

Defusion Techniques

Adapted from *"Finding Life Beyond Trauma: Using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy to Heal from Post-Traumatic Stress and Trauma-Related Problems"*. Follette, Victoria M., Ph.D, and Pistorello, Jacqueline, Ph.D. 2007.



You Are the Driver of Your Own Bus

Imagine you are driving a bus. The passengers on your bus are your negative thoughts – fear, sadness, self-deprecation, etc. They yell at you, try to distract you, criticize your driving, and try to tell you which way to go. But you remember that you are the driver and you are in control. You decide these are unhelpful passengers and you don't want to listen to them. No matter how badly the passengers behave, you can steer the bus in any direction you want to go. They are just passengers, and you are the driver.

Treat Your Brain as a Separate Entity

We can treat our brains as separate from us, as if they were another person. For example, when we are having anxious thoughts, and perhaps start to think "I'm so anxious. I can't do anything right" we may want to reframe this as "My brain is feeling really anxious right now. My brain is telling me I can't do anything right."

Try to Label Your Thoughts and Emotions

When our brain produces a thought, we literally label it as a thought. For example, instead of "I'm worthless," try saying "I'm having the thought that I'm worthless." Then add another level of separation by saying, "I notice I'm having the thought that I'm worthless."

Leaves on a Stream

Imagine you are sitting alongside a beautiful stream with slowly moving water. The water flows over rocks, under trees, and around corners. Every now and then, a big leaf drops into the stream and floats away down the stream. You watch the leaves float away. Each time a thought pops into your head, imagine the thought is written on a leaf in the stream. Just sit beside the stream and watch the leaves with your thoughts, one by one, float away. Don't try to speed them up or slow down the water. Don't try to change the thought on the leaf. If you get distracted, just notice that you got distracted and go back to sitting by the stream and watching the leaves float away.