



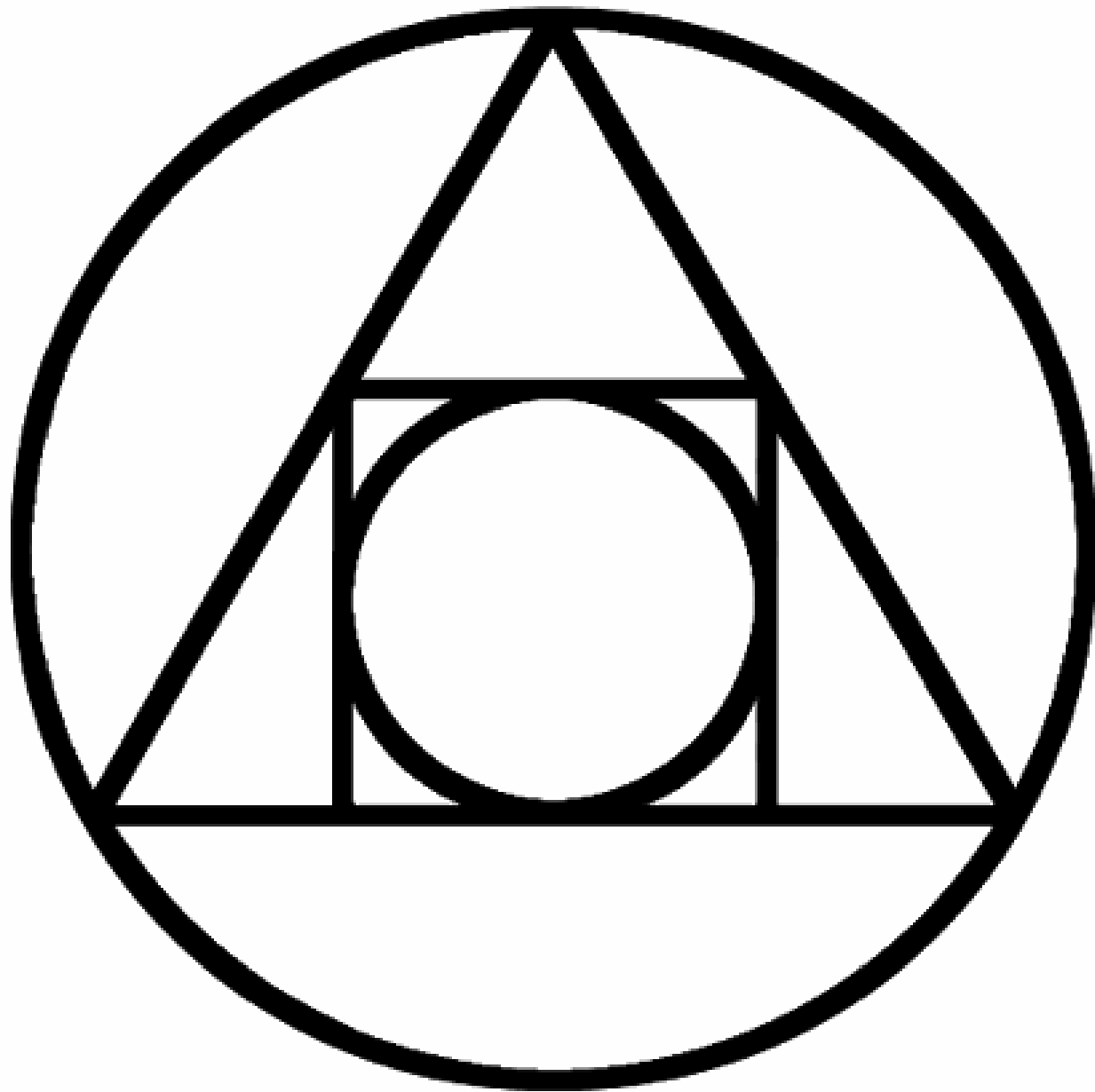
The ACT of Self-Forgiveness

A Principles-Based Response to Intrapersonal Offence

Workshop

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ACT of Self Forgiveness Why?

Completing the Circle -
Self Forgiveness Community and ACBS

Building an evidence-based set of
principles for treatment of distress

Providing useful therapeutic pathways
based on self-compassion, ACT/RFT

ACT with Self-forgiveness is the *lapis
philosophorum* - the philosophers stone
that turns base metal (Regret... etc)
into gold (a renewed life)





You will

Dalai Lama

*“We can never make peace
in the outer world until
we make peace with
ourselves”*





Self-forgiveness

A principles-based approach

Identify our Burden
Take Perspective
Values and pathways
Get Unstuck
Grant ourselves Forgiveness
Values in Action
Make a commitment to ongoing Self Forgiveness



Why a principles-based approach?

- It is ACT consistent
- Manuals may get in the way of the natural flow of self discovery
- Frequently, it may be 4-5 sessions before a person has established the genuine trust and rapport needed to reveal their experience of shame
- It may only be with time that a key stuck point is realized.
- Principles can then be applied rapidly and flexibly





HOW DO I
FORGIVE
MYSELF?

