



MINDFULNESS X  
ACCEPTANCE &  
COMMITMENT  
THERAPY

*with Dalia Halabi*



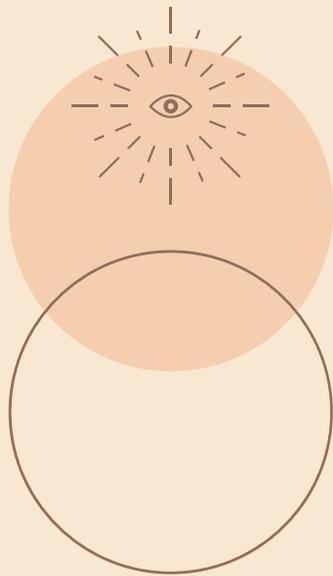
## Welcome

I've always found that we're less likely to dread the things we know we can handle, especially if we are equipped with the right tools.

In this free guide you will learn about Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT's) approach to mindfulness. I love to teach it because it emphasizes the importance of accepting one's thoughts and feelings, rather than trying to change or eliminate them.

If you can learn to control your thoughts, you can begin master your life. After all, your thoughts create your feelings, which ultimately inform your behavior.

# Mindfulness X Acceptance & Commitment Therapy

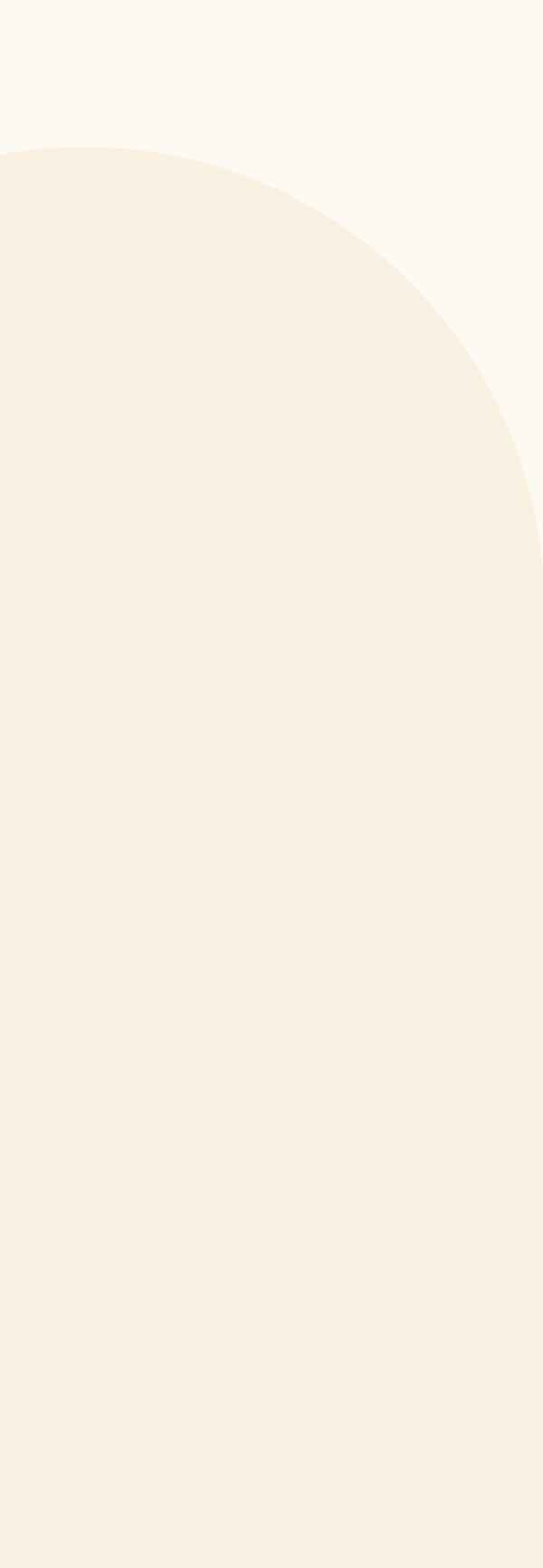


# Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is a form of cognitive-behavioral therapy that emphasizes the importance of accepting one's thoughts and feelings, rather than trying to change or eliminate them.

The main objective of ACT is to equip individuals with the skills to manage distressing thoughts and feelings, and develop a deeper understanding of what is truly important to them. ACT is focused on achieving specific goals, and follows a structured and methodical approach in assisting clients to reach their desired outcomes.





The beauty of ACT is that it encourages individuals to acknowledge and accept their imperfections, and provides them with the tools to move beyond negative thoughts or unpleasant emotions.

