

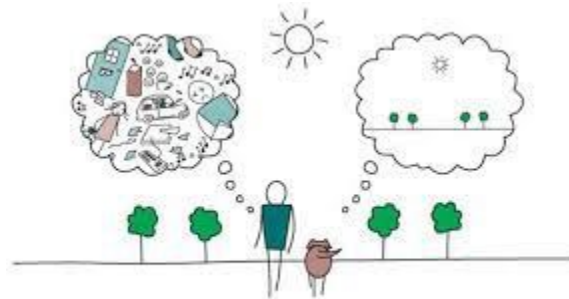


DBT SKILLS

DBT is an abbreviation for Dialectical Behavioral Therapy developed by Marsha Linehan, PhD. The skills derived from this therapy model are powerful tools to achieve balance with one's competing needs, resolve distress, move forward in the emotional recovery process, and ultimately enrich and enhance one's quality of life.

MINDFULNESS

WHY Mindfulness?

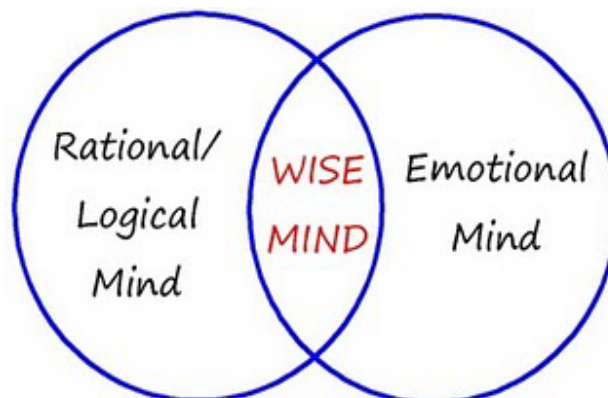


Mind Full, or Mindful?

Cartoon drawing of a person taking a walk, being mindful

- Mindfulness has positive effects on managing stress, self-control, chronic pain, and emotional pain and increases enrichment in our relationships with others.
- Mindfulness helps us to slow down and take inventory as to what's around us (externally and internally).
- Mindfulness helps us to look at things objectively vs reacted too subjectively.
- Mindfulness helps us to break down habitual behavior.
- Mindfulness helps us to approach ourselves and others from a non-judgmental stance.
- Mindfulness reminds us that we are more to being than just our emotions, pain and or circumstances.
- Mindfulness decreases suffering.

States of Mind



Drawing of circles with Rational/logical Mind and Emotional Mind, interlaced by Wise Mind.

**RATIONAL / LOGICAL
MIND**

- Dominated by Logic
- Solution Oriented
- Problem Solver
- Emotions are not needed to make decisions.
- Facts Only
- Reasonable

WISE MIND

- Keeps us centered, grounded and neutral.
- Keeps me/others safe.
- Looks out for my long-term best interest.
- Balance of the rational and emotional mind.

EMOTIONAL MIND

- Does not consider consequences
- Irrational/ Impulsive
- Seeks instant gratification
- Also helps us to be loving, nurturing

***What State of Mind am I in?
Is it effective right NOW?***

The “What” Skills

OBSERVE

- Slow down
- Pay attention
- Be curious
- Watch without reacting
- Notice urges (i.e., the urge to yell, scream, avoid)

Here are some helpful tips that can lead to more effective actions and greatly decrease our suffering.

- 1) Be Here Now – NO Autopilot!
- 2) Stopping and saying in a curious way, “Hey, what’s going on here?”
- 3) What am I thinking?
- 4) What am I feeling?
- 5) What am I doing?
- 6) What is going on around me?”

DESCRIBE

Our next skill is the Describe skill. This is putting words on our experience. First, we notice where we are and then we briefly put words on the experience.