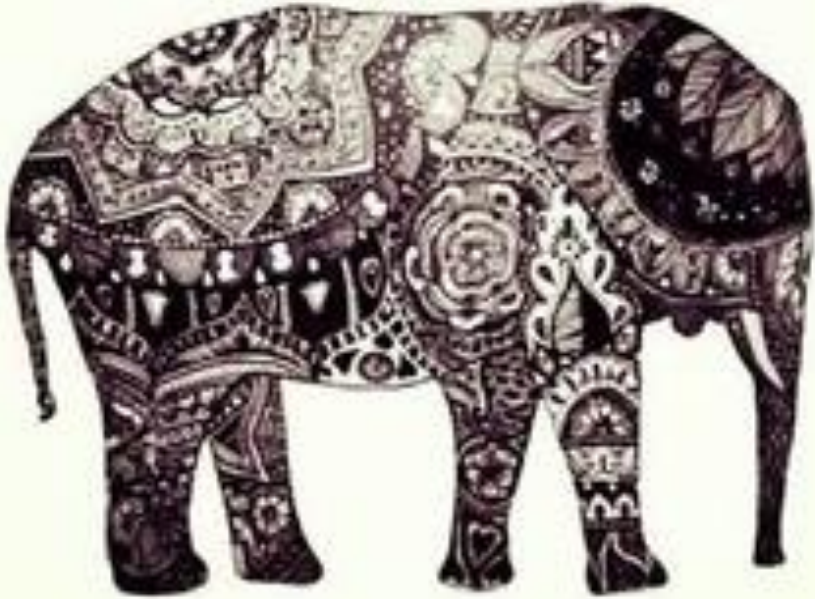
Kathryn Schulz On Regret

"The point is not living without regrets, the point is to not to hate ourselves for having them... We need to learn to love the flawed imperfect things we create and to forgive ourselves for creating them.... Regret [need not] remind us that we did badly... it reminds us that we can do better"



"EVERY EXPERIENCE, NO MATTER HOW BAD IT SEEMS, HOLDS WITHIN IT A BLESSING OF SOME KIND. THE GOAL IS TO FIND IT."

- BUDDHA



Identify the Burden

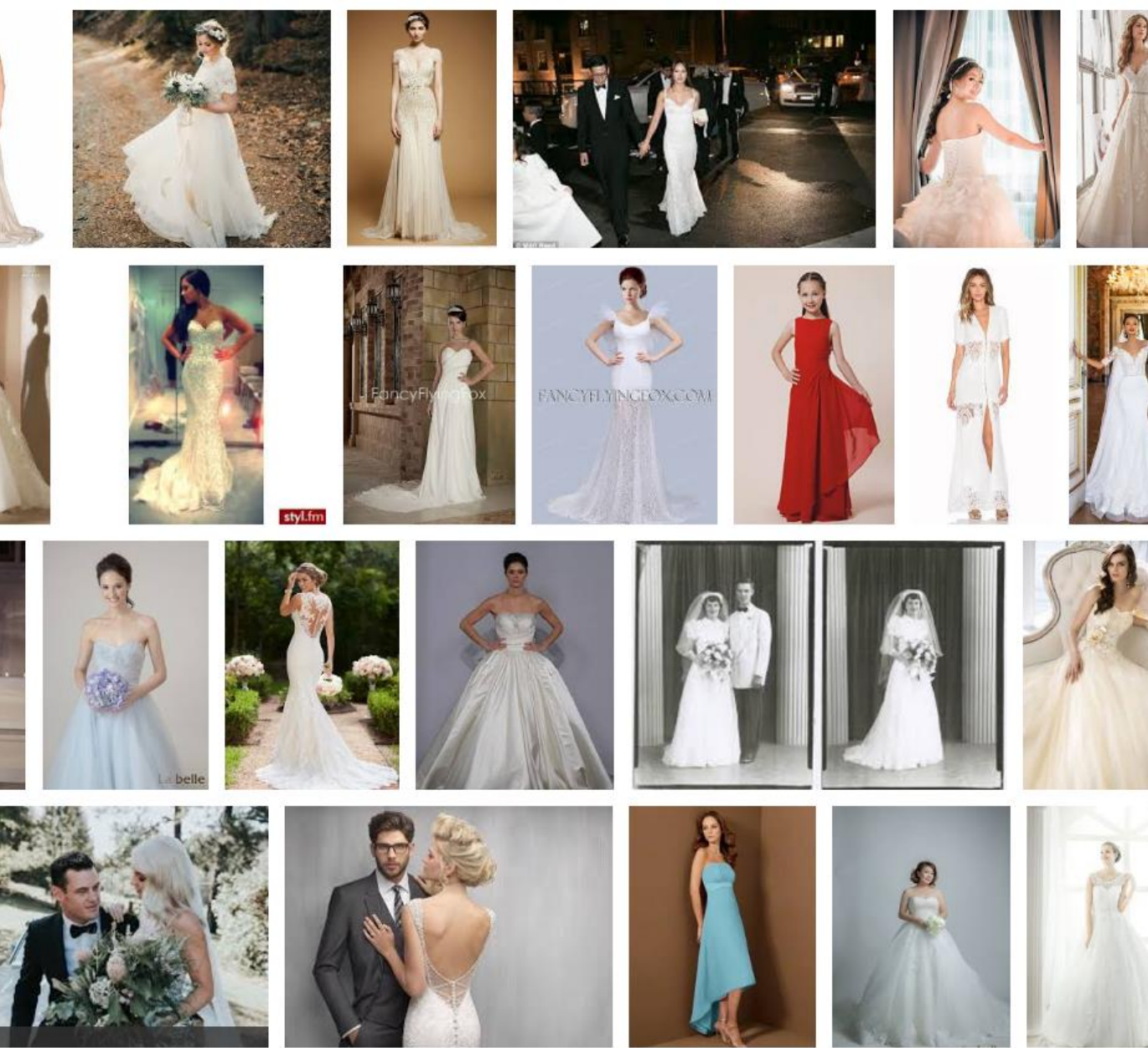
Lean into distress and discover the values within....



we are all architects of our own private hell
no one can hurt us like we hurt ourselves

037





Barry Schwartz: on choice

*"when there is no choice,
the world is to blame.*

*When there is too much
choice I am to blame."*





Decca Aitkenhead: on the loss of her husband

*"self-blame restores
order to a chaotic
and random
universe."*



Princes' guilt at not being able to protect mum



MUCH LOVED: Princess Diana with William and Harry at their Highgrove home in 1988 and Prince Harry today.

