

Peer Perspective April 2022

Radical Acceptance: “Can be defined as the ability to accept situations that are outside of your control without judging them, which in turn reduces the suffering that is caused by them”

For me, practicing radical acceptance has been one of the key skills in my recovery journey. Radical acceptance is one of the more difficult skills as it involves releasing control of the very things, I thought I could control.

The first time I tried radical acceptance, I failed. I attempted to accept something that was bigger than I was ready for. It was suggested to me, that I should attempt to practice radical acceptance on something “easier, like the weather.”

We have zero control of the weather. But we can practice a healthy response to the weather. For example, I had planned a picnic with my children. We planned a day to go sit by the river and eat sandwiches and enjoy the sunshine. As we were getting ready to leave the house, we heard a large thunderclap. And I knew there would be tears.

It turned out to be okay. I allowed the children to have their feelings validating the disappointment they felt about the picnic being ‘ruined’, because I felt the same. I put a lot of work into making the food and gathering the blanket and packing everything neatly in a little cooler. But then it hit me, radical acceptance.

“Yes, it is raining and there is nothing we can do to stop the rain. We feel sad and disappointed about the weather, but let’s work together to come up with a back up plan. We worked together to plan and prepare the picnic. So, what else can we do to make today a better day for us?” The kids came up with ideas and we had a wonderful chat.

We ended up sitting in the garage floor, with the door open listening and watching the rain from a safe place and enjoying our garage picnic. We laughed, shared stories, and ended up having a great time. It is something we still talk about to this day, remember when...

That was the first time I had success with radical acceptance.

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