ACT can be beneficial for a wide range of individuals and issues, like:

- Mood disorders such as depression or melancholy (Hayes et al., 1996)
- Dealing with major life events such as job loss, financial difficulties, loss of a loved one or divorce
- Low self-esteem and self-doubt
- Social anxiety, obsessions, communication difficulties, negative self-talk and limiting beliefs (Twohig, Hayes, & Masuda, 2006)
- Professionals seeking to improve productivity at work

ACT is built on six core principles designed to foster psychological flexibility, which is the ability to engage in actions that are aligned with one's values and goals despite difficult thoughts and feelings. In this workbook we will look at **four** of those principles as they pertain to mindfulness.

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Being mindful means being  
fully present and engaged  
in the current moment,  
with an attitude of  
openness, receptivity, and  
curiosity.

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# The Four Mindfulness Principles According to Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

## 01 DEFUSION

Learning to relate to your thoughts in a new way, so they have much less influence over you. As you learn to defuse painful and unpleasant thoughts, such as self-limiting beliefs and harsh self-criticisms, they will lose their ability to frighten, disturb, worry, stress, or depress you.

## 02 EXPANSION

It means making room for uncomfortable emotions and sensations instead of trying to suppress or push them away. By allowing yourself to experience and accept these feelings, you will find that they have less impact and they dissipate more quickly.

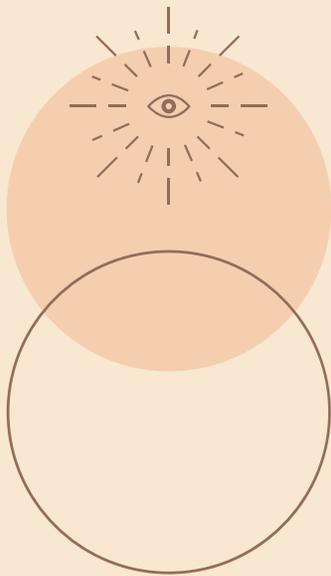
## 03 CONNECTION

Connecting with the present moment, and engaging in the current activity or experience, rather than dwelling on the past or worrying about the future.

## 04 The Observing Self

By understanding this part of yourself, you can improve your relationship with difficult thoughts and feelings.

# Exercises



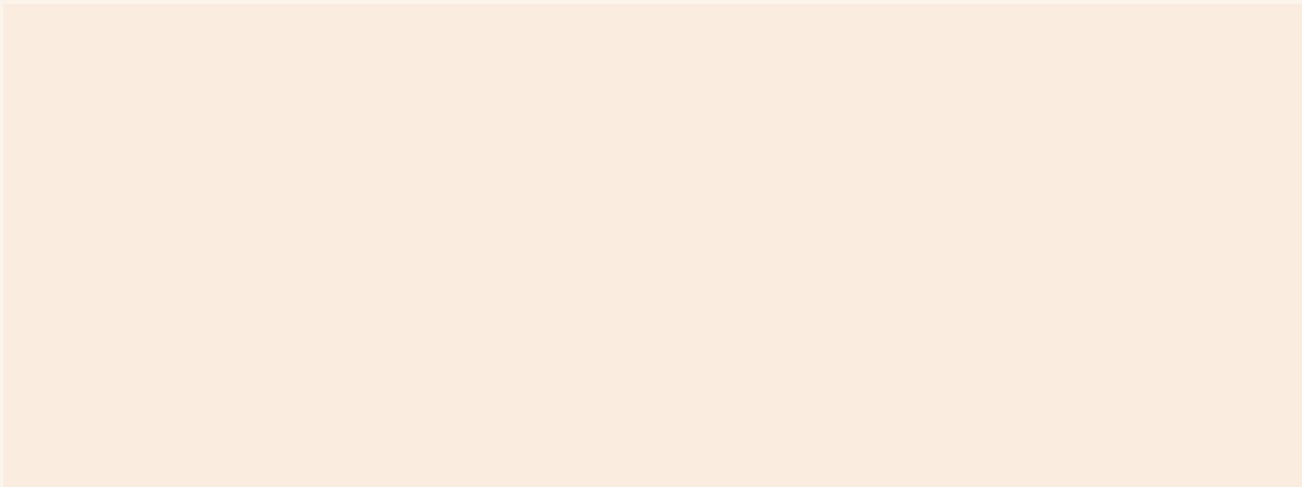
# 1-Dissecting the problem

When we dissect the problem, we usually find four major elements that contribute significantly to the issue. These are represented in the boxes below. Please write as much as you can in each box, about the thoughts, feelings and actions that contribute to or worsen the challenge, problem or issue facing you.

What memories, worries, fears, self-criticisms, or other unhelpful thoughts do you dwell on, or get “caught up” in, related to this issue?