KATHERINE RUSHTON

PRINCE William has made a stunning confession of guilt, saying he and Prince Harry felt they had let their mother down by not protecting her.

In a major BBC interview about the week that followed Princess Diana's tragic car crash death in 1997, the Duke of Cambridge said the pair were finally ready to talk about their mother because "we owe

Diana's death in Paris in August 1997.

The princes told of the moment they heard the news that their mother had died, and described how they felt as young boys following their mother's coffin at her funeral, a scene that moved the world.

Prince Harry, who will be in Sydney next week as part of a flying visit to officially launch the Invictus Games, admitted he was shocked by the public's show of love for his mother.

time. I think it's never going to be easy for the two of us to talk about our mother, but 20 years on seems like a good time to remind people of the difference that she made not just to the Royal Family but also to the world."

The interview was made public days after Princess Diana's biographer, the journalist Tina Brown, described how the young princes were left in a state of confusion immediately after their mother's

On the loss of a mother

"we were not able to protect her...."





Colin Hays: On achievement

*“ when you get what
you want..
you find out that it is
the end of something
else...”*





Steve Hayes: on love pain and purpose

“... we hurt where care and we care were we hurt..... These two pivots are the same thing.... bringing love to yourself even when it is hard, will help you bring love into the world”



Discovery

- Every action serves a need....
 - How did we hurt ourselves?
 - What was the context and consequence?
- To what extent do we now experience:
 - shame, guilt, self blame, regret, remorse?
- What are the common responses when we contact with this burden
 - avoidance, withdrawal, other unworkable action....

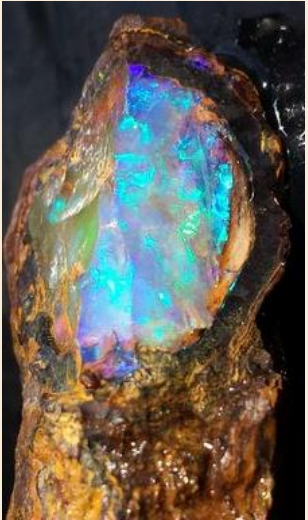




Take Perspective



A Stance - OPAL



Openness: Bring curiosity and interest to our experience

Presence: Lean into our experiences with compassion

Acceptance: Give unconditional positive regard to ourselves

Light: Shine a light in our darkness, and lighten the burden

To understand and respond to:
Shame, Self-Blame, Guilt, Regret, Remorse



Where is the perspective?

- I am here now
- a higher experience
- meaning and purpose
- being compassionate toward varying experiences of our self
 - Story, Process and Context
 - Quick thinking versus Slow thinking
 - Imagination versus Knowledge
 - Mystery versus Certainty



ACT/RFT approaches to exploring self forgiveness

Engaging in a forgiving internal dialogue:

- How would you take a perspective that helps to understand:
 - who you were at the time of the transgression
 - what your intentions were, and,
 - the unintended effects of your actions
- What values are hidden in the struggle and pain?
- How might perspective transform this experience?





John Lennon: On life and chaos

“Life is what happens when you’re busy making other plans”



Using Relational Frames

How else can I view this?

Perspective taking

How is this Like That?

Coordination

How does this cause that?

Contingency/Causality

Is this better or worse than that?

Evaluative

How does this fit/contribute/build on that? Hierarchical





Values and Pathways

*Values are the compass
to find our way out of the swamp
of unforgiveness toward ourselves*



A values perspective provides a reference point to:

- Understand the context of the transgression
- Identify to what extent a transgression contravened our values
- Understand that the process of contact with painful experiences needs a values based perspective



Values Inventory examples.....

Assertiveness	to respectfully stand up for my rights and request what I want
Authenticity	to be authentic, genuine, real; to be true to myself
Compassion	to act with kindness towards those who are suffering
Courage	to be courageous or brave; to persist in the face of fear, threat, or difficulty
Freedom	to live freely; to choose how I live and behave, or help others do likewise
Friendliness	to be friendly, companionable, or agreeable towards others
Honesty	to be honest, truthful, and sincere with myself and others
Love	to act lovingly or affectionately towards myself or others
Mindfulness	to be conscious of, open to, and curious about my here-and-now experience
Trust	to be trustworthy; to be loyal, faithful, sincere, and reliable



Using Values to build pathways

- We can Identify how we may have ignored our values, or,
- How values may have been in conflict
- Acknowledgement of values allows us to:
 - Provide a values based explanation of our behaviours and responses
 - Identify how we may be conflicted in our values and behaviors
 - Recognize our avoidances and excuses
 - Admit and take genuine responsibility
 - Provide a validation of our concern regarding the consequences



THE CURIOUS PARADOX IS THAT WHEN
I ACCEPT MYSELF JUST AS
I AM
THEN I CAN CHANGE.
- carl rogers

TheOrganicSister.com

Getting unstuck

"It's
impossible,"
said pride. "It's
risky," said
experience. It's
pointless," said
reason. "Give it
a try,"
whispered the
HEART."

