



PSYCHOLOGICAL FLEXIBILITY

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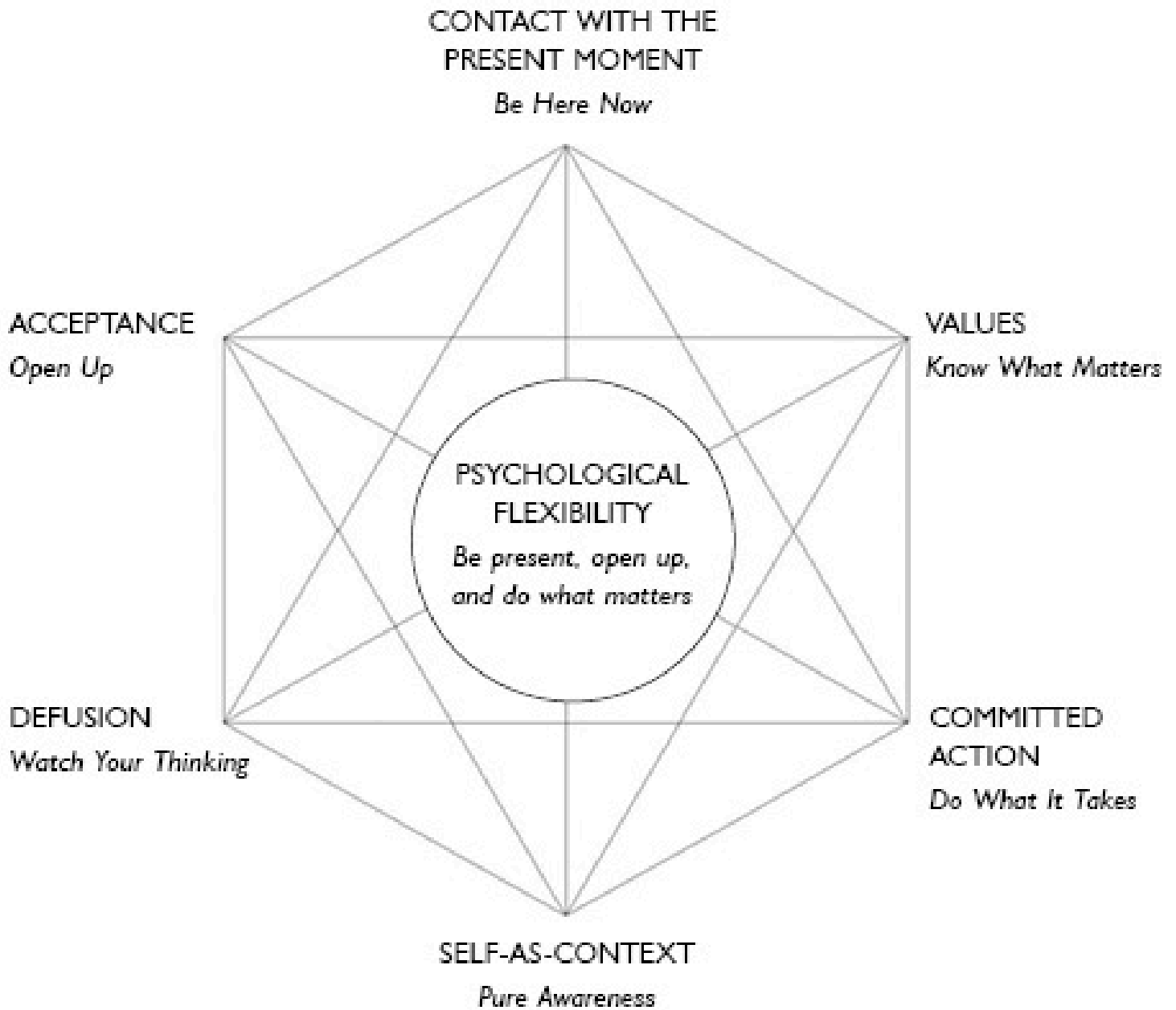


Figure 1.1 The ACT Hexaflex



PSYCHOLOGICAL INFLEXIBILITY

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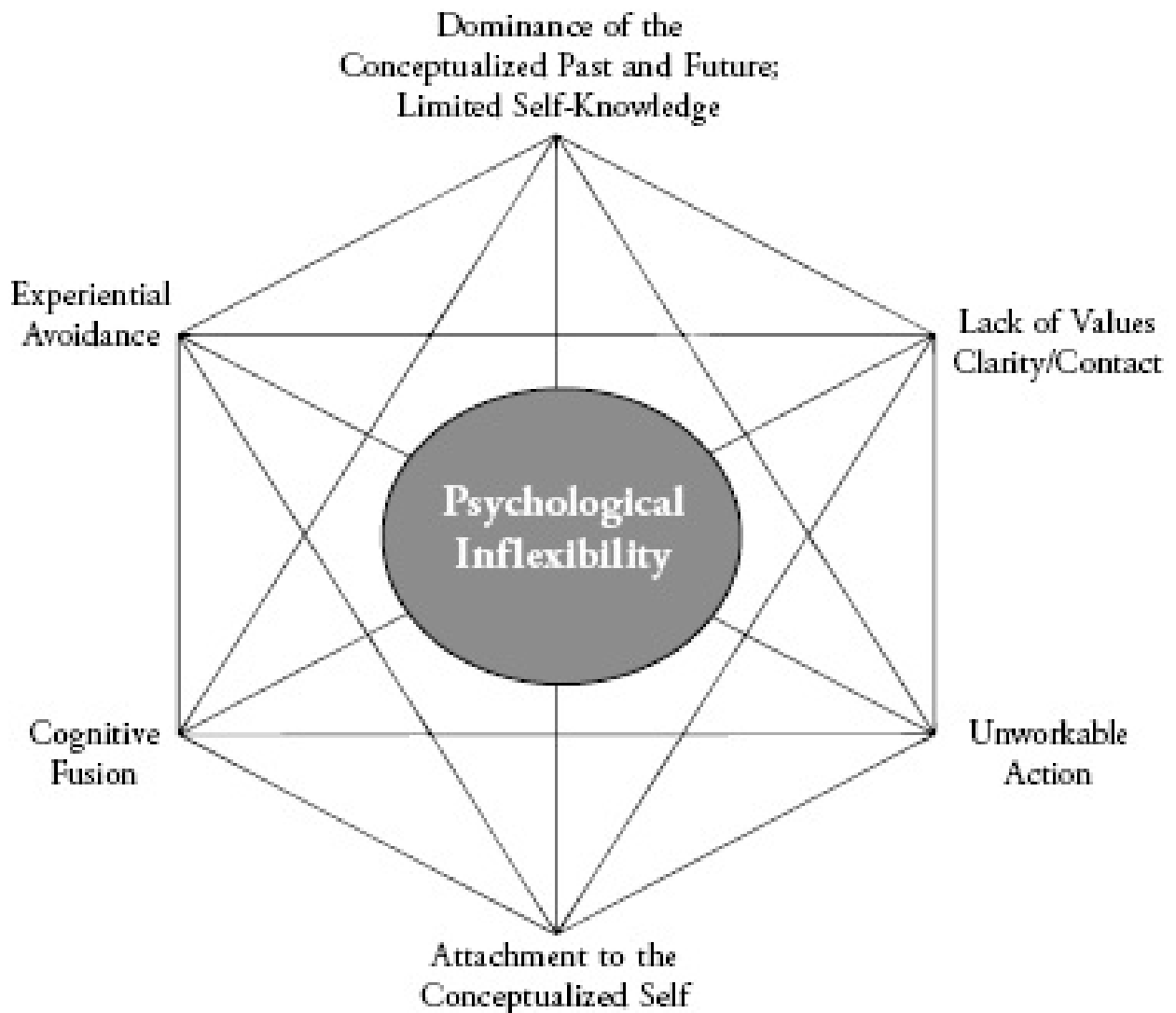