We label without:

- Analyzing
- Questioning
- Interpreting
- Adding information (catastrophizing)
- Subtracting information (denial or avoiding)

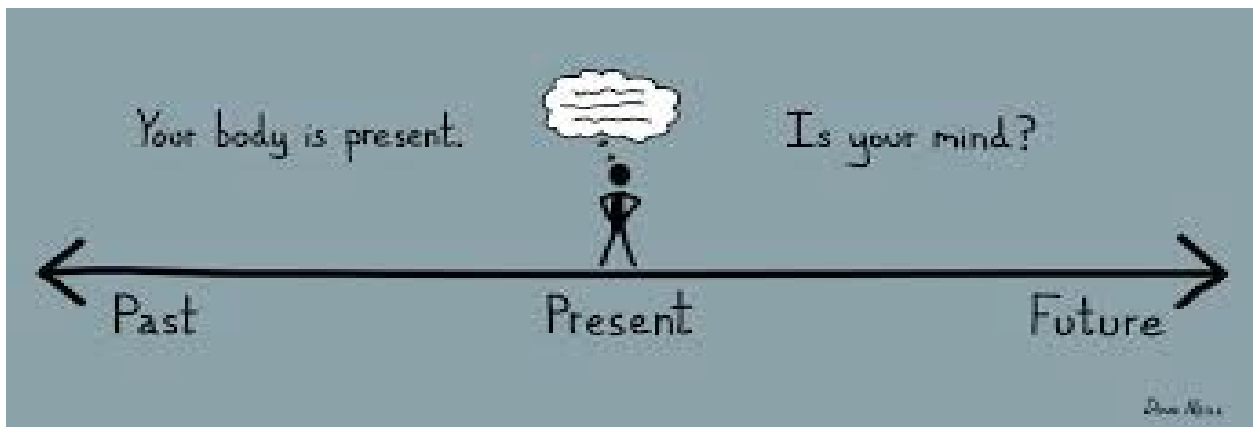
We label by:

- Taking a non-judgmental stance
- Not assuming or predicting
- Sticking only with the facts

PARTICIPATE

Participate is about being in the **NOW**.

Only using the mind when we need it and when it's effective.



Drawing of a person standing in the middle of a line representing your body being in the Present, to the left of being in the Past Mind and to the right of being in the Future Mind. This drawing shows your body in the present, but is your mind?

<u>PAST</u> Painful memories Predicting Painful emotions “Should ofs” Regret = Depression	<u>PRESENT</u> Here & Now Sensory Awareness = Balanced, Manageable	<u>FUTURE</u> “What ifs” Predicting Forecasting Assuming Bracing/Guarding Jumping to conclusions = Anxiety
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The “How” Skills

ONE-MINDFULLY

- One-Mindfully is trying to only do one thing at a time.
- One-Mindfully decreases our suffering
- One-Mindfully is not multi-tasking.
- One-Mindfully is not being on autopilot. This can make us vulnerable to all our old habits and ways of thinking, many of which increase our suffering.

NON-JUDGMENTALLY

- Non-judgmentally is accepting *what is, as it is, because it is*.
- The only realistic attitude toward the present moment is one of acceptance.
- This is the core of the non-judgmentally skill.

All life has pain in it. You fall down; it's going to hurt. You get fired; it's going to hurt. Someone leaves you; it's going to hurt. Pain, whether physical or emotional, is inevitable.

However, suffering is what we do with that pain. When we say to the pain, “No, this should not be,” or “I can't stand this pain...make it go away,” we increase our suffering. Even trying to hang on to good things can cause suffering. Grasping and hanging on too tightly to people or things can cause suffering.

<p><u>PAIN</u></p> <p>Accepting pain as an inevitable part of life</p>	<p><u>SUFFERING</u></p> <p>Shoulds, Grasping, Avoiding, Denial, Pushing Away</p>
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The Non-judgmentally skill is about finding a way to an open acceptance of whatever is right in front of us. It is trying to stay open to the pleasures and pain of life, as they naturally rise and fall, without creating more suffering through hanging on or pushing away.

Now, acceptance doesn't mean compliance or rolling over and playing dead to whatever happens in life. However, when we say, "I hate this. This should not be this way. They shouldn't be doing that, etc.," we tend to reinforce a blaming stance that implies that someone else needs to change. This can often close down effective change because we then look to someone or something else to fix things.

To sum up, non-judgmentally is approaching each moment with acceptance and with an open heart. To do that we have to let go of grasping at what we want or pushing away what we don't want. It is a very powerful skill, and often a very difficult one as well.

EFFECTIVELY

- Effectively is about focusing on what works.
- It is about asking in the moment, "What is going to be effective now?" and "what is going to be effective in the long-term?"
- Being effective empowers you to take responsibility to make change happen or accept what cannot be changed, both of which can decrease your suffering.
- Effectively helps reinforce the idea of acceptance first and then change. "Things are as they are. Okay, then what am I going to do about it?"