- Unknown



Getting Unstuck: Psychological Flexibility

The Self as Observer

Acceptance /
Willingness

Valued Living

Defusion /
Watch your
thinking

Committed
Action



Being Present
Living in the here and now



ACT and Clinically focused RFT

In the Present Moment

- Take time to get in touch with what is going on right here and now
- Take notice of your breath for 3-5 minutes

Values

- Identify your key values, How could you live more in line with them
- Have you neglected anything that is important for things that are not important?

Defusion on your stories/hot thought

- As you go about your day be mindful of those thoughts which are unworkable
- Practice letting go of those thoughts that are not useful

The Observant Self

- Meditate on observing your thoughts without getting bound up in them
- Perspective exercises – How is this like or not like that? How would another view this? How would you see this in five years? How does this build on or subtract from your values?

Willingness

- Make room for uncomfortable thoughts feelings sensations

Committed action

- Take action to live out your values in one key area today

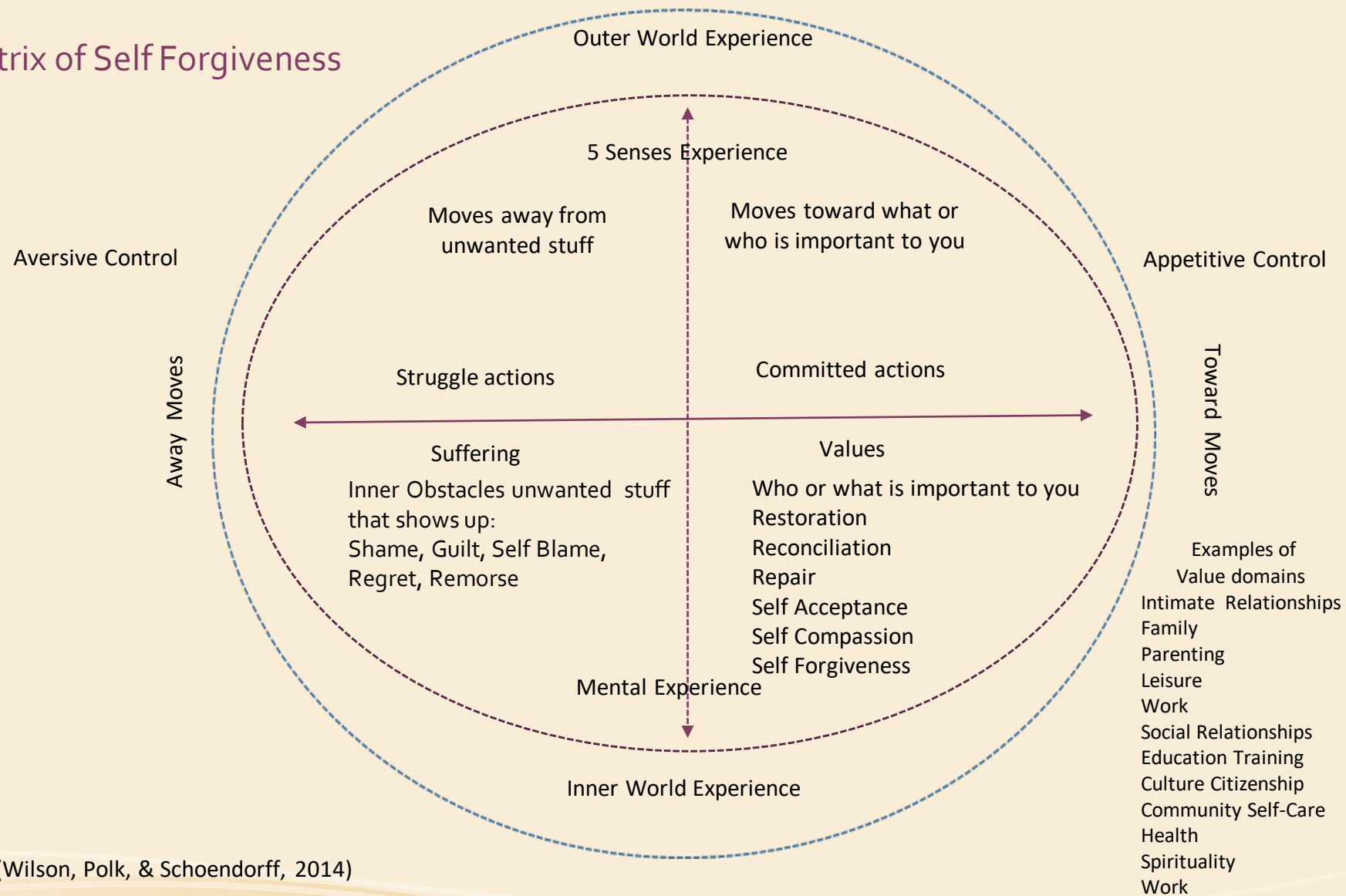


Getting unstuck Utilizing the ACT Matrix...

- Notice how inner world experiences relate to outer world behaviors
- Values vs Stuff that gets in the way
- Moves away and moves towards
- Identify how painful experiences (moves away) can also be used to highlight and clarify values
- Identify pathways for valued and committed action (moves toward)
- Use Relational frames understand experiences within oneself



The ACT Matrix of Self Forgiveness





Granting Self-Forgiveness

How would you speak to a child who was hurt and who needed support and guidance?

How do you speak to yourself?





