



Session 4: Getting on with your life

Passengers on the Bus

At the beginning of session 4, you were shown a video; 'passengers on the bus'. This had a number of key points, which fits in with the **FEAR** to **DARE** message, as well as summarising parts of the course you have covered so far:

F (Fusion, 'buying into')

The driver bought into the stories the passengers said: "It's not going to work" "You're stupid"

E (Excessive Goals)

This will be discussed today

A (Avoidance of Discomfort)

Avoidance of certain roads as the passengers got louder

R (Remoteness from values)

Staying on the 'Same Old Road', restricting his life and making him feel unhappy

D (Defusion, stepping back)

Recognised passengers as 'passengers' and not reality, so they couldn't hurt him

A (Acceptance of Discomfort)

Accepted passengers were still going to be there making noise, and that they would continue to say horrible things

R (Realistic Goals)

This will be discussed today

E (Embracing Values)

Recognising the road that he wanted to travel down in his valued direction (race driver)

Final Session: Values and Goals

Over the past few sessions, you have been exploring your own values through a number of exercises and home practises. We are hoping that by now, you may have more of an idea about what your values are. However, this final session will give you another opportunity to think about these and apply them to goal setting for the future.

Home Practice: Identifying Values

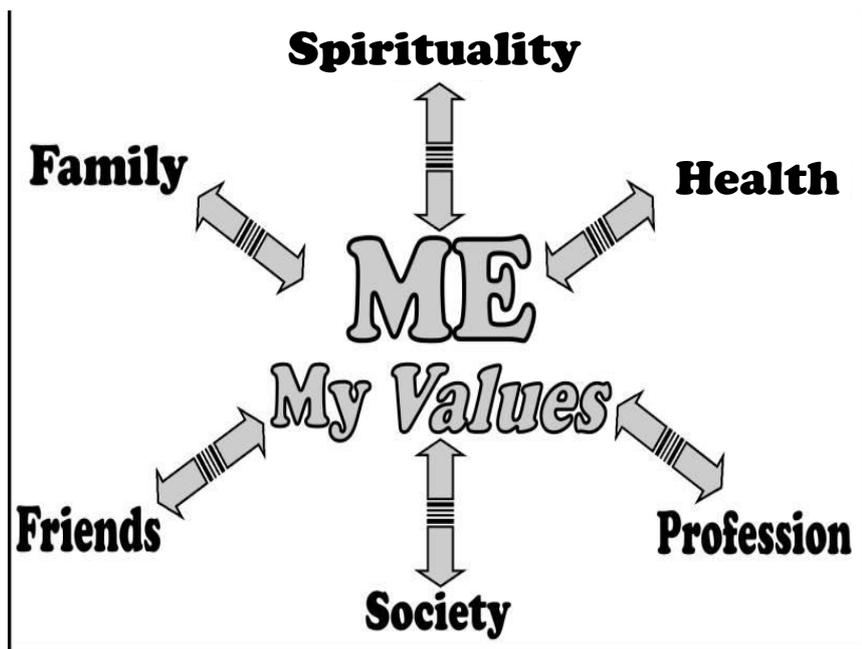
Imagine it is your funeral, with speeches given by people who know you well. What would you hope to hear these people say about you? Think about some things you would like to hear them say and try to identify the values that these comments represent.

We understand that this may be an unpleasant activity for many people. However, think about avoidance of discomfort from week 2, and fusion with week 3, and reflect on whether this is helping you to live a fulfilling and meaningful life.



A value doesn't take you to a fixed destination or end point. It gives you a direction that you can travel along forever.

The difficulty with values is that they can sometimes be difficult to pin down. It can be difficult to identify them as we often have busy lives and they are just in the background. However, they can be influenced by a number of areas:



Caring about things often opens up to potential pain for example, caring deeply about someone opens you up to the possibility of loss, betrayal and rejection. **You could avoid pain** by not getting involved in things and just keeping away from anything that could become a source of distress. However, **that sort of life would be lifeless.**

6 Important Qualities of Values:

1. When values are activated, they become infused with feelings

People who identify **independence** as an important value become **aroused** if their independence is threatened, **despair** when they are helpless to protect it, and are **happy** when they can enjoy it.

2. Values go beyond specific actions and situations

You may find that values such as obedience and honesty are relevant in the workplace or school, with friends or strangers. They are therefore not specific to one area, object or situation, but can be relevant across a number of areas in your life.

3. Values serve as criteria to guide our behaviour

Values can guide the selection or evaluation of actions, policies, people, and events. If you feel that 'justice' is a value you possess; you may find that cases of 'injustice' guide your behaviour to ensure 'justice' is served. You may work in an area which allows you to make positive changes to cases of injustice; or you may attend events which promote justice in an area you feel is not justified. You therefore engage in behaviour which promotes justice.

