotions and thoughts are just the planets and bodies existing inside you. If we could magically pluck any of them out, you'd still be you. But without you, none of those pieces would exist.