

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) in a Nutshell

1. ACT emphasizes building a rich and meaningful life by taking action on our most important values, while effectively managing the pain and difficulty that come with that.
2. This isn't easy because:
 - a. Pain and difficulty are inevitable in life, and they tend to be linked to what matters most to us.
 - b. Our minds evolved to handle pain and difficulty in ways that aren't always conducive to longterm wellbeing, and which can pull us away from our values.
3. Specifically, two main ways that the mind's natural tendencies keep us stuck:
 - a. Automatically "buying in" to the mind's judgments, predictions and stories, when these may not be a useful guide for attention and behavior.
 - b. Trying too hard to avoid, escape or control uncomfortable internal experiences (e.g., thoughts, emotions, memories, sensations), which can backfire and make life smaller.
4. So we are aiming to learn new ways of relating to uncomfortable internal experiences: with acceptance, willingness and curiosity, letting them guide our attention and energy only to the extent that is helpful. In this way, we free ourselves up to live increasingly in alignment with our values.