4. Values are ordered by importance relative to one another

People's values form an ordered system of priorities that characterise them as individuals. Some people, for example, may place more importance on novelty, compared to tradition. They may therefore enjoy it when things are new and different, compared to someone who may enjoy things being the same and more predictable.

5. The relative importance of multiple values guides action

Any attitude or behaviour typically has implications for more than one value. You may find that you value achievement and find this through your career. However, you also value love and find this through your family. When offered a promotion in work meaning you work longer hours and spend less time with your family, your values may conflict so you need to think about which is more important at this time in your life.

6. Values refer to desirable goals that motivate action

People for whom social order, justice and helpfulness are important values are motivated to pursue these goals. You may potentially take up a career in the police force to live by these values.

Take for example Kyle Maynard, a 25 year old quadruple amputee. He climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in Kenya, without aid to break down stigma of disability and raise money for charity. His values may have been helping others, equality, adventure...

Committed Action

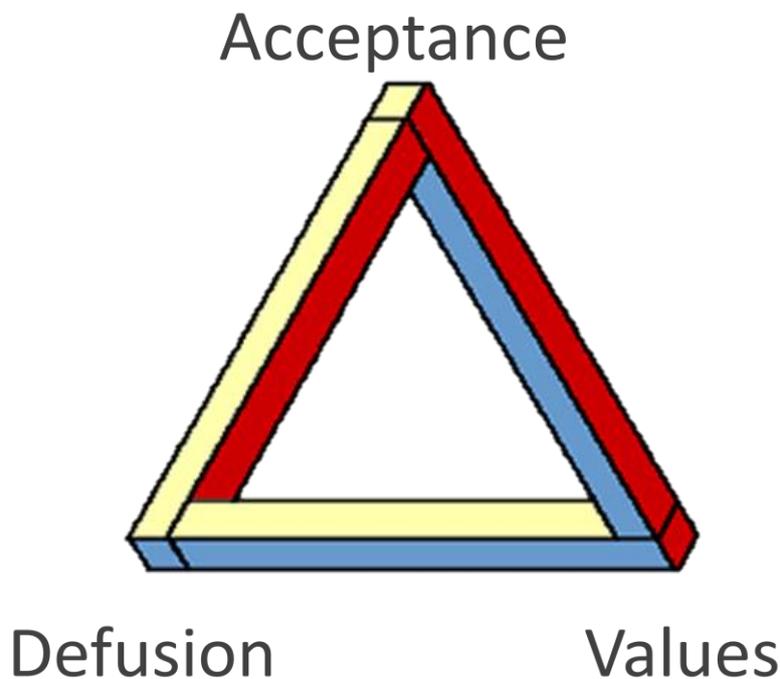
Committed Action is positive and committed action, where you commit yourself to doing whatever it takes and you 'go for it'. In other words, you DARE to face your FEAR. Think about Kyle Maynard. Many people may have argued that he wouldn't be able to climb Kilimanjaro due to his amputations, yet he did.

In session, you were given the example of someone who valued 'health' and smoked 20 a day. Changing words such as "I should live my life" to "I want to live my life", and "I value health but I smoke 20 a day" to "I value health and I smoke 20 a day", allows the person to still value health and smoke at the same time. It also provides them with less pressure to fail if they did want to change their behaviour.



Now, imagine this person wants to stop smoking to live in accordance with their values. As explored in session, they would need to accept the discomfort of craving for nicotine, defuse from thoughts, feelings, images etc. which encourage smoking, identify their value for health, and set goals along this path. This sums up the triangle of commitment below:

Triangle of commitment:

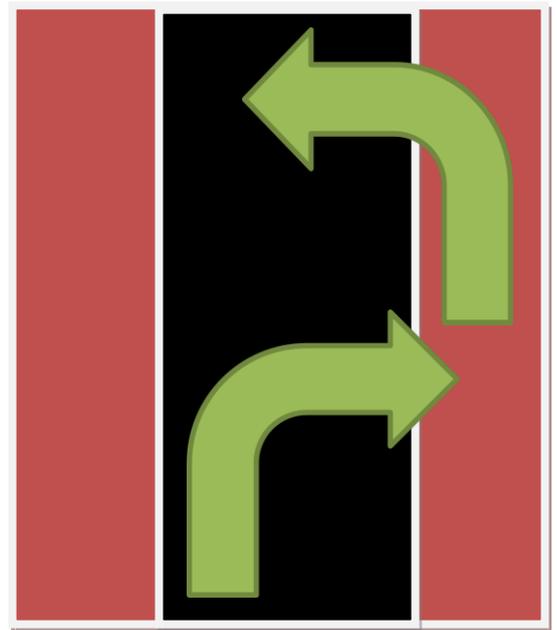
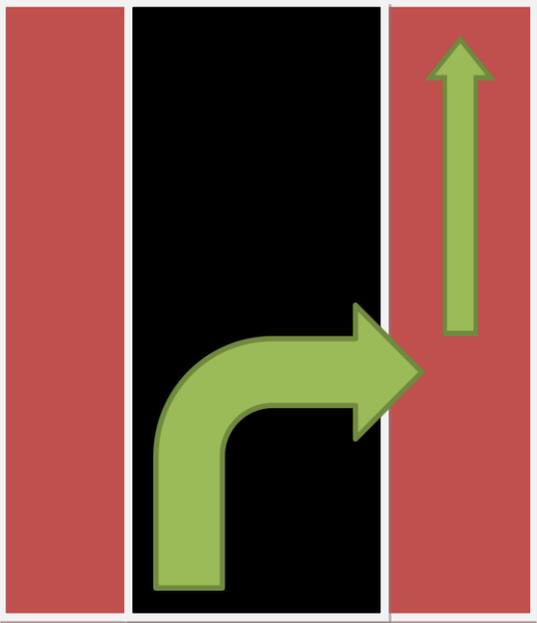


