

Building Resilience

Instructions:

Accept, Change, Remove Exercise

“The present moment is sometimes unacceptable, unpleasant or awful. It is as it is. If you can accept it as if you have chosen it and then work with it and not against it, this will miraculously transform your life” *Eckhart Tolle, The Power of Now*

As explained in *The Power of Now*, much of our negativity arises from a denial of the present moment. Unease, anxiety, tension, stress, worry (all forms of fear) are caused by too much focus on the future and not enough on the present. Guilt, regret, resentment, grievances, sadness, bitterness and all forms of non-forgiveness are caused by too much focus on the past and not enough on the present.

Based on this premise, the starting point is to accept where you are now and focus on what choices are open to you in relation to dealing with what you are faced with at this point in time.

Accepting that you are facing a challenge in the present moment and taking responsibility for your own circumstances, you now have three choices of approach open to you with regards to the situation:

- Remove yourself from the situation
- Change the situation or
- Accept it totally

When you complain about a situation, this implies non-acceptance and carries an unconscious negative charge – stress, and by complaining you are accepting that you are a victim to the situation. When you change the situation by taking action or speaking out (if necessary or possible), leave it or accept it, you are taking back your personal power and responsibility.

When taking action, any action is often better than no action, especially if you have been stuck in an unhappy situation for a long time. By doing something you will learn something and this will lead you to a different place with different choices, doing nothing reveals nothing. If fear is stopping you from taking action, feel the fear and do it anyway – the act of ‘doing’ cuts the link between the doing and your thinking.

If there is truly nothing that you can do to change the situation and you cannot remove yourself, then accept your here and now. This is called surrender. Surrender is not a weakness, there is great strength in it and you will then be free of the inner resistance associated with this situation. This, in turn, will reduce the physical neurological reactions in your body, increasing your capacity to think rationally and create more possible courses of action.

Step 1: Identify where you are now. What stressors are you facing? Create a list & prioritise them in order of impact.

Step 2: Consider the options that are available to you. Create a list of all possible options, regardless of whether you feel you would do them as often inspiration can come from thinking beyond your normal behaviours. At this point do not rule out any options, just create a list of them. Ask yourself:

- How could I remove myself from this situation?
- How could I change the situation?

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Note: In order to generate ideas it might be useful:

- To speak to other people that you respect or could provide you with support
- To ask someone who has experienced the same situation
- To score the situation using the awfulness scale (see exercise 2)
- To review the situation 'by stepping into someone else's shoes' (see exercise 3)

Step 3: Looking at the list what options resonate with you? Create a list of the options that you would like to take action on and give yourself a deadline to complete each of the actions.

Notes:

- If you are feeling overwhelmed, it is recommended that you perform this exercise with the support of a coach or supportive person to help you gain perspective, generate ideas and to support you to overcome any fears in taking the actions you have chosen to carry out. Also, by being accountable to someone else you are more likely to succeed in carrying out your actions.
- With practice this exercise can be used to respond to situations in the moment by allowing you to pause before you choose one of the options of 'accept, change or remove'