DISTRESS TOLERANCE

CRISIS SURVIVAL SKILLS

When do you need Crisis Survival Skills?

1. Needs to be a crisis
2. Can't be resolved NOW
3. Can't afford to make it worse

What is a Crisis?

1. Stressful event or traumatic moment
2. Short term
3. Want it resolved NOW

Two Main Rules

1. Solve the problem if you can
2. Survive it

Overview: Crisis Survival Skills

These are skills for tolerating painful events, urges, and emotions when you cannot make things better right away.

The STOP Skill

Pros & Cons

TIP your Body Chemistry

Distract with Wise Mind ACCEPTS

Self-Soothe with the Five Senses

Improve the Moment

DISTRESS TOLERANCE

The STOP Skill

How to press the STOP Button
when you have self-destructive urges.

S STOP- Don't react, instead STOP! FREEZE!

I Take- a step back, take a break, take deep breaths.

O Observe- internally and externally. Notice what is going on around you.
Notice thoughts and feelings.

P Proceed - with awareness and consider outcomes.

Will my actions make things better or worse?

PROS & CONS

Pros and cons help us target urges/behaviors before they start.
They help us set the stage to be successful. REHEARSE.

	PROS	CONS
To act on the URGE	Pros of acting on your urges and or avoiding what needs to be done.	Cons to acting on the urge, giving in and or not doing what needs to be done.
To not act on the URGE	Pros of resisting the urges, and or doing what needs to be done.	Cons to resisting the urges and or doing what needs to be done

EXAMPLE

	PROS	CONS
To act on the URGE (To Drink)	1) I don't have to deal 2) Feels good in the moment	1) I break 30 years of sobriety. 2) I damage my relationships.
To not act on the URGE (To Not Drink)	1) I maintain another day of sobriety. 2) I maintain my relationships.	1) I feel uncomfortable. 2) I am forced to confront my problem.

When an overwhelming crisis urge hits you; do the following:

- 1) Imagine the benefits of resisting the urge
- 2) Think of the negative consequences of giving into your urges.
- 3) Remember past consequences from acting on urges.

The “TIP” Skill

The goal of the TIP Skill is to change your body chemistry.

- (T) **Temperature:** Change the temperature of your face with COLD WATER to calm down quickly.
 - ✓ Hold an ice cube.
 - ✓ Put a cold pack on the back of your neck.
 - ✓ Take a cold shower or wet your face with cold water.
- (I) **Intense:** Engage in intense exercise for a short while.
 - ✓ Walk
 - ✓ Run
 - ✓ Play a sport
- (P) **Paced** breathing and **Paired** muscle relaxation:
 - ✓ Pace your breathing using diaphragmatic breathing. Breathing from your belly and not your chest.
 - ✓ Pair muscle relaxation with paced breathing i.e., tense your body muscles and then release and repeat, noticing where you carry tension the most.

*The following three skills are **CRISIS SKILLS**. They are intended as a short-term option for distracting from what is painful or when we are ruminating. A useful way to remember these skills is: ACCEPTS, 5 Senses and IMPROVE.*

Distract with ACCEPTS

With **ACTIVITIES:**

Engage in exercise or a favorite hobby; call or visit a friend; do cleaning or organizing; play computer games; go walking; play with your dog or cat; write e-mails or letters; have decaf coffee or tea; do gardening; go to events; watch a movie.

With **CONTRIBUTING:**

Contribute to something; do volunteer work; do someone a favor; buy flowers for friends or family; do a surprising, thoughtful thing; choose cards for loved ones; bake something and share it; walk your dog.

With **COMPARISONS:**

Compare yourself now to past times when you may have suffered even more

-

"Well, this is painful, but I've been through worse. Look at how many skills I have now." Or consider others with greater pain - e.g., when there's a disaster like Hurricane Katrina, we feel concern, but remember our own safety with gratitude.

With OPPOSITE **E MOTION:**

Read emotional books or stories; go to emotional movies; listen to emotional music; look at old photos. *Be sure the event creates **different** emotions.* If sad, try reading joke books, watching a comedy or an adventurous movie, listening to funny records.

With **PUSHING AWAY:**

Push the situation away by leaving it for a while mentally. Refuse to think about the painful aspects of the situation. Box it up and put it away for a while. Like Scarlet O'Hara said in *Gone with the Wind*, "I'll think about that *tomorrow*." Choose a day to have "no emotions" and use skills to keep emotions at bay. Choose a time of day for worrying and then put borders around your worries for the day.

