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Learning to Swim: The ACT Approach to Living with Depression

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LEARNING to SWIM

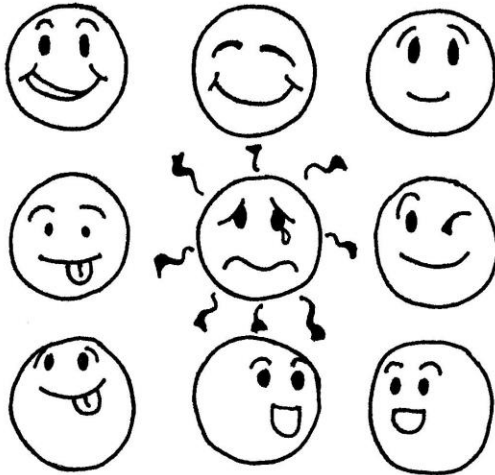


DEEP END



THE ACT APPROACH TO LIVING
WITH DEPRESSION

**IF
YOU HAVE
COME
TO
THIS
MANUAL**



You may have noticed that your mood is different from these around you.

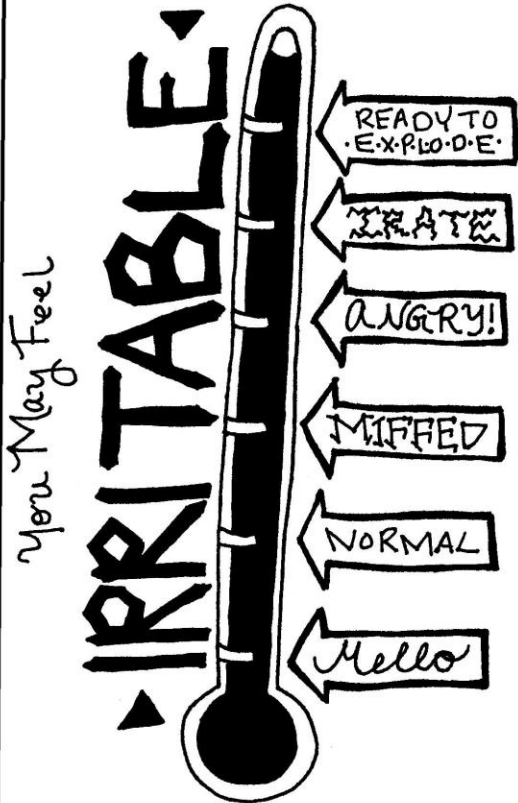
You may be sleeping too much...



