Practicing Radical Acceptance

Therapy with Helena : Practice Guide

Summarized from Tara Brach’s book Radical Acceptance : Chapter Two : Awakening from the Trance: The Path of Radical Acceptance & Julien Lacaille Insight Timer Radical Self-Acceptance

Listen to Julien’s meditation on practicing Radical Self-Acceptance - <https://insighttimer.com/mindspace/guided-meditations/radical-self-acceptance>

So, you’ve practiced noticing when you’re in the trance of unworthiness. (…don’t know what I’m talking about? Check out Practice Guide #1 Recognizing the Trance of Unworthiness.)

How do we get out of the trance? A little something called – Radical Acceptance. I’m really passionate about this concept, so I hope you feel the excitement in my words as I share this with you.

Radical Acceptance is about dismantling (with clarity and compassion) the very foundations of the trance of unworthiness.

**Clearly recognizing what is happening inside us, and regarding what we see with an open, kind and loving heart, is what is called, Radical Acceptance.**

Radical Acceptance helps us to heal and move on, free from unconscious habits of self-hatred and blame.

The wings of radical acceptance are **clarity and compassion.** These two wings of Radical Acceptance are inseparable and both essential practices of dissolving the trance of unworthiness.

**The wing of clarity.**

This is the practice of seeing clearly exactly what is happening in the moment for you, paying attention to your present moment experience of thoughts, sensations and emotions.

When you are mindful of fear for example, you may notice your thoughts racing, your body feels tight and shaky, you feel compelled to get away. Practicing Radical Acceptance you see all of this and you don’t try to manage your experience or change it in any way, you just see it clearly, as it is.

**The wing of compassion.**

The second wing of Radical Acceptance is compassion. This is the practice of relating to your present moment experience in a tender and sympathetic way. Instead of judging or resisting your desire for attention or chocolate or scrolling to numb your feelings, you embrace your desire with the kindness of a loving mother holding her child (*see Practice Guide #3 Practice of Mindful Breathing with Pain).*

Radical Acceptance is not…

* **Passive.** The greatest misunderstanding of Radical Acceptance is that if we simply accept ourselves as we are, we will lose our motivation to change and grow.

*“That’s just the way I am. Take it or leave it” or, “I am the way I am, I’ll never change anyway”*

Radical Acceptance provides the ground for taking effective action. Psychologist, Carl Rogers says, *“The curious paradox is that when I accept myself just as I am, then I can change”*

* **Self-Indulgent.** If we are addicted to nicotine, Radical Acceptance does not mean that each time we feel like having a cigarette we go ahead and light up.

*“I accept I have this craving, and therefore I’ll act on it”*

Radical is derived from the Latin word *radix,* meaning “going to the root or origin”. Radical Acceptance helps us return to the root or origin of who we are.

REFLECT: Take a pause. Notice what stories you tend to live in? What stories about yourself or your emotions have you been believing?

*Eg. my sadness is too much, anger is bad, my thighs are fat and no one will ever find me attractive because of it, my existence is useless, because I feel fear something is wrong with me*

PRACTICE: Consciously switch from a doing mode, to a being mode - where you practice “just being” with your present moment experience.

As you make this shift from doing to being notice what happens with your physical body? What happens with your emotional body?

Lean into this moment, open to your experience as it is - right now

Notice the stillness of not having to do anything, not having to achieve anything - a break from doing.

Noticing your breathing, noticing that there’s nothing to do here, you don’t have to change your breathing or make it better – your breathing can just happen, you can delegate the breathing to the body.

When you notice your mind takes over, as it often does, “but no there is a problem, there is this and that…” just see if you can catch those moments, when the mind pulls you back into a world of problems that need to be fixed and solved

It may help to label it may help to label the activity of the mind: fixing, fixing, planning, planning, planning, avoiding, avoiding, problem solving, problem solving (see practice guide #...mental noting)

Again and again lean back into this moment, this breath - nothing to fix, nothing to problem to solve.

This being human, this being you right now - is not a problem, it’s not a problem to be fixed, it’s an experience to be lived.

Can you give yourself permission for the next few moments, to live it, live your life right now and just be, be you, as you are.

Radical Acceptance: **“ this is what it’s like to be me right now” “it’s ok to be me, with my experience right now”**

That’s the practice, being with your ever-changing experience, as it is. Be gentle with yourself, Radical Acceptance takes practice.