Michelle Charfen: on self-acceptance

“we can't accept others when our acceptance of ourselves is conditional ... realize that its ok to focus on what you want ... find your limiting beliefs and instead of running away from them delve into them”





J.K. Rowling: on failing

“The benefits of my failure..... meant the stripping away of the inessential.... I stopped pretending to myself that I was anything other than what I was.... and began to direct all my energy into finishing the only work that mattered to me... I was set free as my greatest fear had been realized and I was still alive... and I had a big idea....”





Sir Ken Robinson: on being wrong

*children are creative
because they are
prepared to get it wrong*

*"if you're not prepared to
be wrong you will never
come up with anything
original..."*



Granting Self-Forgiveness

Having compassionately:

- Identified our transgression and experiences of Shame, Guilt, Regret and Remorse
- Acknowledged effects and harms
- Taken responsibility for behaviours that don't work
- Reviewed our values
- Worked through development of workable perspectives

We then start the journey of values-based self-forgiveness

Ongoing self-forgiveness is confirmed by active responses





Kathryn Schulz: on mistakes, regret and being right

“we need to forgive ourselves for not making mistakes... we need to embrace our regrets ... and to rediscover wonder ... we need to step out of the tiny terrified space of rightness”





Creating an Action plan

Respond to discoveries...

Restitution

Renewal

Recovery

Reconciliation



Self-forgiveness that lasts requires action

- Ongoing affirmation through self compassion, self acceptance and self worth
- Committed action that acknowledges self-discovery
- Taking consistent steps that move towards values
- Apply the ACT Matrix for self-forgiveness to daily experience



Self-forgiveness that lasts requires action

- Develop SMART goals for values based action for Restitution, restoration, repair and renewal.....
 - What can I **s**pecifically do?
 - How do I **m**easure it?
 - Is it **a**chievable?
 - How is it **r**elevant?
 - By what **t**ime?





An ongoing
commitment to
self-forgiveness

Life continues to happen





Keith Richards: On dreams

*“for years you want
your dreams to become
true, and all that
happens is that your
dreams become real”*



As we free ourselves we find new territory

- A new sense of ourselves can bring a danger of overwhelming regret ... *why did I not do this years ago ... ?*
- New challenges, new responsibilities, new discoveries will require new responses ...
- Then we need to put the principles into action ...





Revisit and review the principles of Self-Forgiveness

- Identify our transgression
- Take Perspective
- Revisit our values
- Get Unstuck
- Grant ourselves Forgiveness
- Values for Action
- Make a commitment to ongoing Self Forgiveness





Brene Brown On Showing up

*“It is not about winning,
it is not about losing,
it's about showing up
and being seen”*





Action for ongoing Self Forgiveness:

Review your SMART goals

Continue to develop choice points for future situations which involve the same contexts or experiences

Establish alternate pathways for relapse prevention



Cultivating a forgiving internal dialogue

- Continue to develop a compassionate presence, self-acceptance and self-respect
- Accepting that things are what they are and being willing to find a way through
- Coach yourself to respond to yourself with values-based self forgiveness that helps you live a flexible and responsive life





We are stars
wrapped in
skin-
The light you
are seeking has
always been
within

On the wonder of self-forgiveness

*I accept myself just as I
am, perfect in my
imperfection,*

*I am now willing to take
action in this state of self
acceptance and am willing
to go through what I need
to do ... so that I can be
what I value*