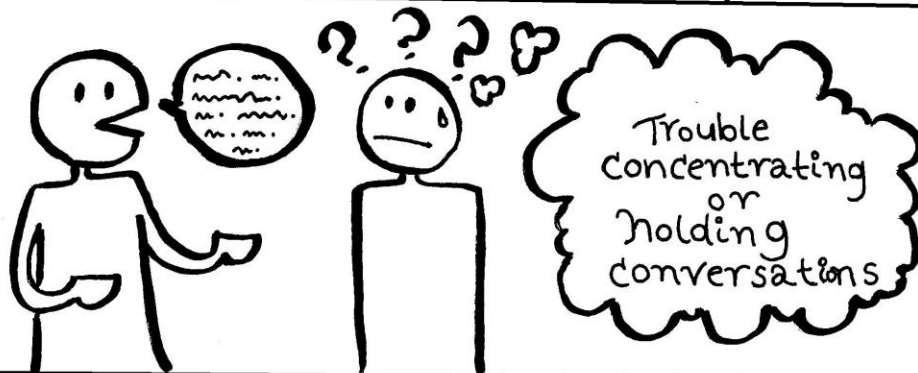
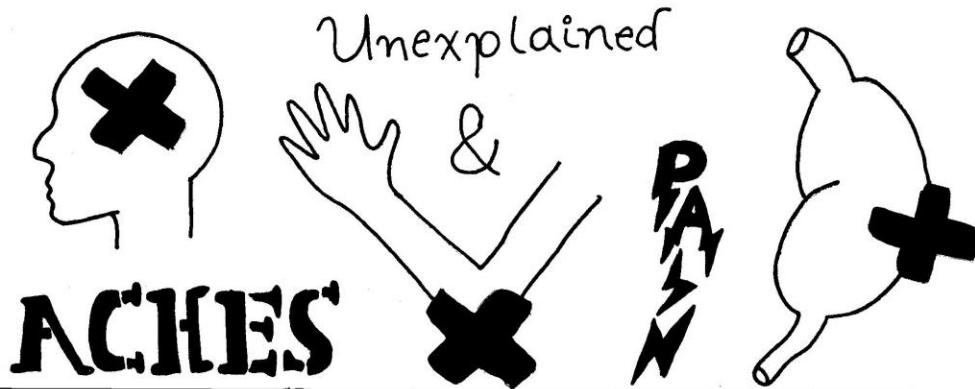
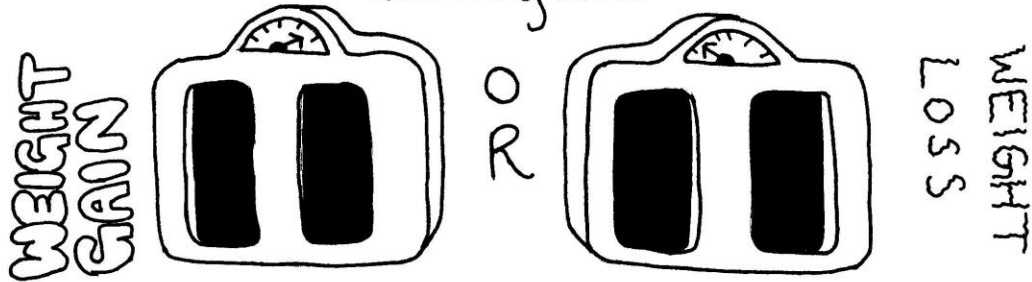
Or too little...



But regardless always feel



You May Have Noticed Changes In Appetite
Resulting In...