What are you currently doing that makes your life worse in the long term? What keeps you stuck; wastes your time or money; drains your energy; restricts your life, that impacts you negatively?



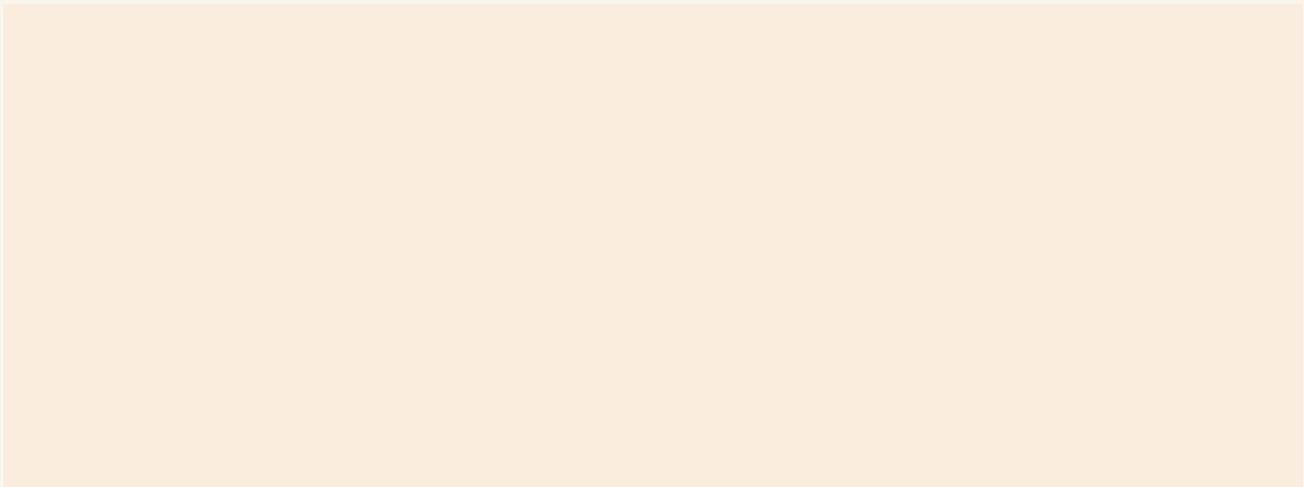
# Dissecting the problem

By disjoining them and looking at each element objectively, we can gather valuable information about the best ways to deal with them

What emotions, feelings, urges, impulses, or sensations (associated with this issue) do you fight with, avoid, suppress, try to get rid of, or otherwise struggle with?



What situations, activities, people or places are you avoiding or staying away from? What have you quit, withdrawn from, dropped out of? What do you keep “putting off” until later?



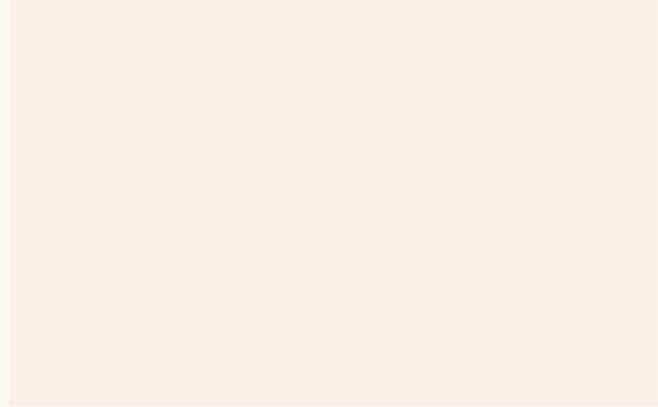
## 2- Connect the DOTS

The first step to being mindful, is recognizing when we're not. This exercise aims to identify the methods we use to avoid or eliminate uncomfortable thoughts and feelings, and to understand the long-term effects of these methods. It is important to approach this exercise with curiosity and without judgment. Instead of labeling the methods as "good" or "bad", "right" or "wrong", "positive" or "negative", the goal is to determine if these methods are effective in the long-term in promoting a fulfilling and meaningful life. If any of the methods prove to be beneficial, then continue to use them.

