

Acceptance: Making Space For What's Hard

InsightTimer

Created in collaboration with licensed clinical psychologist, Dr. Diana Hill

Acceptance is the active process of opening up to difficult thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations—without defense or avoidance. It's about receiving rather than resisting. You don't have to like it, but you can learn to allow it.

The opposite of acceptance is experiential avoidance—when we push away painful experiences, they often come back even stronger. Ironically, it's often the things we care about most that stir up the most discomfort. That's why learning to gently stay with our discomfort, instead of running from it, is such a powerful act of self-compassion.



Acceptance is



Willingness



Courage



Making Space



Turning toward



Opening up



Compassion



Acceptance is not



Approval



Ignoring



Liking it



Being passive



Resigning



Promoting harm or abuse

Which of the words for acceptance resonate for you? Do have ones you would add? Choose words that give you a sense of openness and letting go of resisting what is.

Examples Of Acceptance In Practice

1. Letting sadness sit beside you when you're grieving instead of distracting yourself away.
2. Acknowledging anxiety before a presentation rather than trying to “calm down” or overprepare to avoid it.
3. Soften and stay with physical discomfort instead of pushing past your body's messages.
4. Saying yes to uncertainty while taking meaningful action anyway.

Journal Practice:

Use your Insight Timer Journal to reflect on the following questions:

1. What's something you've been avoiding—an emotion, memory, or situation?
2. What have you been doing to control or push that experience away?
3. What might happen if you softened your resistance—even just a little—and allowed that experience to be there without needing to fix it?

Insight Timer Practice:



[What It Means To Accept And How To Do It With ACT Expert Dr. Diana Hill](#)



[Getting Comfortable With Discomfort With ACT](#)

ACT Daily Practice:

Pick one uncomfortable emotion you're currently navigating.

1. Where do you feel it in your body? Does it have a weight? Texture? Is it moving? Without adding a story notice at the pure level of sensation.
2. Now choose your favorite words for acceptance and turn them into an acceptance mantra:
 - a. Breathing in I make space
 - b. Breathing out I let go

Physically feel your mental and physical grip around this sensation release. It's ok to feel this. This feeling is allowed here.

Remember: I can breathe with what's hard, and still move toward what I care about.