But Mostly You Probably Noticed The

Sadness

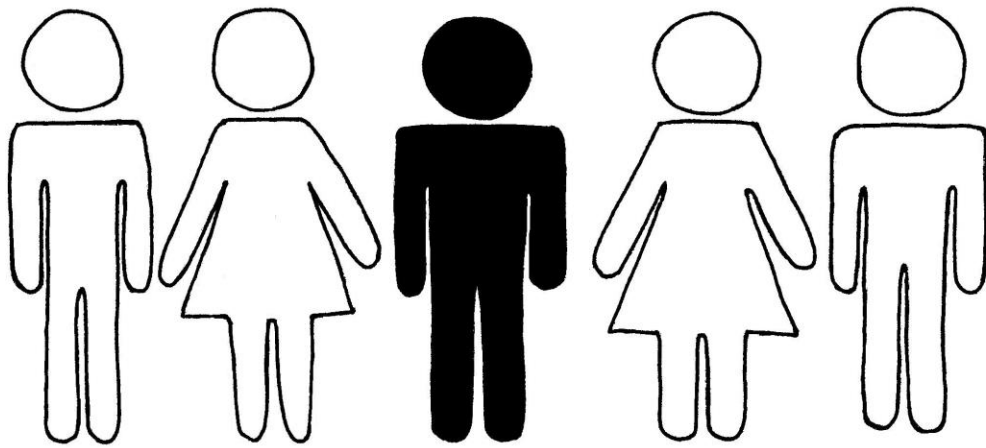
WORTHLESSNESS

Hopelessness

and thoughts
of suicide

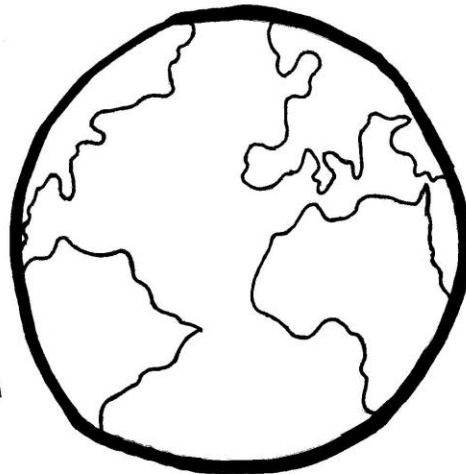
That
Mean
You Could
Have
DEPRESSION

