

ACCEPTING UNPLEASANT EXPERIENCES, THOUGHTS, & FEELINGS

We use language to define our experiences, including those that have caused unpleasant feelings. By labeling experiences negatively, we create the tendency to limit, avoid, or control situations so that the discomfort associated with them will not be repeated. As a result, we may miss opportunities, encounter harm, or experience overall dissatisfaction with life. For example, if you label a party as boring because you felt left out of the conversation, you may decide that you will not go to any more parties.

This worksheet will act as a guide to help you understand that your experience of the present moment does not have to be determined by the past. Accepting unpleasant internal experiences, rather than actively avoiding them, creates opportunities for positive and rewarding experiences that you might otherwise have missed.

Identify five negative internal experiences that cause you to severely limit, avoid, or control certain activities (for example, anxiety, worry, sadness, jealousy, fear, insecurity, etc.):

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Write down the situations you avoid in order to keep from experiencing the discomfort of these five internal experiences.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Finally, identify and describe potentially positive internal experiences you could have if you permitted yourself to engage in these situations, rather than avoid them. Be as specific and descriptive as possible. This will help you identify the experiences you are choosing to miss out on.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____
