Passengers on the bus

A story about thoughts and feelings as passengers, with space for your own.

Name _____ Date _____

Imagine your life is a bus and you are the driver. You know where you want to go. On the bus are passengers: your thoughts, feelings, memories and urges. Some are pleasant. Some are loud, ugly and threatening.

When you turn towards something that matters, the rough ones come up to the front. "You will fail." "You will make a fool of yourself." "Turn round." They are frightening, so you make a deal: you will drive where they say, and they will sit quietly at the back.

The bus is now going where the passengers want. You are no longer heading where you meant to go.

The passengers can shout. They can look terrifying. They cannot touch the steering wheel. Only you can.

Where I want my bus to go	Where I have been driving instead
The direction that matters to me	To keep the passengers quiet

My passengers (thoughts, feelings, urges)	What they say	What I usually do when they shout

What has it cost me to let them steer?

If I kept my hands on the wheel this week, with the passengers shouting, what is one turn I would make?

A metaphor from Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (Hayes, Strosahl and Wilson).

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