But For As Bad As You Feel,
Know You're Not Alone



Nearly **1 in 5** People Will Experience Depression

That's
Almost
20%
of
the
Population

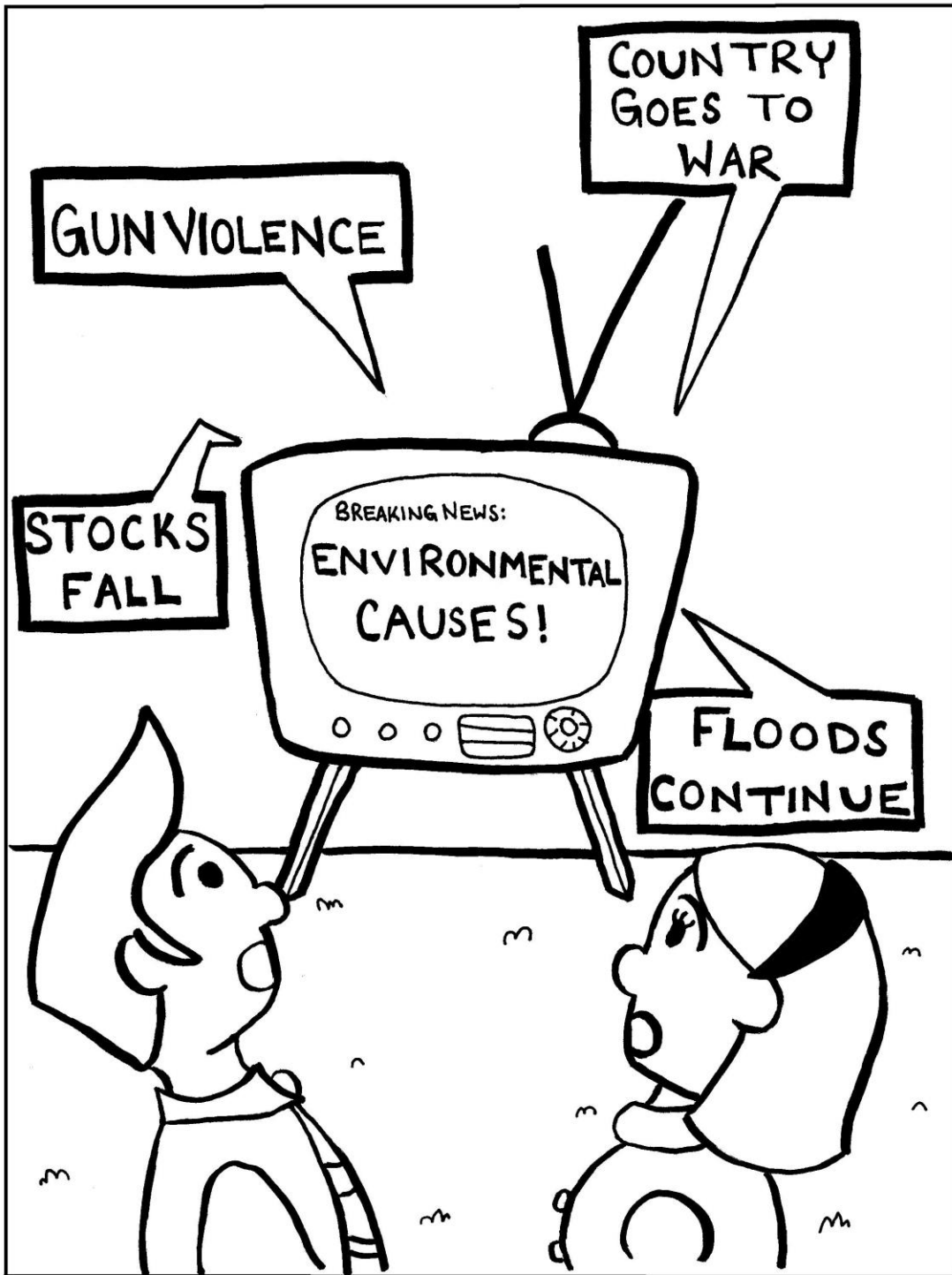


WORLDWIDE

SO
WHEN
CALLED
DEPRESSION
?