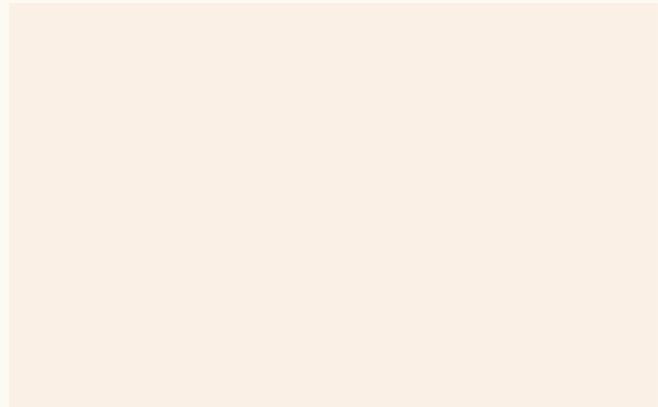
D-DISTRACTION: WHAT DO YOU DO TO DISTRACT YOURSELF OR TAKE YOUR MIND OFF OF NEGATIVE THOUGHTS OR EMOTIONS?	O- OPTING OUT: WHAT IMPORTANT, MEANINGFUL OR LIFE-ENHANCING ACTIVITIES, EVENTS, TASKS, CHALLENGES, OR PEOPLE, DO YOU AVOID?
T- THINKING STRATEGIES: HOW DO YOU TRY (CONSCIOUSLY OR NOT) TO THINK YOUR WAY OUT OF PAIN?	S - SUBSTANCES & OTHER STRATEGIES: WHAT SUBSTANCES OR STRATEGIES DO YOU USE TO AVOID OR GET RID OF PAIN,

## 2-Connecting the DOTS

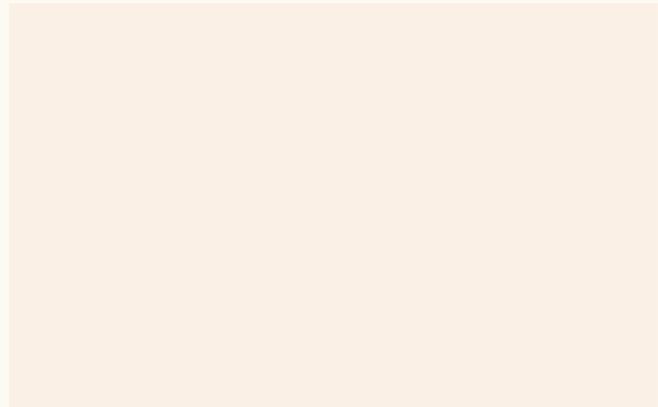
How many of these methods give you some relief from pain in the short term, but keep you stuck or make your life worse in the long term?



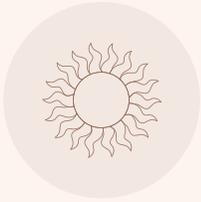
When you have over-relied on these methods what have they cost you in terms of health, money, wasted time, relationships, etc?



Would you be open to learning a 'new way' of responding to them? Are you willing to accept and sit with your emotions?

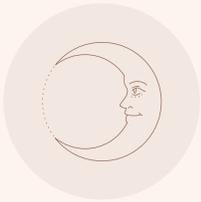


# 3-Simple ways to become present



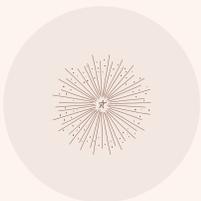
## Take ten deep breaths

1. Take ten slow, deep breaths. Focus on breathing out as slowly as possible until the lungs are completely empty—and then allow them to refill by themselves. 2. Notice the sensations of your lungs emptying. Notice them refilling. 3. See if you can let your thoughts come and go as if they're just passing cars, driving past outside your house. 4. Expand your awareness: simultaneously notice your breathing and your body.



## Drop Anchor

1. Plant your feet into the floor. 2. Push them down—notice the floor beneath you, supporting you. 3. Notice the muscle tension in your legs as you push your feet down. 4. Notice your entire body—and the feeling of gravity flowing down through your head, spine, and legs into your feet. 5. Now look around and notice what you can see and hear around you. Notice where you are and what you're doing.



## Notice 5 things

1. Pause for a moment 2. Look around and notice five things that you can see. 3. Listen carefully and notice five things that you can hear. 4. Notice five things that you can feel in contact with your body (for example, your watch against your wrist, your trousers against your legs, the air on your face, your feet upon the floor, your back against the chair). 5. Finally, do all of the above simultaneously.

Mindful breathing practice enables you to develop several skills: the ability to focus and engage in what you are doing; the ability to let thoughts come and go without getting caught up in them; the ability to refocus when you realize you're distracted; and the ability to let your feelings be as they are without trying to control them. Challenge yourself to five minutes of practice every day and in the boxes below, write what came up for you and how you felt during.

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

SUN

Training the mind to live with negativity is not easy, especially since we are wired towards the negativity bias. As the name implies, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy focuses on self-acceptance and mindfulness, rather than trying to control emotions. So be kind and compassionate with yourself as you go through this process.

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# Notes

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