

## PSYCHOLOGICAL FLEXIBILITY & THE SIX CORE PROCESSES OF ACT

There are six core processes in ACT:

1. **Connection** means being in the present moment: connecting fully with whatever is happening right here, right now. (Technically in ACT, this is called "contacting the present moment".)
2. **Defusion** means learning to step back or detach from unhelpful thoughts and worries and memories: instead of getting caught up in your thoughts, or pushed around by them, or struggling to get rid of them, you learn how to let them come and go – as if they were just cars driving past outside your house. You learn how to step back and watch your thinking, so you can respond effectively - instead of getting tangled up or lost inside your thinking.
3. **Expansion** means opening up and making room for painful feelings and sensations. You learn how to drop the struggle with them, give them some breathing space, and let them be there without getting all caught up in them, or overwhelmed by them; the more you can open up, and give them room to move, the easier it is for your feelings to come and go without draining you or holding you back. (Technically in ACT this is called "acceptance".)
4. **The Observing Self** is the part of you that is responsible for awareness and attention. We don't have a word for it in common everyday language – we normally just talk about the 'mind'. But there are two parts to the mind: the thinking self – i.e. the part that is always thinking; the part that is responsible for all your thoughts, beliefs, memories, judgments, fantasies etc. And then there's the observing self – the part of your mind that is able to be aware of whatever you are thinking or feeling or doing at any moment. Without it, you couldn't develop those mindfulness skills. And the more you practice those mindfulness skills, the more you'll become aware of this part of your mind, and able to access it when you need it.
5. **Values** are what you want your life to be about, deep in your heart. What you want to stand for. What you want to do with your time on this planet. What ultimately matters to you in the big picture. What you would like to be remembered for by the people you love.
6. **Committed action** means taking action guided by your values – doing what matters – even if it's difficult or uncomfortable

When you put all these things together, you develop something called psychological flexibility. This is the ability to be in the present moment, with awareness and openness, and take action, guided by your values. In other words, it's the ability to be present, open up, and do what matters. The greater your ability to do that, the greater your quality of life – the greater your sense of vitality, wellbeing and fulfillment.

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