Figure 2.1 An ACT Model of Psychopathology



ACT TRIFLEX

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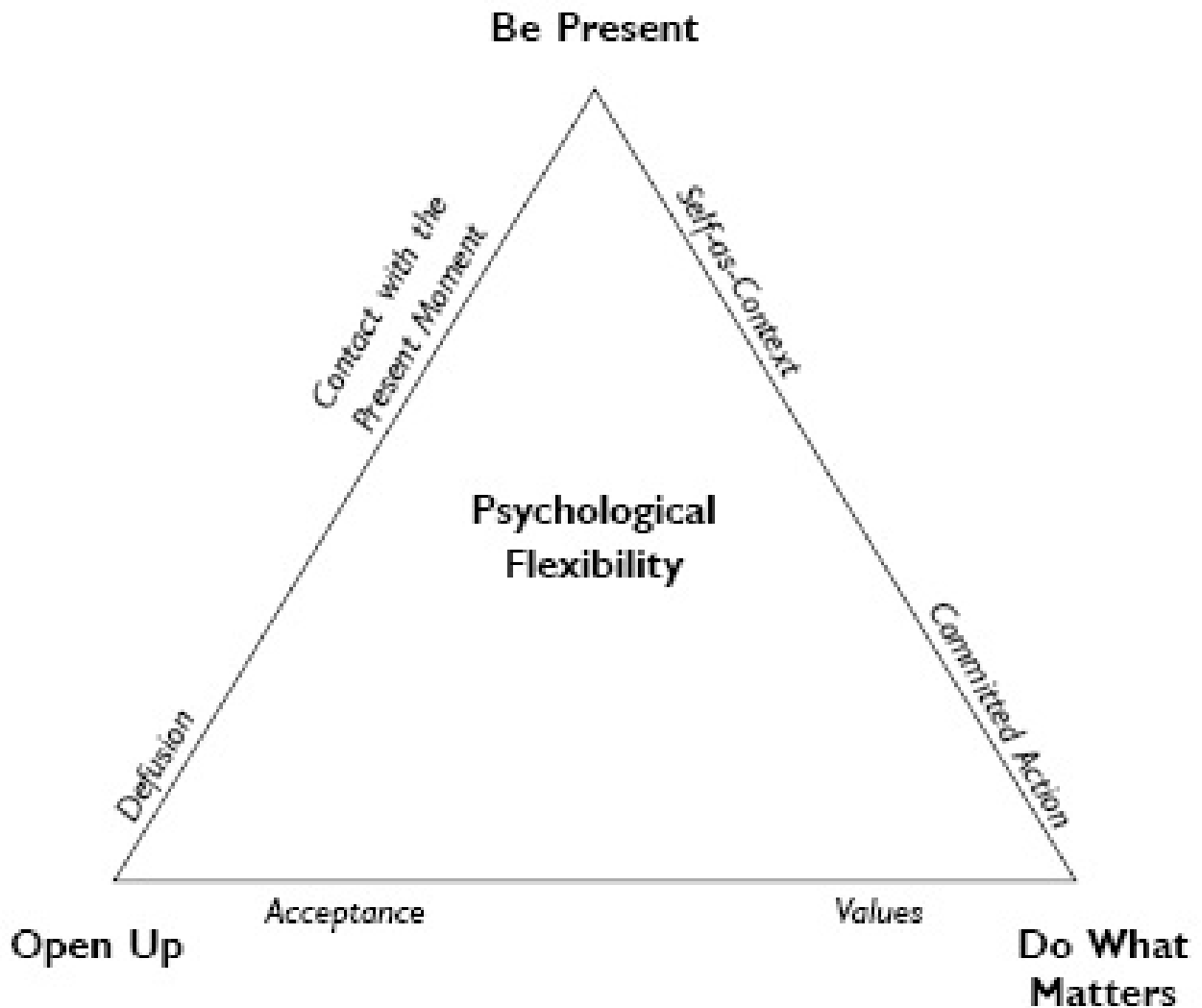


Figure 1.2 The ACT Triflex



ASSESSING PSYCHOLOGICAL INFLEXIBILITY: SIX CORE PROCESSES

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1. *Dominance of the conceptualized past or future; limited self-knowledge:* How much time does your client spend dwelling on the past or fantasizing/worrying about the future? What elements of the past or future does she dwell on? To what extent is she disconnected from or lacking awareness of her own thoughts, feelings, and actions?
2. *Fusion:* What sort of unhelpful cognitive content is your client fusing with—rigid rules or expectations, self-limiting beliefs, criticisms and judgments, reason-giving, being right, ideas of hopelessness or worthlessness, or others?
3. *Experiential avoidance:* What private experiences (thoughts, feelings, memories, and so on) is your client avoiding? How is he doing that? How pervasive is experiential avoidance in her life?
4. *Attachment to the conceptualized self:* What is your client's "conceptualized self"? For example, does he see himself as broken/damaged/unlovable/weak/stupid, and so on, or does she perhaps see herself as strong/superior/successful? How fused is he with this self-image? Does she define herself in terms of her body, or a character trait, or a particular role, occupation, or diagnosis?
5. *Lack of values clarity/contact:* What core values is your client unclear about, neglecting or acting inconsistently with? (For example, commonly neglected values include connection, caring, contribution, authenticity, openness, self-care, self-compassion, loving, nurturing, living in the present.)
6. *Unworkable action:* What impulsive, avoidant or self-defeating actions is your client taking? Does she fail to persist when persistent action is required? Or does she inappropriately continue when such action is ineffective? What people, places, situations, and activities is he avoiding or withdrawing from?