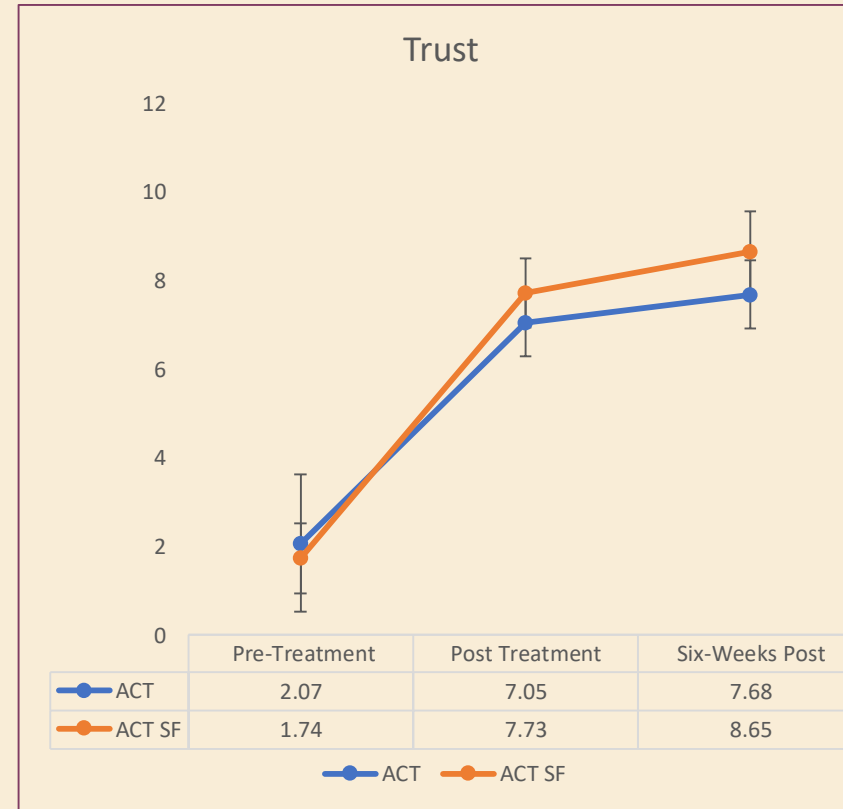
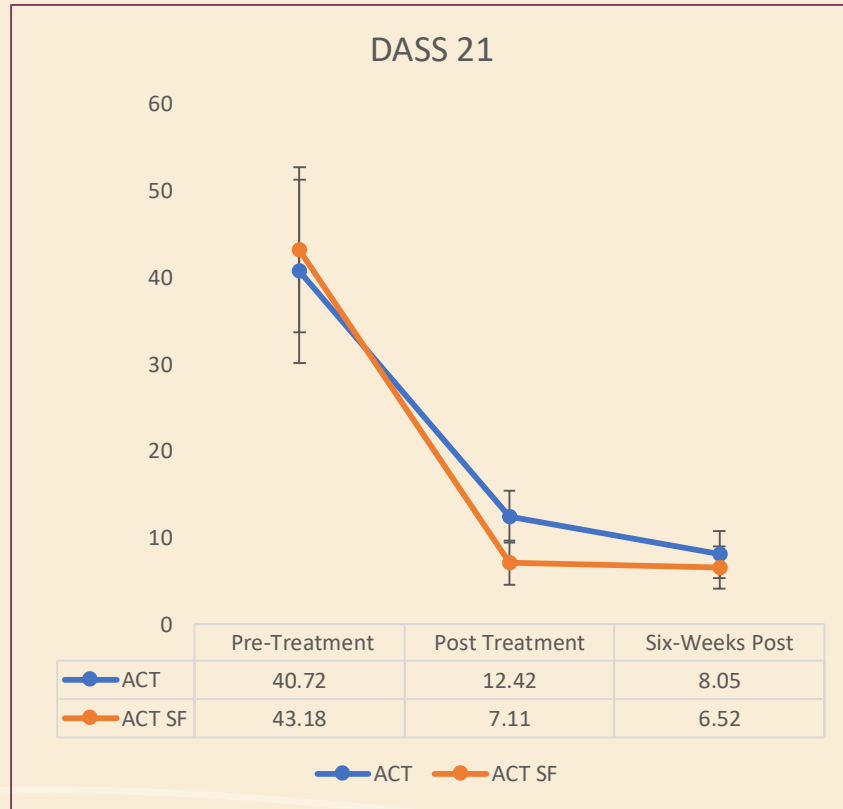
Results: Australian Research Scholarship

- 3 Case studies individuals with Multiple Comorbidities including alcohol abuse and, or, excessive prescription drug use and chronic pain
- Resolution and relapse prevention – now 2- 3 years sober and living a valued life
- Presentation to Allied Health professionals with a thematic analysis – embraced ACT with Self Forgiveness as a useful intervention for stuck cases
- Comparative Intervention ACT $n=60$ ACT SF $n= 66$, as follows:



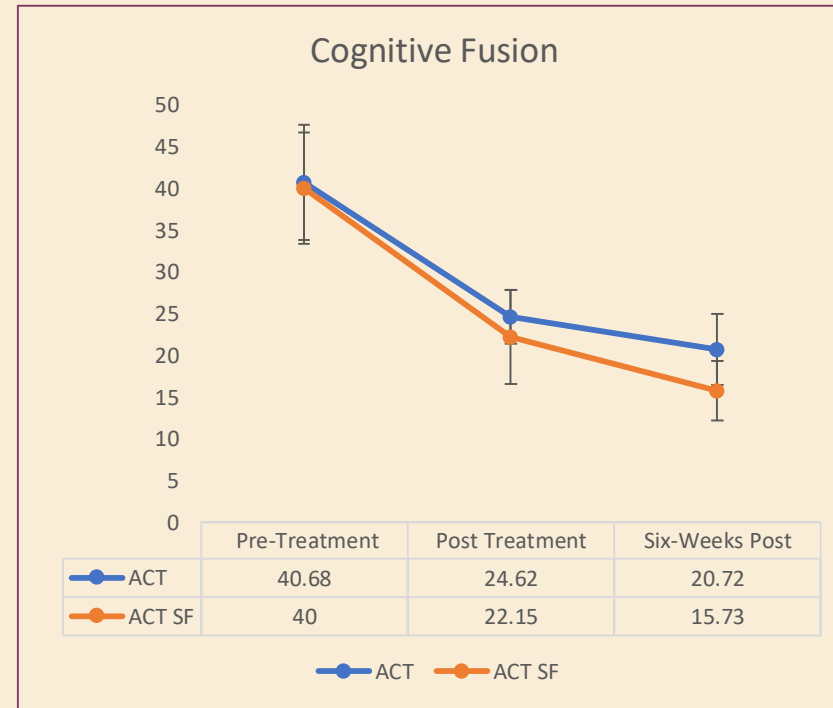
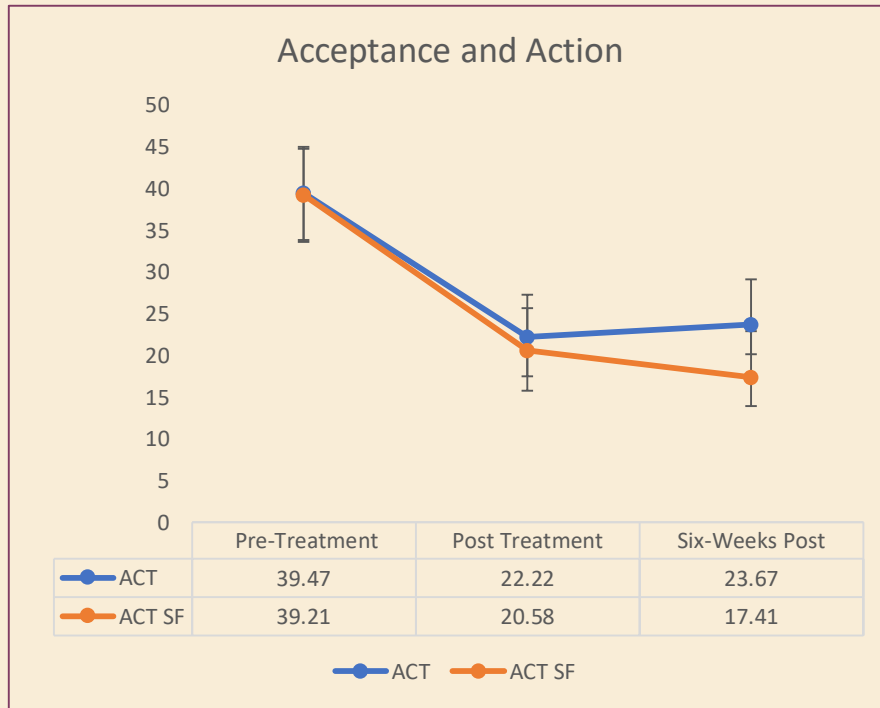
Comparative Intervention