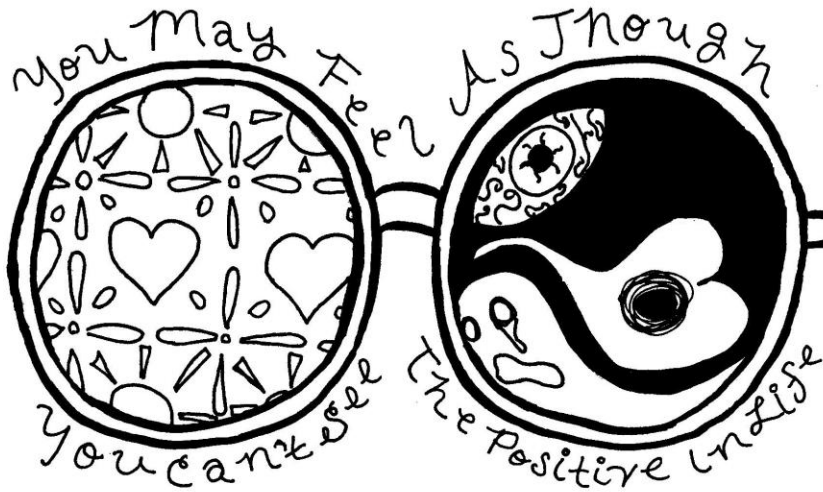
WELL, A LOT OF
THINGS

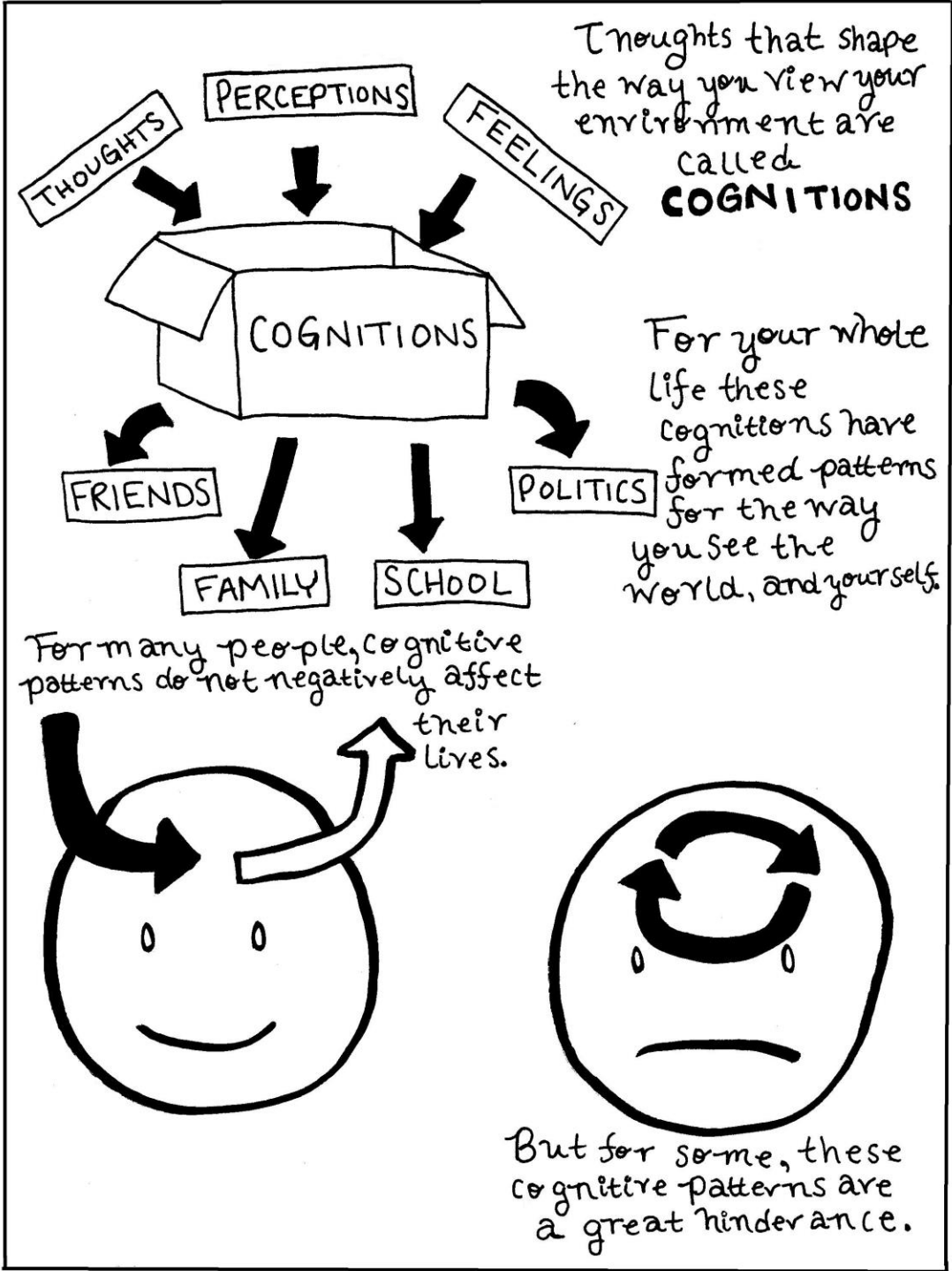




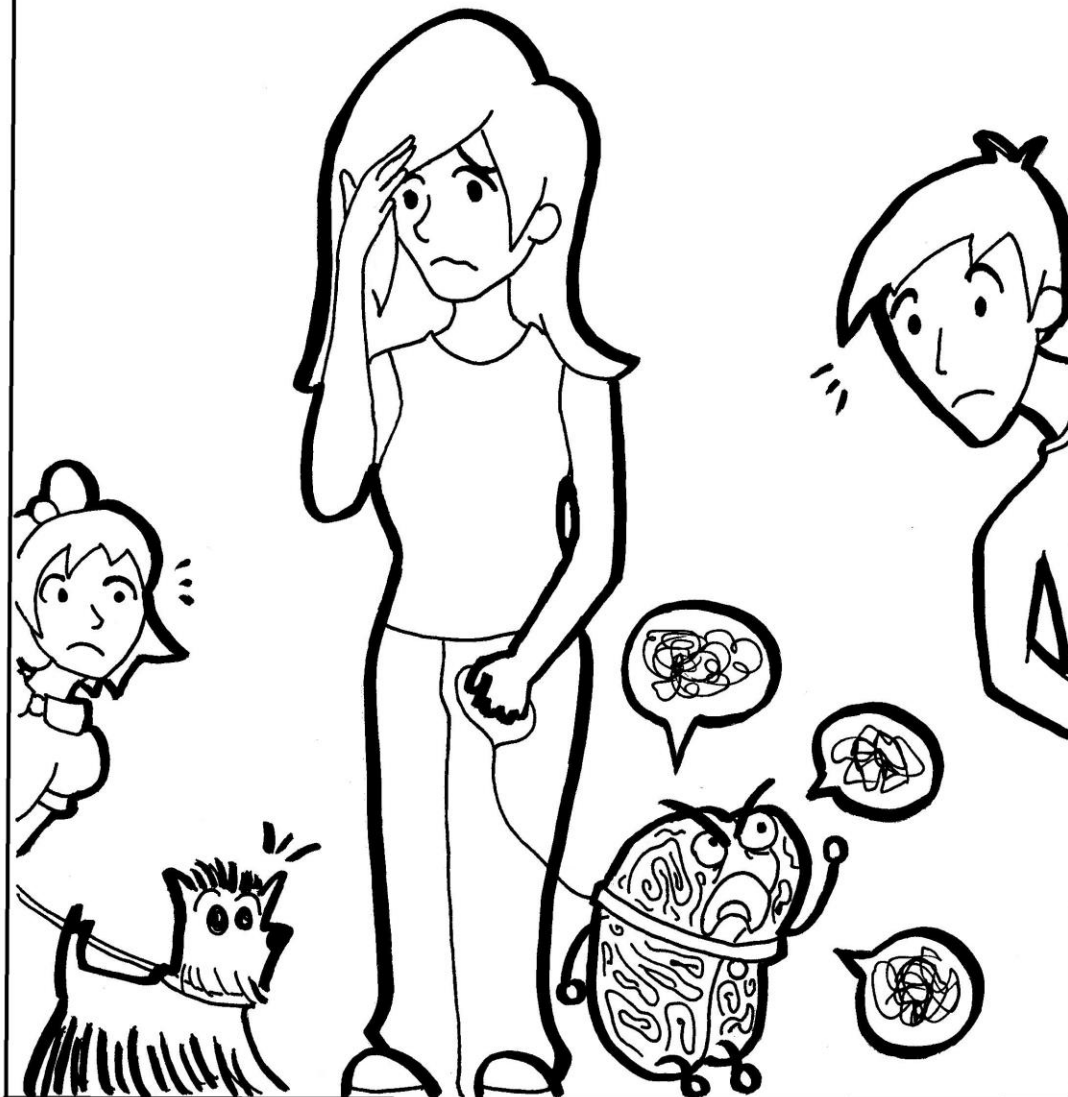
When You Feel Depressed, You
Probably Notice Your Bad
Thoughts

1st





If you are feeling depressed, you probably know what it's like to constantly have bad or negative thoughts about yourself and those around you, dictating your life.