ACT TRIFLEX

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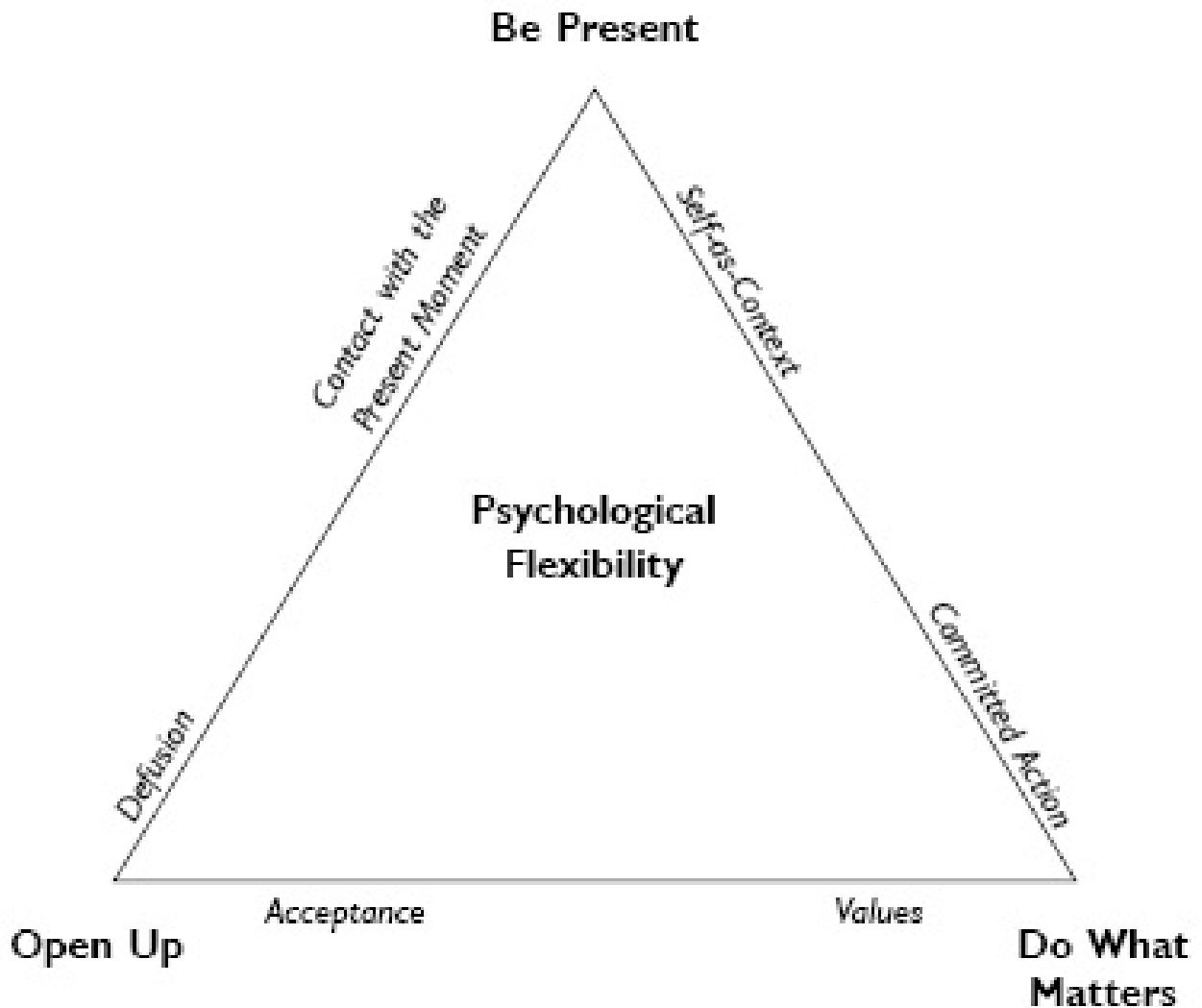


Figure 1.2 The ACT Triflex

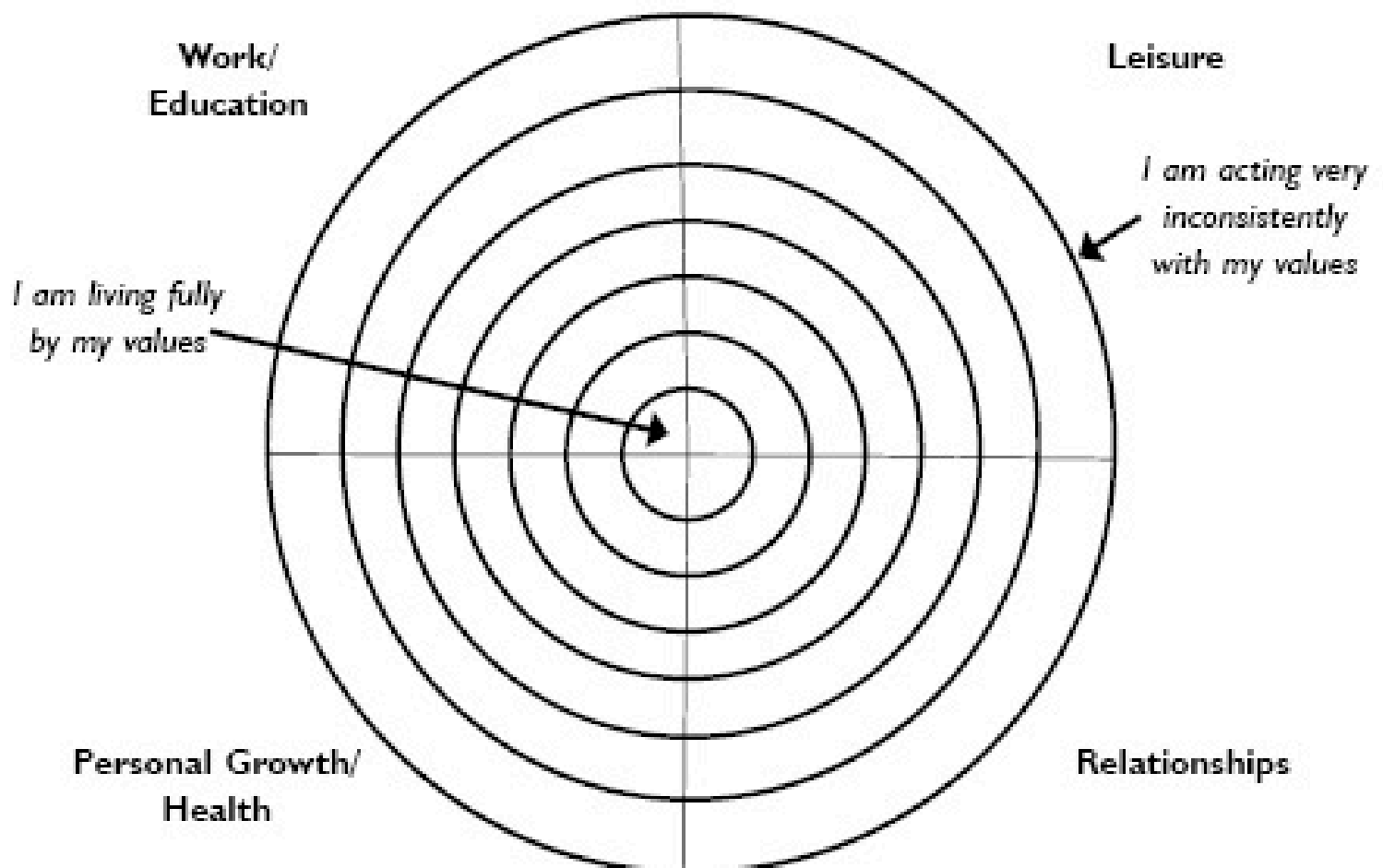
FROM ACT MADE SIMPLE

THE BULL'S EYE

YOUR VALUES: *What do you want to do with your time on this planet? What sort of person do you want to be? What personal strengths or qualities do you want to develop? Please write a few words under each heading below.*

1. **Work/Education:** includes workplace, career, education, skills development.
2. **Relationships:** includes your partner, children, parents, relatives, friends, co-workers.
3. **Personal Growth/Health:** may include religion, spirituality, creativity, life skills, meditation, yoga, nature; exercise, nutrition, and/or addressing health-risk factors.
4. **Leisure:** how you play, relax, or enjoy yourself; activities for rest, recreation, fun, and creativity.