ACT n=60 ACT SF n= 66



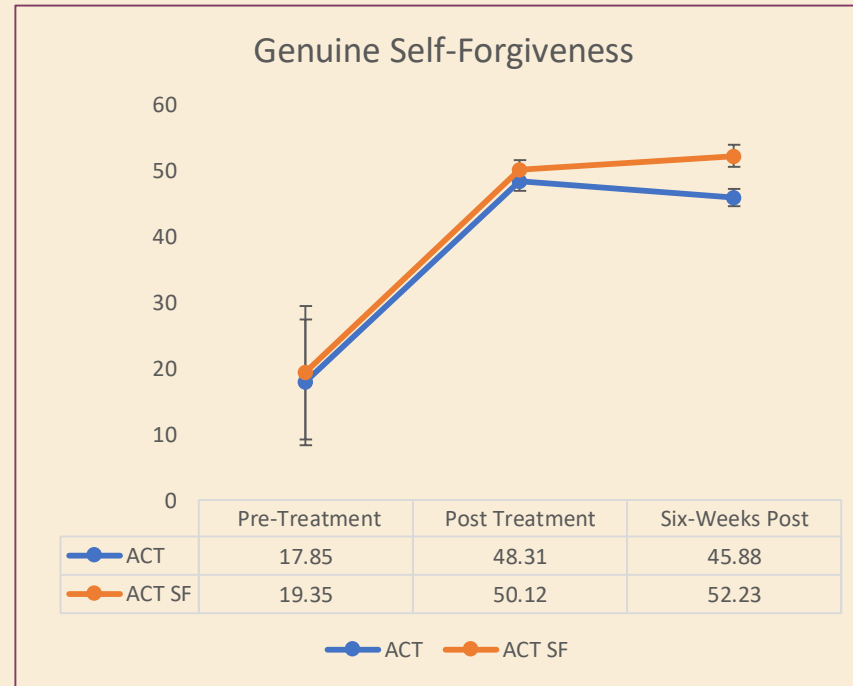
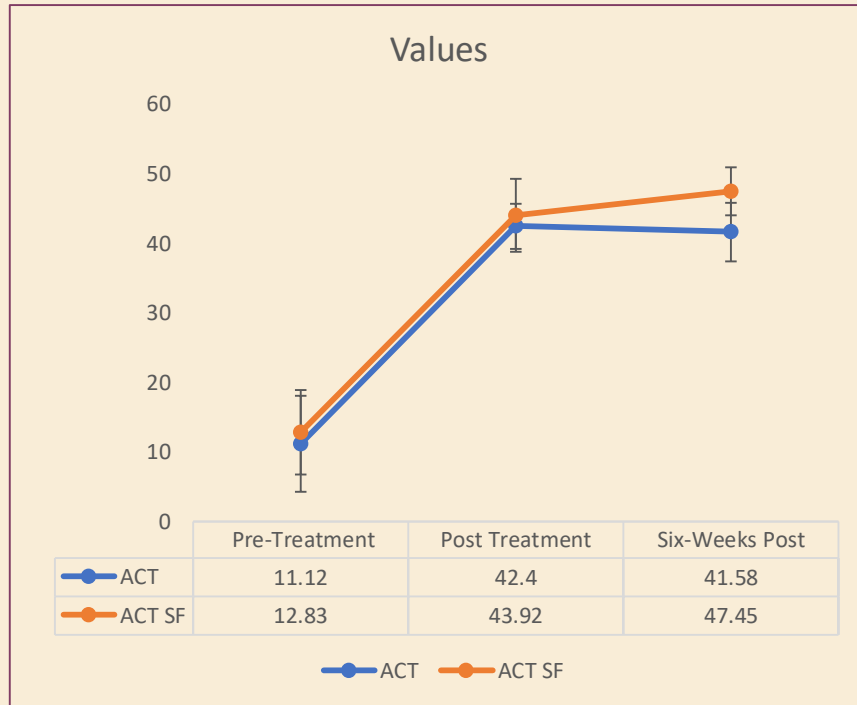
Comparative Intervention

ACT n=60 ACT SF n= 66



Comparative Intervention

ACT n=60 ACT SF n= 66





Questions?



