

FIND YOUR PEACE



Your guide to creating a life of
mindfulness and stress resilience



Week 2: Acceptance

Face Forward

The things that happen to you in your life shape who you become. The question to ask is whether they are critical in a negative way or a positive way.

Some people spend so much time looking in the rear-view mirror, going over the things that have happened in the past, that they miss two things: the good things along the road in front of them as well as the hazards they may face.

This is why the Acceptance Process is so important. When setbacks occur, this process helps you assess what happened, improve what you can for when this happens in the future, and then move on.

Acceptance is not capitulation.

True acceptance is empowerment.

Accepting disappointment may seem like a flat out surrender, but this would only be true if you did nothing about it. In this case, you would be just as likely to have the disappointment happen in the future. In the Acceptance Process, you look back just long enough to understand what happened, make a plan to manage that situation next time, and then face forward again.

ASSESS YOURSELF

Do you Face Forward?

How much time do you spend thinking about letdowns? Think about the times in your life when something uncomfortable or frustrating happens. If someone cuts you off in traffic, are you still upset about that when you get home? If a negative event happens during your day, are you able to leave it at work as soon as you get home?

These are just the everyday frustrations you may have to face before facing forward into your life again.

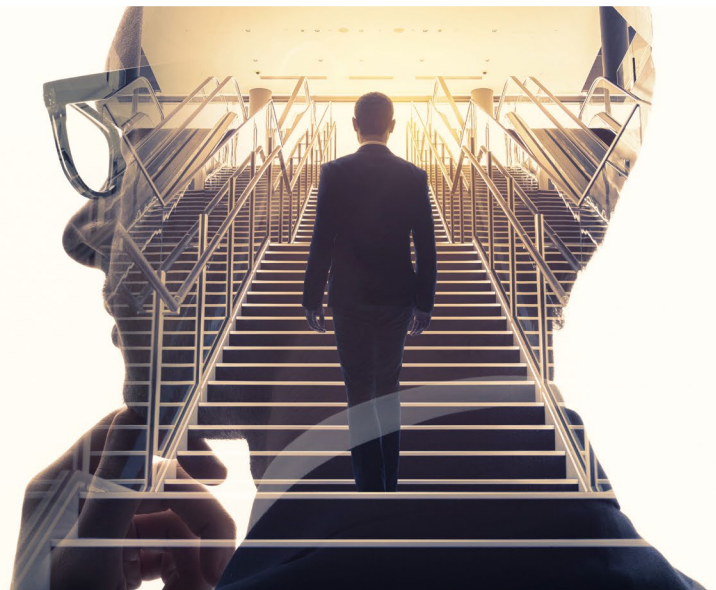
Other instances can include slights, insults, and injuries that happened to you in your past or even childhood. These can be tricky, as some of the more serious variety must be managed through professional counseling. However, even in that case the goal is still to be able to spend more time

thinking ahead than you do regurgitating the past.

The key for you is to start the process of living consciously. Become self-aware of whether you carry the past with you through your day. Once you realize how much this happens, only then can you begin to take control and begin to face forward again.

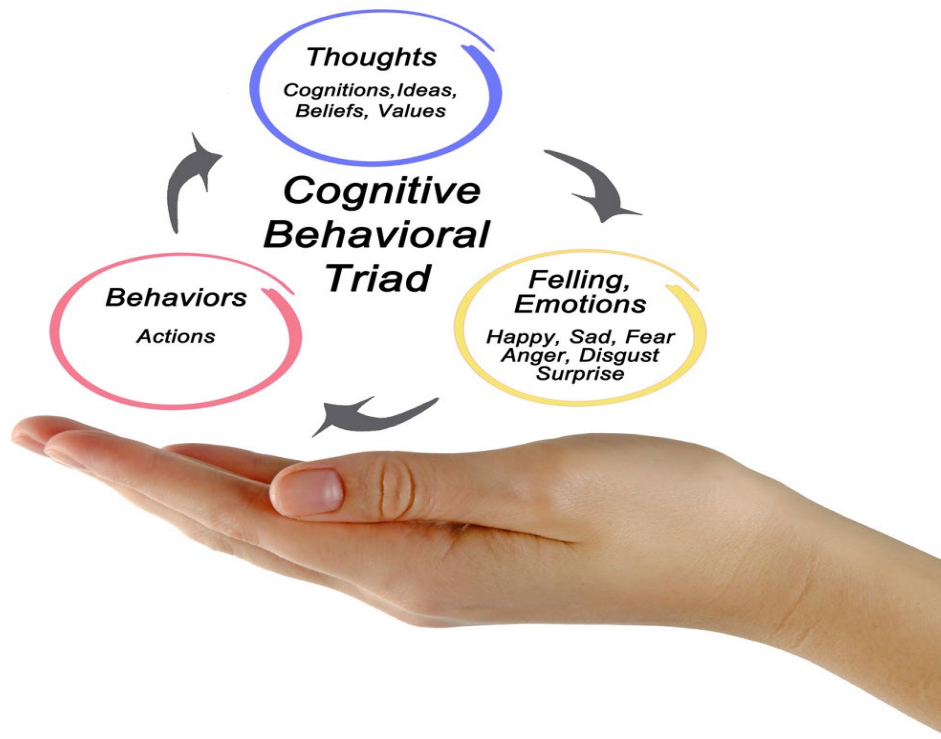
To begin this process, assess yourself by answering these questions for yourself.

- How much of your mental effort goes into reviewing past injuries?
- When negative events happen to you, how long does it take you to pivot from that event to your upcoming events?



MANAGE EXPECTATIONS

What cognitive re-framing is NOT



A panacea. Cognitive reframing is not a cure-all that will wash away your problems and send you straight to zen city. This won't happen.

Simple. Reframing takes practice, self-discipline, and consistency. That said, it does get easier to do as you practice. If you find yourself having a hard time to begin with, just keep working on it. This is perfectly normal.

A switch. This behavioral change is not something that flips on positive emotions instantly. As we say, you can change your mind in an instant, but changing your behavioral

patterns takes a while. This is because the change you are making is so fundamental.

Don't feel like reframing will "paper over" bad things that happen in your life. It is not for this purpose at all.

Commit to practicing the personal art of reframing events in your life in the most positive way possible. Then face forward into the next steps of your life.

This is a key element that will help you live a more conscious life.

Create Your Own Reality?

It sounds crazy, but your brain cannot tell whether stress is real or imagined. If you have a nightmare, you have a physical stress response with nausea, sweating, shallow breathing etc. Your brain thinks it is real.

Likewise, if you experience something positive, your brain responds by producing neurochemicals associated with positive feelings.

The implications of these two facts are profound. You get to decide whether you pump positive neurochemicals into your brain or the negative ones.

In Cognitive Behavioral Psychology, this feedback loop is called "cognitive reframing". Because you can consciously "reframe" events in a positive way or a negative way, you get to decide at least some degree of your emotional state. It takes a conscious decision on your part, but this is something you can do.

Can you create your own reality? In a way, you can. With cognitive reframing, the interpretation you pick will determine whether your internal state will be more positive or negative in the long term.