Is Committed Action Easy?

People often assume commitment is a onetime decision and a straight path thereafter. However, you may be able to remember committed action you have taken (e.g. set a new year's resolution) and broken this within 2 weeks, and then given up on this commitment due to feelings of failure. Committed action can be hard, as life often throws up things which throw you off course. However, ACT suggests remain committed to your choice, and get back on track!

Cycle 1: Commit – Break – **Give Up**

Cycle 2: Commit – Break - **Commit**



In summary, **committed action is commitment to the choice you made**, even if you slip up in your actions. You remain in touch with your original choice, and use your commitment to it to get back on track. Things that may help:

- Staying in touch with your values
- Focusing on your present moment
- Accepting discomfort
- Defusing from our minds attempts to trip us up.

**COMMITMENT MEANS
STAYING LOYAL TO
WHAT YOU SAID YOU
WERE GOING TO DO
LONG AFTER THE
MOOD YOU SAID IT IN
HAS LEFT YOU.**

SMART Goals:

S – SPECIFIC

Be very specific – specify the actions you will take, *when* and *where* you will do so, and *who* or *what* is involved. E.g. ‘I will spend more time with my kids’ vs. ‘I will take the family to the cinema on Saturday to see a specific film’.

Avoid Dead Man’s Goals – these are goals that a dead man (or woman) could do better than you ever could e.g. a dead person could always be less anxious than you, could always lose their temper less than you. **Set Live Man’s Goal’s** – Simply, don’t use don’t. Instead, think about your goal as something you can do e.g. ‘Don’t eat chocolate’ vs. ‘I will eat more fruit

M - Meaningful

In the context of ACT, meaningful goals mean the idea that any goals we set should be in line with our values. Using our values to help set our goals makes the goals have personal meaning to us. The more meaning they have to us the more likely we are to achieve them.

Goal – To buy a big house

Value – To Live Comfortably

Goal – To have a baby

Value – To live as part of a happy family

A - Adaptive

Be adaptive and flexible with your goals, ensuring you recognise when times may be difficult, resources may be limited, strength is weakened. Adapt your goal, but don’t quit the commitment! *Example: You might lose a job which fulfils your values and be struggling to get another one. Perhaps you could volunteer in the same field to gain some further experience as an adapted option.*

R - Realistic

Goals should be realistic. Take into account your health, the amount of time available, your finances, and the skill level necessary to achieve the goal. Goals can sometimes be excessive which means we set ourselves up to fail. We need to break them down into manageable chunks in line with our resources in order to succeed instead.

T – Time bound

To increase specificity of your goal, set a day, date and time for it. If this is not possible, set as accurate a time limit as you can. This means that they do not go on indefinitely, but instead had a clear, realistic deadline, which will in turn be a powerful motivator for action.

Home Practice: Goal Setting Worksheet

Step 1: A key focus in ACT is setting our goals guided by our values. Before any goal setting, we should clarify what value(s) is (are) underlying your goals.

My value(s) underlying these goals are:

Step 2: Write down a graduated series of goals

An Immediate Goal (s) - something small and simple that you can easily accomplish within the next 24 hours:

Short-Term Goal(s) – List some things you can do in the service of your values-based goal within the next few days and weeks

Medium-term goal(s) – Reflect on specific actions you can take to move towards your values-based goals within the next few weeks and months

Long-term goal(s) – Make a plan of what actions will move you closer to your values-based goal over the next few months and years



So, you now have a **choice**.

You can stick with the 'old way' and continue to add suffering to your pain...

OR

You can continue to practice the skills you've learnt over the last four weeks and begin to move your life in the direction of your values; to give your life a greater sense of meaning and fulfilment.

It will be difficult, and no doubt a long road. You will need to commit even when the motivation you might have felt from attending the course has waned, but...

You can do it!

Thank you for attending the course, we hope you have found it helpful.

Don't forget to complete your Willingness and Action Plan to reinforce all the skills you have learnt!

Helpful Resources:

The Happiness Trap – Russ Harris