THE BULL'S EYE: make an X in each area of the dart board, to represent where you stand today.



DISSECTING THE PROBLEM

This form is to help gather information about the nature of the main challenge, issue, or problem facing you. First, please summarize, in one or two sentences, what the main issue or problem is:

Second, please describe, in one or two sentences, how it affects your life, and what it stops you from doing or being:

Regardless of what your problem is—whether it is a physical illness, a difficult relationship, a work situation, a financial crisis, a performance issue, the loss of a loved one, a severe injury, or a clinical disorder such as depression—when we dissect the problem, we usually find four major elements that contribute significantly to the issue. These are represented in the boxes below. Please write as much as you can in each box about the thoughts, feelings, and actions that contribute to or worsen the challenge, problem, or issue facing you:

Entanglement with Thoughts

What memories, worries, fears, self-criticisms, or other unhelpful thoughts do you dwell on or get “caught up” in that are related to this issue? What thoughts do you allow to hold you back or push you around or bring you down?

Life-draining Actions:

What are you currently doing that makes your life worse in the long run: keeps you stuck; wastes your time or money; drains your energy; restricts your life; impacts negatively on your health, work, or relationships; maintains or worsens the problems you are dealing with?

Struggle with Feelings

What emotions, feelings, urges, impulses, or sensations (associated with this issue) do you fight with, avoid, suppress, try to get rid of, or otherwise struggle with?

Avoiding Challenging Situations:

What situations, activities, people, or places are you avoiding or staying away from? What have you quit, withdrawn from, dropped out of? What do you keep “putting off” until later?

THE LIFE COMPASS

In the main part of each large box, write a few key words about what is important or meaningful to you in this domain of life: What sort of person do you want to be? What do you want to do? What sort of strengths or qualities do you want to develop? What do you want to stand for?

(If a box seems irrelevant to you, that's okay: just leave it blank. If you get stuck on a box, skip it and come back to it later. And it's okay if the same words appear in several or all boxes.)

Then in the upper small square of each large box, mark on a scale of 0 to 10 how important these values are to you at this point in your life (0 = no importance, 10 = extremely important). It's okay if several squares all have the same score. Finally, in the lower small square of each large box, mark on a scale of 0 to 10 how effectively you are living by these values right now (0 = not at all, 10 = living by them fully). Again, it's okay if several squares all have the same score.

Now have a good look at what you've written. What does this tell you about (a) what is important in your life? (b) what you are currently neglecting?

Parenting <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	Personal Growth <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	Leisure <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	Spirituality <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
Health <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	Work <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	Community & Environment <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	
Family Relationships <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	Intimate Relationships <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	Social Relationships <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	

Adapted from *Living Beyond Your Pain* by J. Dahl and T. Lundren by permission of New Harbinger Publications (Oakland, CA), www.newharbinger.com.

PROBLEM

the main challenge, issue, or problem facing you. Write in the issue or problem is:

how it affects your life, and what it stops you from

doing: Is it a physical problem such as chronic pain, a mental illness, a difficult relationship, a work situation, a severe injury, or a clinical disorder such as depression? List your major elements that contribute significantly to the problem. Write as much as you can in each box about the challenge, problem, or issue facing you:

Identifying Actions:

What are you currently doing that makes your life worse in the long run: keeps you stuck; wastes time or money; drains your energy; restricts your freedom; impacts negatively on your health, work, or relationships; maintains or worsens the problems you're dealing with?

Struggle with Feelings What emotions, feelings, urges, impulses, or sensations (associated with this issue) do you fight with, avoid, suppress, try to get rid of, or otherwise struggle with?	Avoiding Challenging Situations: What situations, activities, people, or places are you avoiding or staying away from? What have you quit, withdrawn from, dropped out of? What do you keep "putting off" until later?