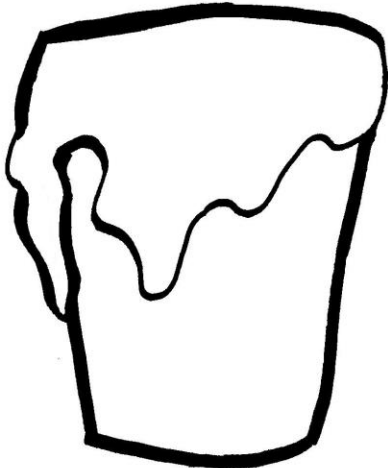


These negative ways
of thinking are called

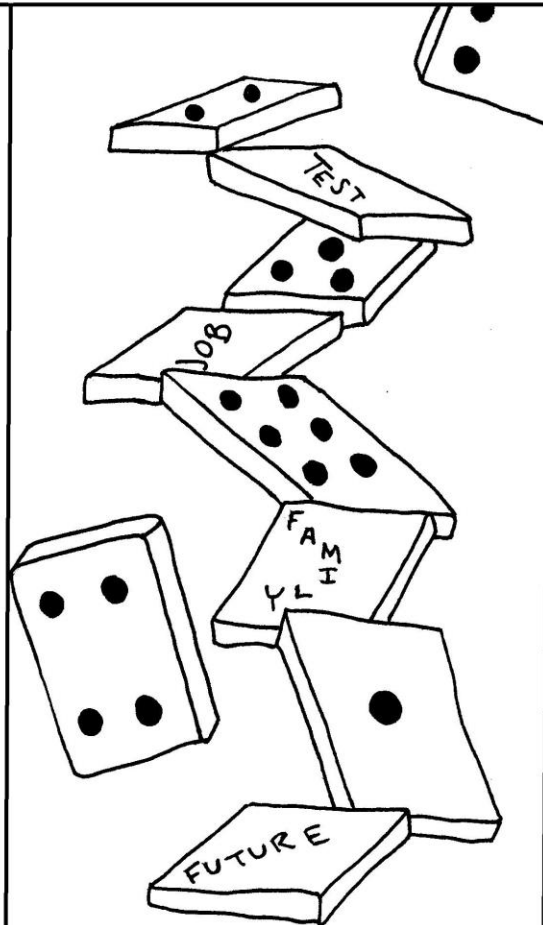
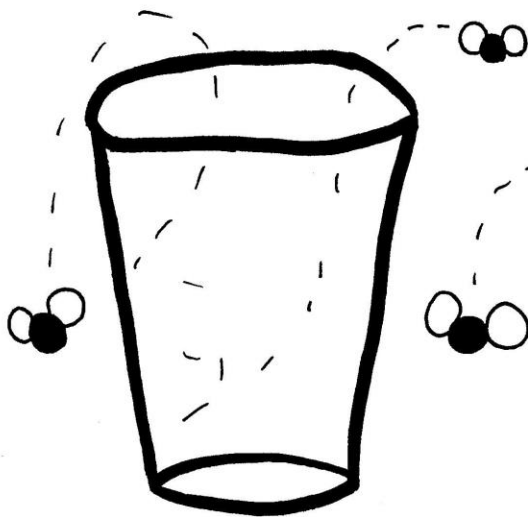
COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS

and typically
fall into one
of ten categories.

1. All or NOTHING Thinking



Think of it like the cup as half-empty or half-full, but to the extreme.



2. OVER-GENERALIZATION

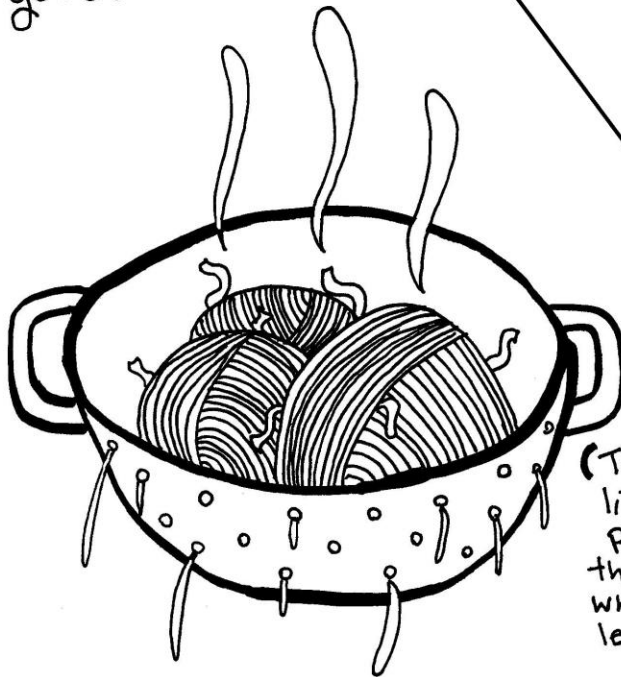
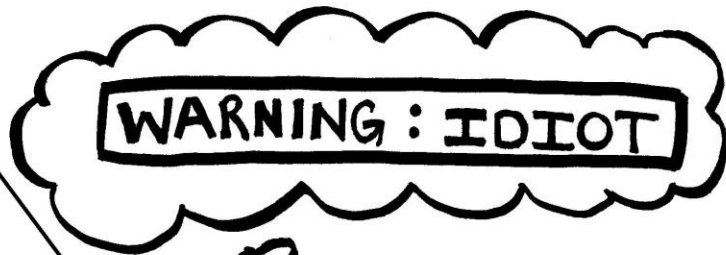
One or a few bad things mean that bad things will continue to happen, forever.