With other **THOUGHTS:**

Fill your short-term memory with other thoughts. Count to 10, count colors of cars as you drive; play computer games, poker, or solitaire, do word puzzles, play Sudoku; recite to yourself sayings, slogans, or lyrics that you know well; play alphabet games, name the Presidents, or state capitols; organize your bookcases.

With intense other **SENSATIONS:**

Use this part of the skill to "trick your biology" by deliberately choosing sensations that bring about emotions different than your current experience. Your brain will respond to your senses quickly. Help yourself out this way!

Hold ice in your hand, stand under a cool or hot shower. Get in a tub filled with cold or hot water and stay in it until the water is tepid. Listen to music at louder than usual volume (but don't hurt your ears!). Turn the lights up bright in your room. Roll down your car window and focus on the sound and feel of the wind blowing. Suck on lemons or drink lemonade, eat cinnamon candy or strong mints, have icy drinks.

You may need to use one thing after another to get through the crisis period. Be prepared to try a different activity every 30 minutes. Remember, the goal is to survive the crisis without making things worse.

A Plan for Distracting with ACCEPTS!

Activities:

Contributing:

Comparisons:

Opposite Emotions:

Pushing Away:

**With other
Thoughts:**

With Sensations:

Self-Soothe (with the Five Senses)

With **VISION:**

Buy one beautiful flower; create a special space in your home or yard; set a pretty place at the dinner table; go to a museum; notice nature around you; drive to the beach/mountains and look; stargaze at night; look at beautiful pictures; watch a dance performance.

Be mindful of each sight that passes in front of you.

With **HEARING:**

Listen to music; sounds of nature/relaxing sounds (waves, birds, rainfall, leaves rustling); sing your favorite songs; hum; hang wind chimes; be silent. *What do you hear when it's quiet?*

With **SMELL:**

Apply your favorite perfume or lotion; spray fragrance; light a scented candle; bake bread or food with strong smells; boil cinnamon; smell flowers; go outside and mindfully breathe in the fresh air; smell the air after it rains. *What scents do you love?*

With **TASTE:**

Eat fresh, seasonal vegetables or fruit; have a healthy, soothing drink; try peppermint candy/ gum; eat a special food very slowly; make a food that has positive memories and enjoy its comfort. *Really taste the food you eat; eat one thing mindfully.*

With **TOUCH:**

Enjoy a shower or bath; feel clean sheets on the bed; pet your pet; get a massage; soak your feet; use lotion; place a cold compress on your forehead; be cozy; walk barefoot in fresh grass or at the beach, dig in the dirt. *Notice how your world feels.*

A Plan for Using Self-Soothing!

VISION:

HEARING:

SMELL:

TOUCH:

TASTE:

IMPROVE the Moment

With **IMGERY:**

Imagine a relaxing scene, your child's or pet's face, your loved one's kitchen, or your garden; create a *fantasy* scene that is calming and beautiful. Imagine hurtful emotions draining out of you like water out of a pipe or like a balloon floating away; imagine yourself coping well; imagine what peace looks like.

With **MEANING:**

Reflect on what you might learn from your current struggles; focus on any positive aspects of a painful situation you can find. Make lemonade out of lemons.

With **PRAYER:**

If it suits you, remember your connection to a higher power, greater wisdom and/or your own wise mind; pray for strength to accept what is happening; be willing to consult your wise mind; access what is spiritual to you.

With **RELAXATION:**

Accepting with the body can help you accept with your mind; try deep muscle relaxation, imagery, breathing or yoga; take a hot bath/hot tub; massage your neck, scalp, and feet; light candles or dim the light; breathe in deeply to the count of 4 and out to the count of 6. Do this 10 times; try listening to a relaxation APP or soothing music; lay on a blanket and look up at a tree or the clouds.

With **ONE THING IN THE MOMENT:**

Focus your entire attention on what you are doing right now; all you have to survive is this one moment; break time and tasks down into the smallest of parts; do just one thing at a time.

With a brief **VACATION:**

Give yourself a break from stress: wear comfy clothes; read something entertaining; ask to be pampered; treat yourself to a comforting meal; lay on a blanket outside; unplug you're your phone/screens; watch a sunset; soak your feet; sit outdoors during lunch, **play!**

With **ENCOURAGEMENT:**

Be your own cheerleader/positive coach: repeat over and over "I can do this," "I will make it out of this," "I am doing the best that I can do," "This too, shall pass," "I only have to do one thing at a time – forever." Choose statements that you can really buy into. What would your best friend say? Your therapist? Imagine someone else's words if you cannot encourage yourself with conviction. Practice out loud. Quotes can be helpful as encouragement. How might you encourage someone?