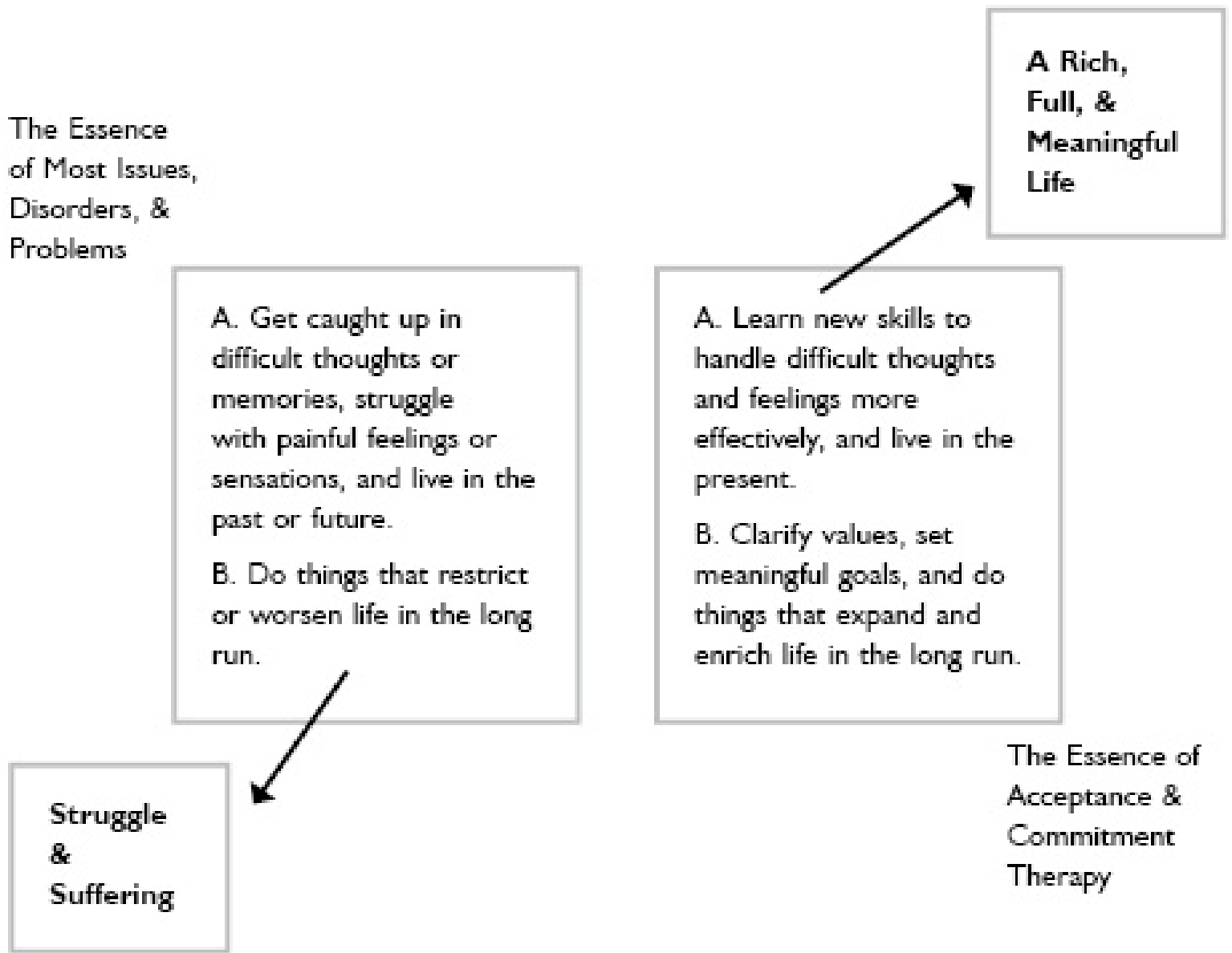


Figure 5.1 The Essence of Clinical Issues

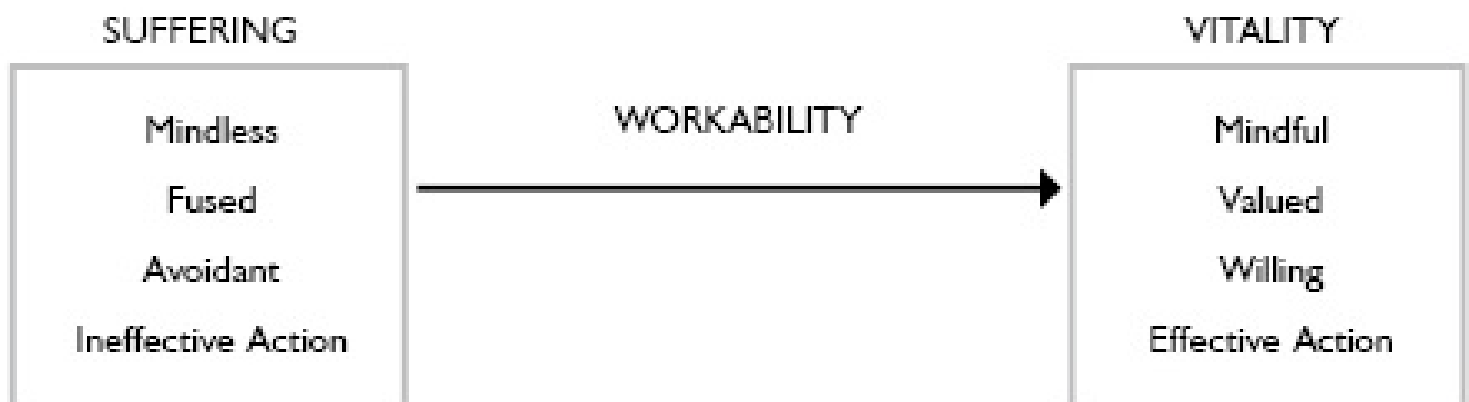


Figure 5.2 From Suffering to Vitality

THE LIFE COMPASS

In the main part of each large box, write a few key words about what is important or meaningful to you in this domain of life: What sort of person do you want to be? What do you want to do? What sort of strengths or qualities do you want to develop? What do you want to stand for?

(If a box seems irrelevant to you, that's okay: just leave it blank. If you get stuck on a box, skip it and come back to it later. And it's okay if the same words appear in several or all boxes.)

Then in the upper small square of each large box, mark on a scale of 0 to 10 how important these values are to you at this point in your life (0 = no importance, 10 = extremely important). It's okay if several squares all have the same score. Finally, in the lower small square of each large box, mark on a scale of 0 to 10 how effectively you are living by these values right now (0 = not at all, 10 = living by them fully). Again, it's okay if several squares all have the same score.

Now have a good look at what you've written. What does this tell you about (a) what is important in your life? (b) what you are currently neglecting?

Parenting	Personal Growth	Leisure	Spirituality
Health	Work	Community & Environment	
Family Relationships	Intimate Relationships	Social Relationships	

THE PROBLEMS AND VALUES WORKSHEET

Acceptance and commitment therapy aims to reduce struggle and suffering and make life rich, full, and meaningful. To help this process, four types of information—represented in the four columns below—are particularly important. Between now and the next session, see what you can write in or add to each column.

STRUGGLE & SUFFERING		RICH & MEANINGFUL LIFE	
Problematic Thoughts and Feelings: What memories, worries, fears, self-criticisms, or other thoughts do you get “caught up” in? What emotions, feelings, urges, or sensations do you struggle with?	Problematic Actions: What are you doing that makes your life worse in the long run—that keeps you stuck, wastes your time or money, drains your energy, impacts negatively on your health or your relationships, or leads to you “missing out” on life?	Values: What matters to you in the “big picture”? What do you want to stand for? What personal qualities and strengths do you want to develop? How do you want to enrich or improve your relationships? How would you like to “grow” or develop through addressing your issue(s) or problem(s)?	Goals and Actions: What are you currently doing that improves your life in the long run? What do you want to start or do more of? What life-enriching goals do you want to achieve? What life-enhancing actions do you want to take? What life-improving skills would you like to develop?

VITALITY VS. SUFFERING DIARY

Between now and next session, keep a record of what you do when painful thoughts and feelings arise, and notice if these actions lead to increased vitality or increased suffering.

Painful Thoughts/Feelings/ Urges/Sensations/Memories that showed up today	Things I did—when those thoughts and feelings showed up—that led to VITALITY (that is, expanded or enriched my life, or improved my health, well- being, or relationships)	Things I did—when those thoughts and feelings showed up—that lead to SUFFERING (that is, restricted or worsened my life, or hurt my health, well-being, or relationships)

JOIN THE DOTS

What are the main thoughts and feelings that are problematic for you? Write these down under “Body” and “Mind.” Next, write down everything you have tried to get rid of, avoid, suppress, escape, or distract yourself from these thoughts or feelings.

BODY

Feelings, sensations, urges

MIND

Thoughts, memories, beliefs, worries

D - Distraction: How have you tried to distract yourself from these thoughts and feelings (for example, watching TV, shopping, and so on)?

O - Opting out: We often opt out (quit, avoid, procrastinate, or withdraw from) people, places, activities, and situations when we don't like the thoughts and feelings they bring up for us. What are some of the things you opt out of?

T - Thinking: How have you tried to think your way out of it (for example, blaming others, worrying, rehashing the past, fantasizing, positive thinking, problem solving, planning, self-criticism, analyzing, trying to make sense of it, debating with yourself, denial, beating yourself up, pretending it's not important, and so on)? Have you dwelled on thoughts such as “What if?”, “If only ...,” “Why me?”, “Not fair!”, or similar things?

S - Substances, Self-harm, Other Strategies: What substances have you tried putting into your body (including food and prescription medication)? Have you ever tried self-harming activities—for example, suicide attempts, reckless risk-taking? Are there any other strategies you have ever tried—for example, excessive sleeping?

Did these strategies get rid of your painful thoughts and feelings in the long run so that they never came back?

When you have used these strategies excessively, rigidly, or inappropriately, what have they cost you in terms of health, vitality, energy, relationships, work, leisure, money, missed opportunities, wasted time, or emotional pain?

