

THE LITTLE BOOK OF

*Acceptance &
Commitment
Exercises*



W E L L B E I N G
C O L L E C T I V E

LET EVERYTHING
OUT

TABLE OF *Content*

What to expect	01
I am having the thought that...	02
Give Your Mind a Name	03
Thank Your Mind	04
Passengers on the Bus	05
The Radio in the Background	06
Tug of War with the Monster	07
The Two Roads	08



WHAT TO EXPECT



This booklet offers a gentle introduction to Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and some of the ideas and exercises that can help us respond differently to difficult thoughts and feelings. ACT is not about getting rid of uncomfortable emotions or forcing ourselves to think positively. Instead, it encourages us to make space for what we experience while learning how to move towards the things that matter to us.

Inside, you will find simple explanations and practical exercises exploring thought defusion, acceptance, values and meaningful action. You do not need any previous experience with ACT, and there is no right or wrong way to complete the activities. Take your time, approach the exercises with curiosity and focus on what feels useful to you.

There is no particular order you need to follow when using this booklet. You can work through the exercises from beginning to end or choose a particular activity depending on what you need at the time. Some exercises may feel more useful than others, and that is completely okay.

Try to give yourself enough time to pause and reflect rather than rushing through each activity. You might find it helpful to write your thoughts down, return to exercises more than once or keep a note of the ones you find most useful. The aim isn't to complete everything perfectly, but to begin noticing your thoughts and feelings, understanding what matters to you and taking small steps towards the life you want to live.

I AM HAVING THE THOUGHT THAT...



WHY TRY THIS EXERCISE?

Sometimes we become so caught up in our thoughts that they can feel like facts, instructions or predictions that we have to follow.

Defusion helps us notice our thoughts as thoughts, rather than automatically believing or acting on them.

TRY IT:

Write down a thought that has been bothering you. Now rewrite it beginning with:

“I am having the thought that...”

For example:

“I’m going to make a fool of myself.”

becomes

“I am having the thought that I’m going to make a fool of myself.”

Now notice: Does anything feel different when you create that little bit of distance?

You haven’t made the thought disappear or changed whether it is true.

You have simply reminded yourself that you are the person noticing the thought, not the thought itself.

GIVE YOUR MIND A NAME



Our minds are designed to look for problems, predict what might happen and keep us safe. Sometimes, though, the mind can become repetitive or overly critical. Giving your mind a name can help you recognise when it is doing what minds do, rather than getting pulled into every thought it produces.

Try it:

Give your mind a name or character. It could be serious, silly, affectionate or completely random. You might call it The Worrier, Brenda, The Critic, Dave, or anything that feels right to you.

When a familiar thought appears, try saying:

“[Your mind’s name] is telling me...”

For example:

“Brenda is telling me that everyone is judging me.”

“The Worrier is telling me that something is going to go wrong.”

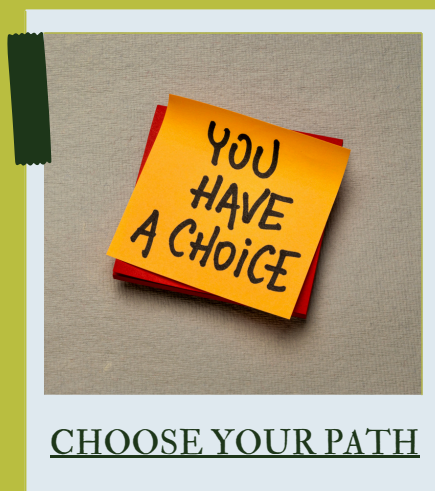
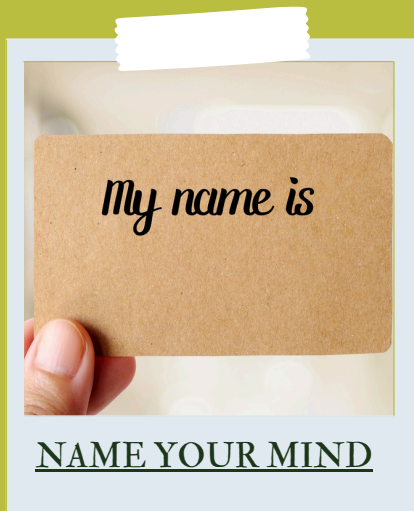
“The Critic is telling me that I need to get everything right.”

Write down three things your mind often tells you:

[Name of your mind] tells me: _____

[Name of your mind] tells me: _____

[Name of your mind] tells me: _____



THANK YOUR MIND

WHAT IS THIS EXERCISE?

This exercise builds on “I’m having the thought that...” and “Name Your Mind.”