A Plan for using IMPROVE the Moment!

Imagery:

Meaning:

Prayer:

Relaxation:

**One thing in the
moment:**

Vacation:

Encouragement:

Urge Surfing

When you are tempted to engage in a behavior that is habitual or impulsive and unhelpful (e.g., binge, use substances, self harm, throw or break something, yell at your loved one, quit your job, over-spend, "run away"), and the urge feels irresistible, Urge Surfing is **THE** foundational skill. It buys you time to calm down so you can make a wiser mind choice.

Every urge has three characteristic periods or phases. The ramp-up period begins at the trigger point or prompting event, when the idea of doing the behavior first arises. The peak is the intense high point of the urge. Then comes the ramp-down or fall off period as things gradually return to baseline - *even if you never gave in to the urge!* It is important to recognize these periods in your own experience.

During the ramp-up, the thought of doing the behavior arises and as soon as it does, the urge becomes strong - sometimes very strong. The ramp up period may be a few hours or a few moments, and it is during this time you have the most options for making wiser choices. During the ramp up you can begin using distress tolerance skills (observe the breath, self soothe, distract) and mindfulness / wise mind skills (pros/cons, wise mind shift). But what if your ramp-up on a given occasion is only a *few moments* and you realize you are about to engage in a behavior that you are trying to stop? Urge Surf!

To Urge Surf, it is important to begin with a few deep breaths and a conscious willingness to reduce the urge and let go of the behavior as a solution for that moment's pain. Often the next step is to remove yourself from the situation if you can (e.g., walk out of the room where the food, substance or self harm implement is). Whether or not you can leave the area of temptation, the next step is to try to relax the body and practice breathing or calming techniques while staying mindful and present-focused. Avoid getting into debates with yourself about whether you will or won't do the behavior, just stay present and breath. Sit down or lie down if you can.

As soon as you feel the urge lessening and you feel a bit calmer, now is the time to return to distress tolerance skills (self soothing, improve the moment, distract) and if you haven't yet put distance between yourself and the tempting object, do so now!

Later, when you are much calmer and have had time to self care and self sooth and get back to your wise mind, you will need to look back on the triggering situation to decide if any further wise mind action is needed to avoid being in that same dilemma again.

Urge Surfing Homework Sheet

Instructions: In the space below, describe your practice of Urge Surfing. Be very detailed. Describe your moment-to-moment observations. Describe the ebb and flow of your thoughts, feelings, sensations, urges.

DISTRESS TOLERANCE

Basic Principles of Accepting Reality

RADICAL ACCEPTANCE

- Freedom from suffering requires ACCEPTANCE from deep within of what is. Let yourself go completely with what is. Let go of fighting reality.
- ACCEPTANCE is the only way out of misery.
- Pain creates suffering only when you refuse to ACCEPT the pain.
- Deciding to tolerate the moment is ACCEPTANCE.
- ACCEPTANCE is acknowledging what is.
- To ACCEPT something is not the same as judging it as good.

TURNING THE MIND

- Acceptance of reality as it is requires an act of CHOICE. It is like coming to a fork in the road. You have to turn your mind towards the acceptance road and away from the "rejecting reality" road.
- One must make an inner COMMITMENT to accept.
- The COMMITMENT to accept does not itself equal acceptance. It just turns you toward the path. But it is the first step.
- One must turn their mind and commit to acceptance OVER AND OVER AND OVER again. Sometimes one must make the commitment many times in the space of a few minutes.

WILLINGNESS

Cultivate a WILLING response to each situation.

- Willingness is **DOING JUST WHAT IS NEEDED** in each situation, in an unpretentious way. It is focusing on effectiveness.
- Willingness is listening very carefully to your **WISE MIND**, acting from your inner self.
- Willingness is **ALLOWING** into awareness your connection to the universe—to the earth, to the floor you are standing on, to the chair you are sitting on, to the person you are talking to.

Replace WILLFULNESS with WILLINGNESS.

