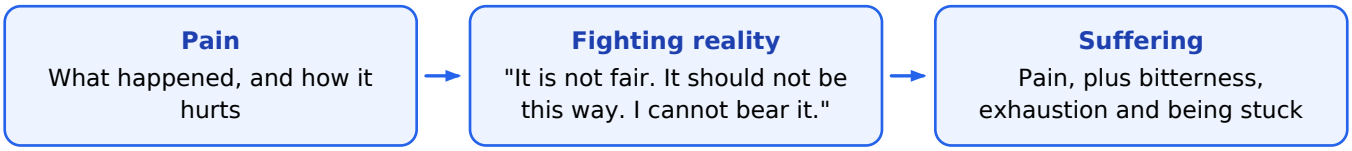
Radical acceptance

What it means to accept something you cannot change, and how to practise it.

Some things cannot be changed: something that has already happened, a loss, another person's choices, a fact about your health. You can spend enormous energy on "this should not be". The pain is unavoidable. The extra suffering that comes from fighting reality is not.



What acceptance is not

- It is not approving, liking or agreeing.
- It is not saying it was OK.
- It is not giving up or doing nothing.
- It is not forgiving, unless you choose to.

It is acknowledging, fully, that this is how things are. Only from there can you decide what to do next.

How to practise

1. **Notice the fight.** "It should not have happened." "Why me?" Bitterness and tension are clues.
2. **State the facts.** "This is what happened. This is where things stand."
3. **Remember it has causes.** Things came about through a long chain of events. Given all of them, it could not have been otherwise.
4. **Accept with your body.** Unclench your hands, soften your face, breathe out.
5. **Allow the feelings.** Sadness and grief often rise when the fighting stops. Let them.
6. **Turn again.** Acceptance is not done once. You choose it over and over, sometimes many times an hour.

Something I am fighting that cannot be changed

What the fight is costing me

What might become possible if I stopped fighting it?

Radical acceptance is a skill from Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT), developed by Marsha Linehan.

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