PRAGMATISM
If you go along with that thought, buy into it, and let it control you, where does that leave you? What do you get for buying into it? Where do you go from here? Can you give it a go anyway, even though your mind says it won't work?

INTERESTED
That's an interesting thought.

MEDITATIVE
Let your thoughts come and go like: passing clouds; cars driving past your house; etc.

YOUR MIND IS LIKE ...

- * a "don't get killed" machine
- * a word machine
- * radio "doom and gloom"
- * a masterful salesman
- * the world's greatest story teller
- * a fascist dictator
- * a judgment factory

BULLYING REFRAME
What's it like to be pushed around by that thought/belief/idea? Do you want to have it run your life, tell you what to do all the time?

PROBLEM SOLVING
This is just your mind problem solving. You're in pain, so your mind tries to figure out a way to stop the pain. Your mind evolved to solve problems. This is its job. It's not defective; it's doing what it evolved to do. But some of those solutions are not very effective. Your job is to assess whether your mind's solutions are effective: do they give you a rich and full life in the long run?

WORKABILITY
If you let that thought dictate what you do, how does it work in the long run? Does buying into it help you create a rich, full, and meaningful life?

THOUGHTS

THE CLASSICS
I'm having the thought that ...
Say it in a silly voice.
Sing it.
Say it very slowly.
Repeat it quickly over and over.
Write thoughts on cards.
Passengers on the Bus Metaphor.
Thank your mind for that thought.
Who's talking here: you or your mind?
Leaves on a Stream Exercise.
How old is that story?

SECONDARY GAINS
When this thought shows up, if you take it at face value/go along with it/let it tell you what to do, what feelings, thoughts, or situations might it help you avoid or escape from (in the short run)?

FORM AND LOCATION
What does that thought look like? How big is it? What does it sound like? Your voice or someone else's? Close your eyes and tell me, where is it located in space? Is it moving or still? If moving, in what direction and at what speed?

COMPUTER SCREEN
Imagine this thought on a computer screen. Change the font, color, and format. Animate the words. Add in a bouncing ball.

INSIGHT
When you buy into this thought, or give it all your attention, how does your behavior change? What do you start or stop doing when it shows up?

NAMING THE STORY
If all these thoughts and feelings were put into a book or movie, titled "the something something story," what would you call it? Each time this story shows up, name it: "Aha, there's the XYZ story again!"

NOTICING
Notice what your mind is telling you right now.
Notice what you're thinking.

THE OBSERVING SELF
Take a step back and look at this thought from your observing self.

Figure 7.1 Summary of Defusion Techniques

HEALING HAND

Lay a hand on the part of your body where you feel this most intensely. Imagine this is a healing hand--the hand of a loving nurse or parent or partner. Send some warmth into this area--not to get rid of the feeling, but to open up around it, make room for it, hold it gently.

SOFTENING

See if you can soften up around the feeling, loosen up, and hold it gently.

ALLOWING

See if you can allow this feeling to be there. You don't have to like it or want it--just allow it.

EXPANSION

See if you can open up and expand around the feeling. It's as if, in some magical way, all this space opens up inside you.

THE OBSERVING SELF

Take a step back and look at this feeling from your observing self.

THE CURIOUS SCIENTIST

Notice where this feeling is in your body. Zoom in on it. Observe it as if you are a curious scientist who has never encountered anything like this. Where are the edges? Where does it start and stop? Is it moving or still? Is it at the surface or inside you? Hot or cold? Light or heavy?

THE CHOICE TO FEEL

Suppose I could give you a choice:
(a) you never have to have this feeling ever again, but it means you lose all capacity to love and care, or
(b) you get to love and care, but when there's a gap between what you want and what you've got, feelings like this one show up.
Which do you choose?

FEELINGS

PHYSICALIZING

Imagine this feeling is an object. Is it liquid, solid, or gaseous? How big is it? Is it light or heavy? What temperature is it? Is it at the surface or inside you? What shape does it have? What color? Is it transparent or opaque? What does the surface feel like--hot or cold, rough or smooth, wet or dry?

COMPASSION

Hold this feeling gently as if it's a crying baby or a whimpering puppy.

THE STRUGGLE SWITCH

Is the struggle switch on, off, or at the halfway point we call "tolerating it"? If the switch was like a dial with a scale of 0 to 10, and 10 is full on struggle, and 0 no struggle at all, then right now, what level are you? Are you willing to see if we can bring it down a notch or two?

NORMALIZING

This feeling tells you that you're a normal human being who has a heart and who cares. This is what humans feel when there's a gap between what we want and what we've got.

METAPHORS

Quicksand
Passengers on the Bus
Demons on the Boat
Wade Through the Swamp
Pushing Against a Clipboard

BREATHE INTO IT

Breathe into this feeling. It's as if your breath flows into and around it.

NOTICING

Notice where this feeling is. Notice where it's most intense. Notice the hot spots and cold spots. Notice the different sensations within the feeling.

Figure 8.1 Common Acceptance Techniques

INFORMAL MINDFULNESS PRACTICE

1. *Mindfulness in Your Morning Routine*

Pick an activity that constitutes part of your daily morning routine, such as brushing your teeth, shaving, making the bed, or taking a shower. When you do it, totally focus attention on what you're doing: the body movements, the taste, the touch, the smell, the sight, the sound, and so on. Notice what's happening with an attitude of openness and curiosity. For example, when you're in the shower, notice the sounds of the water as it sprays out of the nozzle, as it hits your body, and as it gurgles down the drain. Notice the temperature of the water, and the feel of it in your hair, and on your shoulders, and running down your legs. Notice the smell of the soap and shampoo, and the feel of them against your skin. Notice the sight of the water droplets on the walls or shower curtain, the water dripping down your body and the steam rising upward. Notice the movements of your arms as you wash or scrub or shampoo.

When thoughts arise, acknowledge them, and let them come and go like passing cars. Again and again, you'll get caught up in your thoughts. As soon as you realize this has happened, gently acknowledge it, note what the thought was that distracted you, and bring your attention back to the shower.

2. *Mindfulness of Domestic Chores*

Pick an activity such as ironing clothes, washing dishes, vacuuming floors—something mundane that you have to do to make your life work—and do it mindfully. For example, when ironing clothes, notice the color and shape of the clothing, and the pattern made by the creases, and the new pattern as the creases disappear. Notice the hiss of the steam, the creak of the ironing board, the faint sound of the iron moving over the material. Notice the grip of your hand on the iron, and the movement of your arm and your shoulder.

If boredom or frustration arises, simply acknowledge it, and bring your attention back to the task at hand. When thoughts arise, acknowledge them, let them be, and bring your attention back to what you're doing. Again and again, your attention will wander. As soon as you realize this has happened, gently acknowledge it, note what distracted you, and bring your attention back to your current activity.

3. *Mindfulness of Pleasant Activities*

Pick an activity you enjoy such as cuddling with a loved one, eating lunch, stroking the cat, playing with the dog, walking in the park, listening to music, having a soothing hot bath, and so on. Do this activity mindfully: engage in it fully, using all five of your senses, and savor every moment. If and when your attention wanders, as soon as you realize it, note what distracted you, and re-engage in whatever you're doing.