- Willfulness is **SITTING ON YOUR HANDS** when action is needed, refusing to make changes that are needed.
- Willfulness is **GIVING UP**.
- Willfulness is the **OPPOSITE OF "DOING WHAT WORKS,"** being effective.
- Willfulness is trying to **FIX** every situation.
- Willfulness is **REFUSING TO TOLERATE** the moment

From Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

RADICAL ACCEPTANCE

This skill is about identifying what you have control over, what you do not have control over, and knowing the difference between the two. There are many things in life that are out of your control, including people and the environment. What you do have control over is yourself. You can control your thinking, feelings, impulses, and behaviors.

Radical Acceptance is about being skillful by letting go of things you cannot control in order to focus your energy on what you can control: yourself.

Radical Acceptance is empowering and life enhancing. It is not approval or resignation. It does not mean that you have to like what is happening. It is accepting that reality is what it is. Then you can focus on being who you need to be and acting how you need to act to be as effective as possible.

Strategies I will use to let go of things I cannot control:

Strategies to stay in control of my thinking, feelings, and behaviors:

Barriers and obstacles to using Radical Acceptance effectively:

Strategies to overcome the barriers and obstacles:

Ways I will use Radical Acceptance effectively on a regular basis:

Non-Acceptance is denying your reality

- What reality are you denying?
- How is this impacting your mood and relationships?
- Is this effective?

Non-Acceptance = Pain + Suffering

Suffering is what we do with pain. When we say to pain “No, this should not be,” or “I can’t stand this pain...make it go away,” we increase our suffering. Even trying to hang on to good things can cause suffering. Grasping and hanging on too tightly to people or things can cause suffering.

Pain is inevitable but suffering is optional.

- Does your behavior or things you say make your pain worse or does it help you cope?
- The goal is to ride the wave so long as the wave is here; without making it any more or any less than what it is.
- A fire represents pain (burning just fine all on its own).

- Lighter fluid represents things we say or do that increase our suffering (making the pain bigger than what it needs to be or the reality of what it is).

Acceptance is:

- Acknowledging your reality for what it is, as it is, because it is.
- Working towards ungluing from our judgments.
- Practicing moment by moment.
- Staying open to the pleasures and pain of life, as they naturally rise and fall, without creating more suffering through hanging on or pushing away.
- Not contingent on whether we like our reality, agree, disagree with our reality, but because it is.
- Not complying or rolling over and playing dead to whatever happens in life.
- Not blaming since that implies that someone else needs to change.

EMOTIONAL REGULATION

(Reducing Vulnerability to Negative Emotions)

DBT Skill: Opposite Action

Changing Emotions by Acting Opposite to the Current Emotion

- Every emotion has an action.
- An emotion causes an action, and an action causes more of the emotion.
- Knowing this, you can change the emotion you want to change by engaging in the **Opposite Action** – the one opposite of the emotion.

Emotions



Actions

Fear

Anxiety/Fear.....Avoid

- Do what you are afraid of doing OVER AND OVER AND OVER.
- APPROACH places, tasks, activities, or people you are afraid of.
- Do things to give yourself a sense of CONTROL and MASTERY.
- When overwhelmed, make a list of small steps or tasks you can do. DO THE FIRST THING ON THE LIST.

Guilt or Shame

Guilt/Shame.....Hide

(When regret is justified, i.e., the emotion fits your wise mind values)

- REPAIR the transgression.
 - ✓ Say you're sorry. APOLOGIZE.
 - ✓ Make things better.
 - ✓ Do something nice for the person you offended (or for someone else if that is not possible).
- COMMIT to avoiding the mistake in the future.
- ACCEPT the consequences gracefully, then LET IT GO.

(When regret is not justified, i.e., the emotion does not fit your wise mind values)

- Do what makes you feel guilty or ashamed...OVER AND OVER.
- APPROACH don't avoid.

Sadness or Depression

Sadness/Depression..... Isolate

- Get ACTIVE.
 - ✓ Connect with others.
 - ✓ Exercise.
 - ✓ Get outdoors.
 - ✓ Plan an activity.
- APPROACH, don't avoid.
- Do things that make you feel COMPETENT AND SELF-CONFIDENT.

Anger

Anger.....Attack (physical and/or verbal)

- Gently AVOID the person with whom you are angry rather than attacking (i.e., take a "time-out.")
- Avoid ruminating about the conflict or trigger.
- Do something NICE rather than mean or attacking.
- SLOW DOWN. BREATHE.