Presentation:

47 years of age, complex grief due to loss of husband to cancer after extensive failed IVF

I now really regret IVF program failure and infertility

I feel I do not respect myself

I am lonely but I do not want to get over my husband

I avoid friends with children

History :

Grew up in on farm - complex relationship with parents, experience of childhood sexual abuse by farm employee. Not reported, no action taken.

Worked in public sector and health care.

Engaged in active sex life from age of 18 (had one termination - revealed at session 10).At age 28 met husband (40 yoa) with grown children

Tried for pregnancy, no success 13 cycles of IVF, one miscarriage.

Ceased effort at age 38.

Husband diagnosed with cancer when she was 40, he died when she was 43

Health :

Overweight but active



Describing

Please try to describe without judging it as being it being either good or bad what is this experience

I am consumed by loss and grief about my husband due to cancer

I have honoured him by staying single (even though he gave me instructions to remarry) and undertaking journeys, through the centre of Australia from South Australia up to Queensland in a four-wheel-drive and caravan.

I am now really regret IVF program failure and am reflecting on my regret about the termination of my pregnancy at age 18

I feel I do not respect myself, I am lonely but I do not want to get over my husband

Present moment attention

Lean into Distress

Feel frozen by grief, unable to speak, lump in the throat, tears

describe discomforting thoughts, emotions and bodily sensations.

Rising sense of panic at the thought of being judged by others

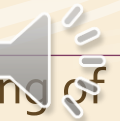
Fearful of being seen as being unfaithful, and being talked about as a bad person for my decisions.



Principles

Entering into Self Forgiveness

What are these Burdens?	Mourning and grief for husband Fighting with accepting permission for a new relationship Deep regret regarding termination and loss of opportunity for motherhood
How might these reveal your values	Building respect, healthy relationship, freedom in sexuality, connection
Perspective taking.	Taking the stance of her husband Noticing moves towards values moves away - noticing inside and outside rules. If this happened to a friend what response? Looking at achievements/values..... Honour, faithfulness, journeys
Getting unstuck	Using the ACT matrix take perspective on responding under the experience of shame and guilt, regret and remorse. What happens in the outer world When working in line with values. What might happen in the outer world
Grant self-forgiveness	Acknowledge worth with self-acceptance genuine self-love and compassion Grant self forgiveness through compassionate presence with herself Naming the losses. Reconciling with herself and with her former husband Giving herself permission for new relationship
Valued action	Visiting the grave of her husband to talk through her reconciliation Commencing dating, Reconnecting with friends with children.
Commitment to self-forgiveness	Daily mindfulness journaling experiences of self-acceptance and ongoing noticing of responses to life - applying to dating





When you are *comfortable* with both
your strengths and weaknesses,
you radiate simple unaffected humanity.

Self acceptance total self acceptance
means self forgiveness.

**When you forgive yourself and stop
judging yourself -**

**then you won't judge others and there
will be less conflict in the world.**

@ feelgoodtribe.com



The Reality Slap, Dr Russ Harris, ACTMindfully.com

Embracing your Demons: https://www.actmindfully.com.au/upimages/Dr_Russ_Harris_-_A_Non-technical_Overview_of_ACT.pdf

Steve Hayes Founder of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Psychological flexibility: How love turns pain into purpose https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o79_gmO5ppg

The secret to self control | Jonathan Bricker | TEDxRainier <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTb3d5cjSFI>

Mental Brakes to Avoid Mental Breaks | Steven Hayes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GnSHpBRLJrQ>

Clinical Relational Frame Theory (RFT) Video demonstration https://contextualscience.org/clinical_rft

Self-Acceptance: The Compassionate Alternative to Self-Esteem https://contextualscience.org/wc13_powerpoints_handouts

Unconditional positive regard -- the power of self acceptance | Michelle Charfen <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tkkL9w2pw8>

What is the ACT Matrix <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3NuoQrCClY>

Kelly McGonigal How to make Stress Your Friend https://www.ted.com/talks/kelly_mcgonigal_how_to_make_stress_your_friend?language=en

Dan Ariely Self Control <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PPQhj6ktYSo>

Kathryn Schulz: On being wrong https://www.ted.com/talks/kathryn_schulz_on_being_wrong

Kathryn Schulz: Don't regret regret https://www.ted.com/talks/kathryn_schulz_don_t_regret_regret

Jonathan Haidt: Religion, evolution, and the ecstasy of self-transcendence [Http://www.ted.com/talks/jonathan_haidt_humanity_s_stairway_to_self_transcendence?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/jonathan_haidt_humanity_s_stairway_to_self_transcendence?language=en)

Ken Robinson: Do schools kill creativity? https://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity?language=en

Brene Brown: The power of vulnerability www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCvmsMzIF7o

Brené Brown: Listening to shame <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=psN1DORYYV0>

Brené Brown: The price of invulnerability: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_UoMXF73j0c

Brené Brown: Why Your Critics Aren't The Ones who count www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-JXOnFOXQk

Bravery & Authenticity in a Digital World /w Brené Brown | Chase Jarvis <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cUuXDZERxrk>

Daring Greatly to Unlock Your Creativity with Brené Brown <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kAk4cwjvJ0A>

J.K. Rowling Speaks at Harvard Commencement <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHGqp8lz36c>

Natalie Portman Harvard Commencement Speech https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jDaZu_KEMCY

How To Skip the Small Talk and Connect With Anyone | Kalina Silverman <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDbxqM4Oy1Y>



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Sevilla Muchas Gracias! Adios

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