SIMPLE WAYS TO GET PRESENT

Take Ten Breaths

This is a simple exercise to center yourself and connect with your environment. Practice it throughout the day, especially any time you find yourself getting caught up in your thoughts and feelings:

1. Take ten slow, deep breaths. Focus on breathing out as slowly as possible until your lungs are completely empty—and then allow them to refill by themselves.
2. Notice the sensations of your lungs emptying. Notice them refilling. Notice your rib cage rising and falling. Notice the gentle rise and fall of your shoulders.
3. See if you can let your thoughts come and go as if they're just passing cars, driving past outside your house.
4. Expand your awareness: simultaneously notice your breathing and your body. Then look around the room and notice what you can see, hear, smell, touch, and feel.

Dropping Anchor

This is another simple exercise to center yourself and connect with the world around you. Practice it throughout the day, especially any time you find yourself getting caught up in your thoughts and feelings:

1. Plant your feet into the floor.
2. Push them down—notice the floor beneath you, supporting you.
3. Notice the muscle tension in your legs as you push your feet down.
4. Notice your entire body—and the feeling of gravity flowing down through your head, spine, and legs into your feet.
5. Now look around and notice what you can see and hear around you. Notice where you are and what you're doing.

Notice Five Things

This is yet another simple exercise to center yourself and engage with your environment. Practice it throughout the day, especially any time you find yourself getting caught up in your thoughts and feelings:

1. Pause for a moment.
2. Look around and notice five things that you can see.
3. Listen carefully and notice five things that you can hear.
4. Notice five things that you can feel in contact with your body (for example, your watch against your wrist, your trousers against your legs, the air on your face, your feet upon the floor, your back against the chair).
5. Finally, do all of the above simultaneously.

**The Observing
Self**

The Conceptualized Self

All the beliefs, thoughts, ideas, facts,
images, judgments, memories, and so on
about "who I am"

Fusion

**The Observing
Self**

The Conceptualized Self

All the beliefs, thoughts, ideas, facts,
images, judgments, memories, and so
on about "who I am"

**Noticing / Observing
(self-as-awareness)**



Defusion

**The Observing
Self**

The Conceptualized Self

All the beliefs, thoughts, ideas, facts,
images, judgments, memories, and so on
about "who I am"

Fusion

**The Observing
Self**

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**Noticing / Observing
(self-as-awareness)**



Defusion

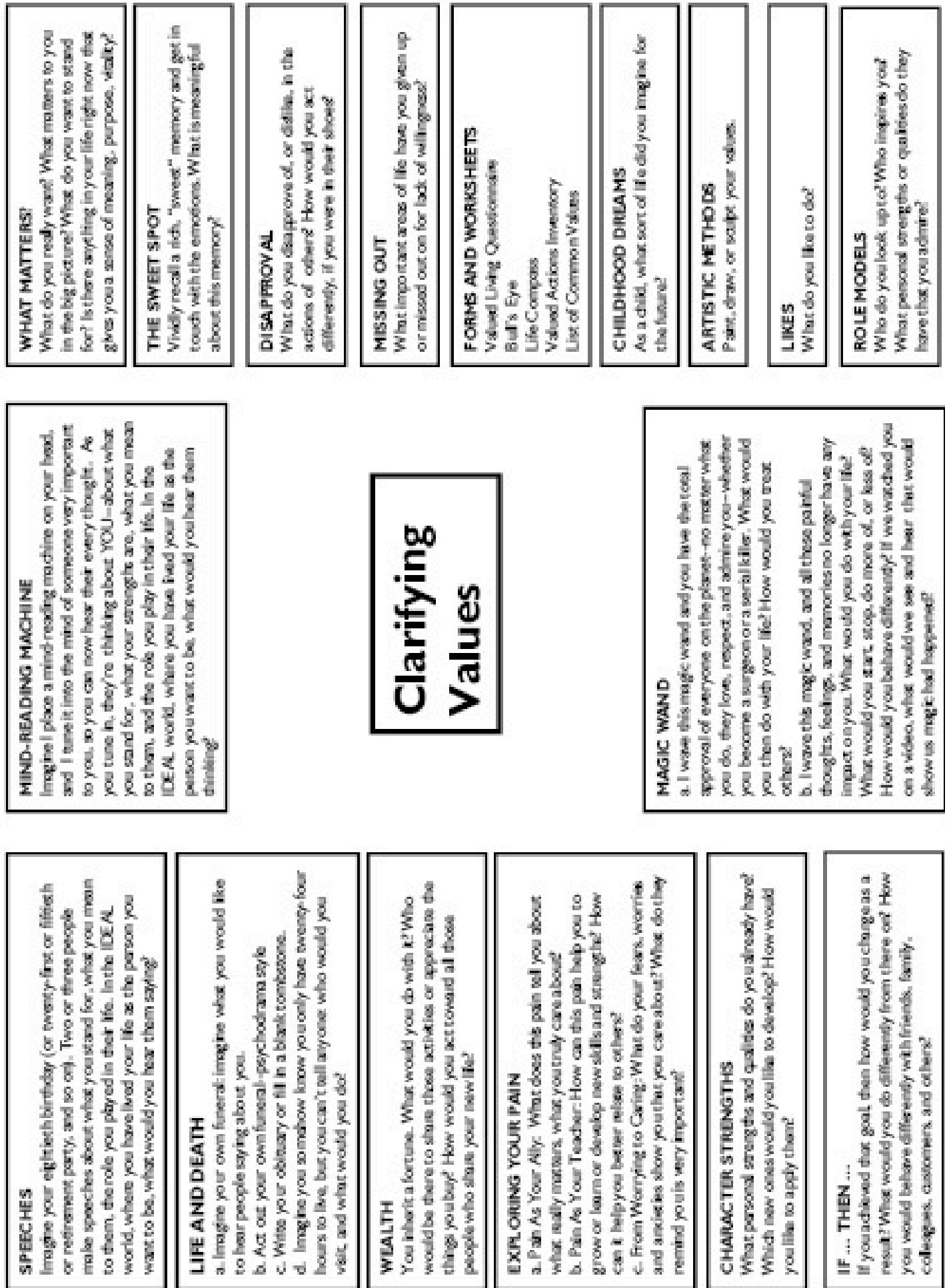


Figure 11.1 Common Values Clarification Techniques

SETTING VALUES-BASED GOALS

Three Steps to Setting Values-Based Goals

Step 1: The domain of life I choose to work on is (circle one or two, but no more): work, health, education, social, parenting, intimate partner, family, spiritual, community, environment, leisure, personal growth.

Step 2: The values underlying my goals (in this domain of life) are:

When it comes to setting goals, make sure you set a SMART goal:

- *Specific:* Specify the actions you will take—when and where you will do so, and who or what is involved. For example, this is a vague or nonspecific goal: “I will spend more time with my kids.” This is a specific goal: “I will take the kids to the park on Saturday afternoon to play baseball.” Make your goal specific enough so that you can easily tell whether or not you’ve achieved it.
- *Meaningful:* If this goal is genuinely guided by your values as opposed to following a rigid rule, trying to please others, or trying to avoid some pain, then it will be personally meaningful. If it lacks a sense of meaning or purpose, check in and see if it’s really guided by your values.
- *Adaptive:* Does the goal help you to head in a direction that, as far as you can predict, is likely to improve, enrich, or enhance your quality of life?
- *Realistic:* The goal should be realistically achievable. Take into account your health, competing demands on your time, financial status, and whether you have the skills to achieve it.
- *Time-framed:* To increase the specificity of your goal, set a day, date, and time for it. If this isn’t possible, set as accurate a time frame as you possibly can.

