

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: ACE's

A: Acknowledge your thoughts and feelings. Put yourself into the mindset of a child, filled with curiosity. Name and identify your feelings using terms like "I'm noticing" or "here is". The aim here is to acknowledge your thoughts without struggling against them. This creates a separation from you and your thoughts and feelings. Instead of I am anxious (you are the anxiety), here is anxiousness (this is something you are experiencing, it's not you).

Do this for 20 seconds to 2 minutes or longer.

C: Connect with your body. Continue acknowledging your thoughts and feelings while at the same time connect with your physical body. Find your own way of doing this in terms of how useful it is to you. Below are some suggestions:

- Slowly and gently push your feet into the floor
- Slowly and gently straighten your back and your spine
- Slowly and gently press your hands together, touching only at the fingertips
- Slowly and gently stretch out your arms, stretch your neck, or roll your shoulders
- Breathe in and out

Do this for 20 seconds to 2 minutes or longer

E: Engage in what you are doing. Here you can do the 5 things grounding technique (5 things you can see, 4 things you can feel, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, one thing you can taste) or bring your full attention to something in front of you. This can be work, reading a book, focusing on something you are eating, etc.

Do this for 20 seconds to 2 minutes or longer.

Do this process two, three, four or five times in a row,. Notice if anything changes throughout.

What happened for you? Hopefully you experienced at least some of the following:

- Although the thoughts and feelings may not have changed much, you were able to separate a little from them. You were less bothered or impacted by them.
- You were able to feel and move your body more readily and have a greater sense of control over your actions.
- You were more present, awake, alert.
- You had a greater awareness of where you are, what you are doing, and what you're thinking and feeling
- You had a sense of disentangling yourself from your thoughts.

Citation. Harris, R. (2008). The happiness trap: How to stop struggling and start living.