The aim is to change your relationship with your thoughts rather than argue with or suppress them.

When an unhelpful thought appears, instead of debating whether it’s true, respond with:

“Thank you, mind.”

FOR EXAMPLE:

“I’m going to make a fool of myself.”

“Thank you, mind.”

“Something is going to go wrong.”

“Thank you, mind.”

“I’m not good enough.”

“Thank you, mind.”

The point isn’t to be sarcastic or convince yourself that the thought is ridiculous. You’re simply recognising that this is your mind producing a thought, rather than treating the thought as something you have to obey.

You can notice the thought and then return your attention to the present moment and what you are doing.

You might think:

“My mind has given me this thought. I don’t have to work it out, believe it, or get rid of it. I can let it be there and carry on.”

PASSENGERS ON THE BUS

Imagine that you are driving a bus.

Your destination represents the things that matter to you - your values and the life you want to move towards.

Your passengers are your thoughts, feelings, memories, worries, urges and self-criticisms.

Some passengers are pleasant:

Confidence, excitement, happiness, motivation, hope

Others are difficult:

Anxiety, self-doubt, anger, sadness,
“I’m not good enough”, “What if this goes wrong?”,
painful memories



The important part is that you don’t have to get the difficult passengers off the bus before you can drive towards your destination.

They may shout.
They may complain.
They may tell you to turn around.
They may even threaten you.

But you remain the driver.

ACT asks:

If these difficult thoughts and feelings could come along for the ride, where would you choose to drive?

So rather than:

“I can’t do this because I’m anxious.”

you move towards:

“I’m anxious, and I’m still going to do this because it matters to me.”

The exercise is essentially about separating:

What I’m experiencing from what I choose to do.

THE RADIO IN THE BACKGROUND

Imagine your mind is like a radio that is permanently switched on.

Sometimes it plays useful information.

Sometimes it plays criticism, predictions, worries and old stories.

You don't have to switch the radio off.

You can simply notice:

"The radio is doing its thing."

Then continue with what you're doing.

This is particularly useful for repetitive thoughts because the goal isn't to achieve a completely quiet mind.



Don't try to change the channel.



Don't turn the volume up.



Let the radio play.



Keep going about your day.

TUG OF WAR WITH THE MONSTER

IMAGINE YOU'RE IN A TUG OF WAR WITH A HUGE MONSTER.

The monster represents a difficult thought or feeling.

You're pulling as hard as you can.

The monster pulls back.

You become exhausted.

Then you realise that the struggle itself is keeping you stuck.

You don't necessarily have to defeat the monster.

You can drop the rope.

The thought or feeling may still be there, but you no longer have to spend all your energy fighting it.

ACT calls this acceptance: allowing an internal experience to be present without allowing it to dictate your behaviour.



YOU DON'T HAVE TO
DEFEAT THE MONSTER TO
MOVE FORWARD.

LET GO OF THE STRUGGLE,
ALLOW IT TO BE THERE,
AND CHOOSE WHERE YOU
WANT TO GO NEXT.

THE TWO ROADS



Imagine two roads in front of you.

One is the away road. It involves all the things you do to escape uncomfortable thoughts and feelings.

The other is the towards road. These are the actions that move you towards the person you want to be and the things that matter to you.

Ask yourself:

"Is what I'm about to do an away move or a towards move?"

For example:

Away move:

"I'm skipping my workout today to avoid feeling out of shape or judged."

Towards move:

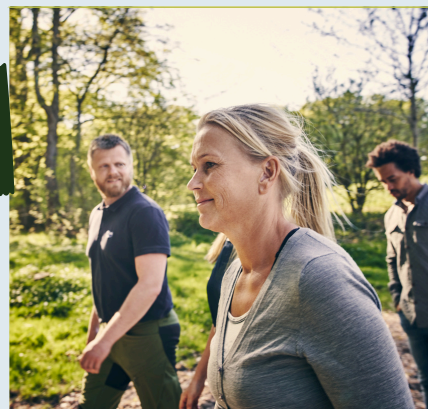
"I feel intimidated going on the park run, but I'm going anyway to build my strength and health."

The point isn't that every away move is automatically bad. Sometimes rest, distraction or stepping away is completely appropriate.

It's about noticing whether avoidance is running your life.



AWAY ROAD



TOWARDS ROAD



WWW.LEOWELLBEINGCOLLECTIVE.CO.UK

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is about learning to make space for difficult thoughts and feelings while taking steps toward what matters, one small moment at a time. We hope this booklet has given you some simple tools to explore and return to whenever you need them.

For more wellbeing resources, support and information about what we offer, visit our website.