Step 3: My values-based goals are ...

- **an immediate goal** (something small, simple, and easy that I can do in the next twenty-four hours):

- **short-term goal(s)** (things I can do over the next few days and weeks):

- **medium-term goal(s)** (things I can do over the next few weeks and months):

- **long-term goal(s)** (things I can do over the next few months and years):

THE WILLINGNESS AND ACTION PLAN

1. My goal is to (be specific):

The values underlying my goal are:

The actions I will take to achieve that goal are (be specific):

2. The thoughts/memories, feelings, sensations, urges I'm willing to make room for in order to achieve this goal are:

■ Thoughts/memories:

■ Feelings:

■ Sensations:

■ Urges:

3. It would be useful to tell myself that:

4. If necessary, I can break this goal down into smaller steps.

The smallest, easiest step I can begin with is:

The time, day, and date when I will take that first step are:

FROM FEAR TO DARE

From FEAR to DARE: Part I

Let's assume you have clarified your values and set yourself a goal, but you haven't followed through on it. What stopped you? The FEAR acronym covers most of the common barriers:

- F = Fusion (stuff your mind tells you that will hold you back if you get caught up in it)
- E = Excessive goals (your goal is too big, or you lack the skills, time, money, health, or other resources)
- A = Avoidance of discomfort (unwillingness to make room for the discomfort this challenge brings)
- R = Remoteness from values (losing touch with—or forgetting—what's important or meaningful about this)

So now, in as few words as possible, write down everything that has stopped you from following through:

Now go back and label each answer with one or two of the letters F, E, A, or R, whichever best describe(s) this barrier:

- Was it F = fusion with a story (for example, I'll fail, it's too hard, I'll do it later, I'm too weak, I can't do it, or others)?
- Was it E = excessive goal (you lacked the time, money, health, facilities, skills, or support necessary; or it was just too big and you got overwhelmed)?
- Was it A = avoidance of discomfort (you were unwilling to make room for the anxiety, frustration, fear of failure, or other uncomfortable thoughts and feelings)?
- Was it R = remoteness from your values (you forgot or lost touch with the values underlying this goal)?

The antidote to FEAR is DARE.

D = Defusion

A = Acceptance of discomfort

R = Realistic goals

E = Embracing values

Go through your barriers, one by one, and work out how you can deal with them, using DARE. On the next page, you'll find some suggestions to help you.

This worksheet has been reformatted to fit the layout of this book. Rather than photocopying it, we recommend you use the original version, downloadable from www.actmadesimple.com

From FEAR to DARE: Part 2

Defusion Strategies

- Name the story.
- Thank your mind.
- Acknowledge “Here’s reason-giving” or “Here’s judging.”
- Name the demon/monster/passenger.
- Recognize this is Radio Doom and Gloom broadcasting.
- Simply let the thoughts come and go like passing cars.

Acceptance Strategies

- Name the feeling.
- Observe the feeling like a curious scientist.
- Rate the feeling on a scale of 1 to 10.
- Commit to allowing the feeling.
- Breathe into the feeling.
- Make room for the feeling.
- Give the feeling a shape and color.

Realistic Goal Setting

- If you lack skills, set new goals around learning them.
- If your goal is too big, break it down into small chunks.
- If you lack resources, brainstorm how you can get them.
- If you lack time, what are you willing to give up in order to make time?
- If the goal is truly impossible—for example, due to health or financial issues, or external barriers over which you have no direct influence, then set a different goal.

Embracing Values

- Connect with what matters to you about this goal.
- Is this goal truly meaningful?
- Is this goal aligned with your values?
- Is this goal truly important?
- Does this goal move your life forward in the direction in which you wish to go?

Using these ideas (and others of your own or of your therapist/coach), write down how you can respond to the barriers you listed above:

Finally, ask yourself these questions:

- *Am I willing to make room for the difficult thoughts and feelings that show up without getting caught up in them or struggling with them?*
- *Am I willing to take effective action in order to do what, deep in my heart, matters?*

If your answer is yes, go ahead and give it a go.

If your answer is no, consider these three questions:

1. Does this really and truly matter to you?
2. If it does, then what is the cost to you of avoiding it or putting it off?
3. Would you rather have the life-draining pain of staying stuck or the life-enhancing pain of moving forward?

This worksheet has been reformatted to fit the layout of this book. Rather than photocopying it, we recommend you use the original version, downloadable from www.actmadesimple.com

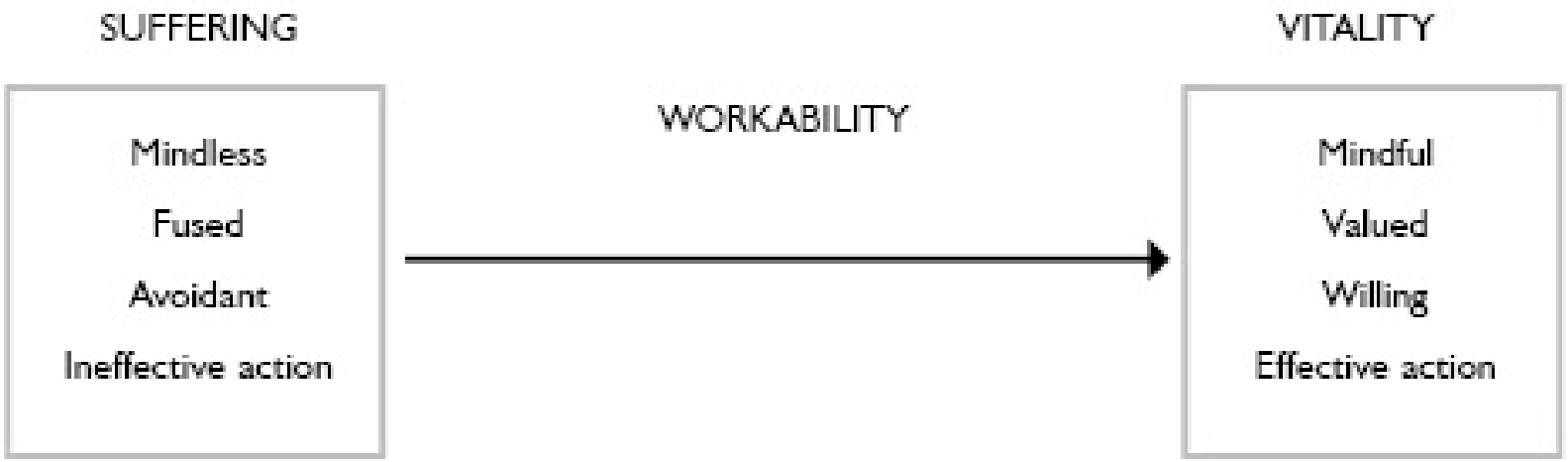


Figure 15.1

