

INTEGRATED ACT-CBT-FAP QUESTIONS / PROCESSING & BEHAVIOR CHANGE

1. Who is important to you? What is important to you?

Values (for you, the most rewarding activities and experiences) you want to move toward in terms of relationships, recreation/leisure, education and work, responsibilities at home, physical health, and meaning/spirituality

2. What shows up in your head that gets in the way of you moving toward what or who is important to you?

Inner stuff that keeps you from being or getting what you want and need / your thinking and feeling, your memories or imaginings, your body sensations or perceptions, all that you experience on the inside which nobody else can see - scenes from the past that run through your mind, physical sensations like nausea or tightness in your chest? Feelings like fear or guilt or anxiety or anger or sadness? Thoughts like "I don't deserve this" or "if I do, there will be hell to pay" or "I'm not strong enough to push for what I want and need"

3. What do you do to move away from this inner stuff? When you want to block out or distract yourself from the most disturbing or uncomfortable stuff you have to deal with on the inside, what do you do?

Behaviors that you could be seen doing in reaction to uncomfortable stuff which shows up in your head, what you do to move away from what's going on inside – staying home alone or hiding out, making excuses, getting drunk or high or binging online or with exercise or food, sleeping excessively, arguing with or yelling at people or blaming or judging them, over-helping others or trying to fix everybody else's problems.

4. What would it take for you to move away from this disturbing stuff in your head without resorting to these kinds of unhealthy and self-defeating behaviors - instead deal head-on with what is disturbing you, so you can really start living your values?

When you feel a sudden shift toward negative emotion or can't seem to shake a negative feeling or you're struggling to act in line with your values and goals, in deciding how to feel or behave better, ask yourself the following -

a. Are there events or circumstances, conflicts or irritants within yourself or with others which triggered or are fueling how you feel or how you're behaving?

RE: INTEGRATED ACT-CBT-FAP QUESTIONS / PROCESSING & BEHAVIOR CHANGE

b. And if so, is there anything you can do to fix, escape or avoid the triggers, eliminate the problems which are leaving you stressed? And what steps do you need to take to make that happen?

c. If no, if you're dealing with a trigger or stressor which neither you nor anybody else can do anything about, keep in mind that events or circumstances don't directly trigger negative feelings or undesirable behavior but rather how we react to them (how and what we think, our assumptions about why something happened or what it means about us or for us) packs the most punch. So, restructuring our thoughts is usually the key to reducing stress (getting past negative, difficult emotions) and so we need to ask the questions that will help identify problems with what and how we think and help identify healthier, positive emotion-producing and more adaptive thinking:

i. What thoughts automatically come up when you think about negative or difficult feelings you're experiencing and the events to which they seem attached? And if the thinking you've identified isn't clear as to how it leaves you feeling bad, ask yourself if what you believe it true, then what else does it mean, what else is true? – For example, waiting for a friend to text you back and feeling nervous and noticing you're thinking 'I hate texting', ask yourself What does that mean? Why do I hate it? It means 'I never know when I've texted something annoying or stupid'. And if that's true, what else is true? It means 'I'm always doing things that turn people off'. And then what, so what? 'Nobody likes me in the end, I'm not a friend worth keeping'.

ii. Are there common themes in your thoughts? Are there recurrent messages that seem to come up? Stories you keep telling yourself about yourself, maybe core self-defeating beliefs about who you or what you are, negative scripts from childhood about who or what you are or aren't, what you don't deserve in life or are incapable of being or accomplishing?

iii. What is the evidence for and against what you habitually believe about yourself or about what your experience with others or the world and what your experience says about you? What 'thinking errors' can you identify? Black-and-white thinking? Always or never thinking?, Emotional vs. logical thinking? Overgeneralization? Shoulding (I *must* do or be this or this or that *has to* happen)? Catastrophizing? Personalization? Discounting the Positive?

iv. What is the rational or more accurate and so more adaptive and positive mood-enhancing alternative? What beliefs can you reasonably adopt instead when it comes to how or what you think when it comes to yourself or your interactions with the world and other people?

RE: INTEGRATED ACT-CBT-FAP QUESTIONS / PROCESSING & BEHAVIOR CHANGE

5. What is there to be gained or lost by moving away from the inner stuff in your head in a healthy fashion, e.g. to rethink and correct distorted and problematic automatic thoughts and self-defeating lifelong core beliefs? And what are the functional consequences, good or bad, when it comes to quitting the unhealthy thinking habits you've been sticking with or the dysfunctional behaviors you tend to fall back on under stress or when you're faced with a problem, a challenge or conflict?

What is the immediate payoff for you continuing your problem behaviors or beliefs, i.e. the cost in the short-term should you quit self-defeating habits or quit believing and acting on negative ideas about who or what you are or can expect of yourself or others in life?

What is the cost of these behaviors and 'spins' on yourself and your life in the short term? What will happen if you stick with them, long-term? And if you let go of them and dare to behave and think (and so feel) differently, what would happen?

What would be most difficult for you if you embrace healthy script and habits, change towards ways which work for you, which allow you to live your values? What would you lose? What would you have to face or feel or accept? For what purpose or gain (for whom or for what / to realize what values), would you be willing to face or risk the losses or other consequences you anticipate?

6. What is there to be gained or lost when it comes to the ways you behave socially, what you tend to say or not say and do or not do (the attitudes you project or roles you play) when you interact with the people who matter most to you?

What problems come up in your relationships? What do you tend to do that causes stress or conflict? What do other people do that triggers you or ends up being a problem for you?

Did anything happen recently with other people (e.g. when you were with somebody you care about) which felt stressful or caused conflict or left you with difficult feelings? Was there something you did or didn't do which may have contributed to the conflict or difficult feelings?

And does what you did or didn't do as part of the interaction tend to show up in other relationships or social situations?

Does the same or similar behavior ever show up in psychotherapy, when you interact with me?