

Radical acceptance might be easy to understand in theory, but tricky to apply in real life. This handout helps you get familiar with radical acceptance by providing multiple examples of both rejecting and radically accepting reality.

Radical acceptance is seeing reality for what it really is, even if you don't like what you see. It doesn't mean approving of a situation or giving up attempts to make things better - it just means fully acknowledging what the situation really is. Below are four examples of hard situations and responses.

**Rachel's upbringing was really tough.** Now that she's an adult, seeing her parents can still bring up difficult feelings, especially when their behavior reminds her of the ways they hurt her in the past.

### Rejecting reality

Ex. 1: Rachel ignores these feelings. She thinks, "Other people had it way worse. It wasn't that bad. I should only be grateful to my parents for everything they've done."

Ex. 2: Rachel gets deeply stuck in these feelings. She thinks, "My parents never loved me. Their only goal was to hurt me in as many ways as they can, and they will never stop."

### Acceptance

Rachel radically accepts reality. She sees all the times her parents hurt her and acknowledges that their behavior really did affect her negatively. She reflects on how their own parents hurt them as children. She remembers times they showed her love. She allows herself to feel grief for her younger self and for her relationship with her parents.

**Tim has always wanted to be an engineer,** and was thrilled to get into an engineering program as well as get a full ride football scholarship for college. In his second semester, he got a bad concussion during a game. Recovery has been slow and he was devastated to find that his engineering classes, which used to be exciting, started to drain his brainpower very quickly.

### Rejecting reality

Ex. 1: Tim sinks deeply into his fears. He thinks, "My life is ruined. I can't play football. My brain will never recover and I will lose my scholarship. I'll never be an engineer."

Ex. 2: Tim rejects reality. He ignores his symptoms and pushes through his classwork every day until he is exhausted. He gets back on the football field before he's fully healed.

### Acceptance

Tim radically accepts reality. He thinks, "This situation is really awful. I am so upset that I can't play and that my brain is not working as well as it used to. Life is going to be different for a while. Right now I need to focus on recovery and work with my academic advisor to find accommodations."

*\*This worksheet provides information but is not a substitute for therapy. It works best with guidance from a professional.*



**Viv just got into a fender-bender.** She was running late for work and was texting her boss her ETA while driving when she failed to look up in time. She was alarmed when she hit the back bumper of the driver in front of her who had stopped at a red light.

Rejecting reality

Ex. 1: Viv protests reality. She thinks, "Why me?? I was just trying to do the right thing and let my boss know! It wasn't my fault I overslept or that the light turned red!!"

Ex. 2: Viv gets stuck. She thinks, "Oh my god. I'm being punished for something. What did I do to deserve this? It's like the stars aligned perfectly. I must be a horrible person."

Acceptance

Viv radically accepts reality. She thinks, "I really messed up. I should have texted my boss before I got in the car, but I didn't. There's no excuse to not pay attention while driving."

**Alex is sick of dating.** He'll go on a few dates with someone, but eventually, they'll stop responding or tell him it just isn't the right fit. These rejections hurt far more than Alex would care to admit, and he's at the point of deleting his dating apps.

Rejecting reality

Ex. 1: Alex has had it. He thinks about never dating anyone as long as he lives. It's just not worth it unless the perfect person comes along who wants to be with him forever. What's the point otherwise??

Ex. 2: Alex pushes his feelings away. He ignores anyone on his dating apps that fall short of his highest standards. He rejects people before they can reject him, and tells himself that only perfection is worth his time.

Acceptance

Alex radically accepts reality. He remembers that parts of life can be worth it, even if they are uncomfortable or painful. He decides to pause on the apps and try to meet people through friends and his community for a while.





# Additional Resources to Support Your Mental Health Journey

It can be hard to know where to begin looking for support in your mental health journey. Getting a referral from a primary care physician is a reliable first step. Also, sometimes family and friends have experienced similar issues and have professionals they would recommend. The experts at ChoosingTherapy.com are here to help as well, with resources we have reviewed and recommend. Our [strict editorial standards](#) ensure our reviews are fair, honest, thorough, and based on firsthand experience.

## You Can Trust ChoosingTherapy.com



**325+**  
Companies Reviewed



**3,625+**  
Hours of Firsthand Experience



**1,545+**  
Data Points Analyzed



### [Best Online Therapy](#)

Online therapy is a convenient way to connect with a licensed therapist to address mental health issues, reduce unhealthy behaviors, develop effective coping skills, and get more satisfaction out of life. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.

### [Best Online Psychiatry](#)

Online psychiatry providers enable patients to consult with licensed psychiatrists and other mental health professionals. They can evaluate, diagnose, and prescribe medication to help manage mental health issues. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.



### [Best Mental Health Apps](#)

Apps can be great way to monitor mood, track sleep, journal, and practice healthy coping skills like mindfulness and meditation. There are apps specifically designed to help people reduce the symptoms of depression, anxiety, ADHD, chronic stress, and burnout.

### [Therapist Directory](#)

When you're looking for a mental health provider with a very particular skill set, level of experience, or personality type, a therapist directory can be very helpful. Using the filters, you can refine your search until you find a therapist who feels like a perfect fit.





# Tools for Self-Assessment and Psychoeducation

Figuring out the next step in your mental health journey can be overwhelming. Developed by psychologists, the tools at [ChoosingTherapy.com](https://www.ChoosingTherapy.com) can help. Our mental health self-assessment quizzes can help you explore common symptoms of mental health concerns, as well as find the best therapy style for you. Our mental health worksheets can guide you through therapy concepts and how to use them in your life.

## [Learn More with Mental Health Quizzes](#)

Our collection of psychologist-developed mental health quizzes can help you learn if you are experiencing mild, moderate, or concerning levels of anxiety, depression, stress, burnout, and more. Each quiz also provides targeted resources based on your answers. These self-assessments are designed to offer insight, not diagnoses, and can be a helpful first step in recognizing symptoms and deciding whether to seek further support. If you have concerns about your mental health or your quiz results, we recommend you reach out to a licensed mental health professional.



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