3. LABELING: One act or mistake defines your entire character.

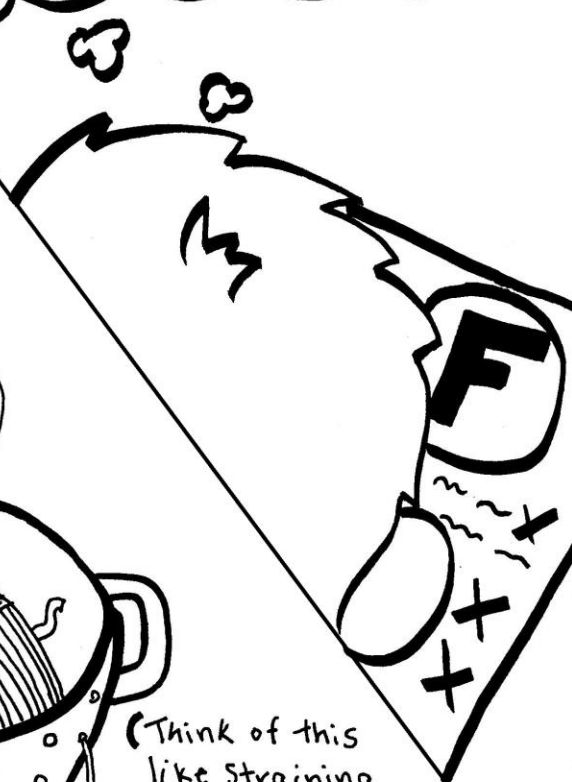
4.

MENTAL FILTERING

Only paying attention to the bad, while ignoring the good.



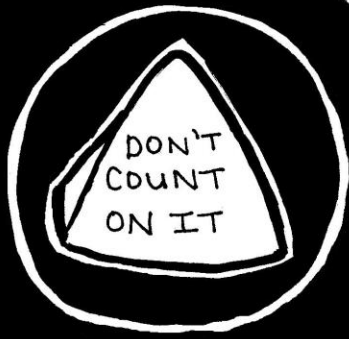
(Think of this like straining pasta—only the bad stays in, while all the good leaks out.)



5. Disqualifying positive experiences is when you ignore the good in your life.



6. Mind-Reading, or jumping to conclusions occurs when you assume the worst or predict the future based on your negative thoughts.

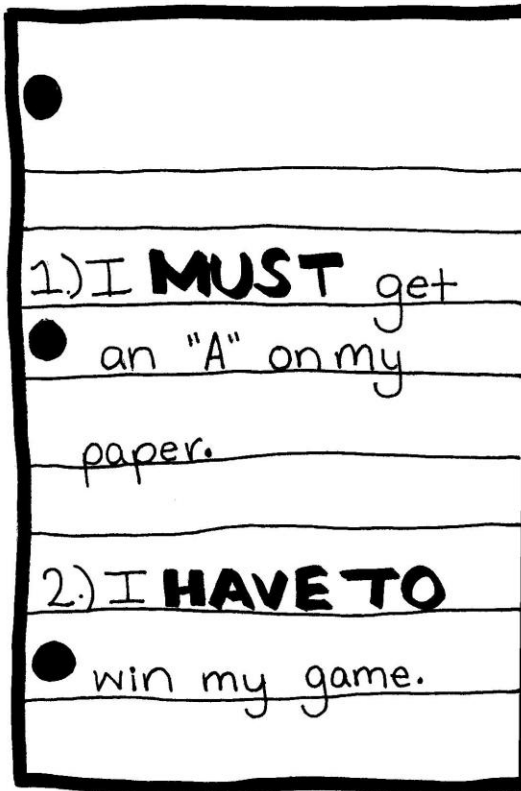


7. Similar to making a mountain out of a molehill, maximizing or minimizing a thought makes it much more or less important than it really is.



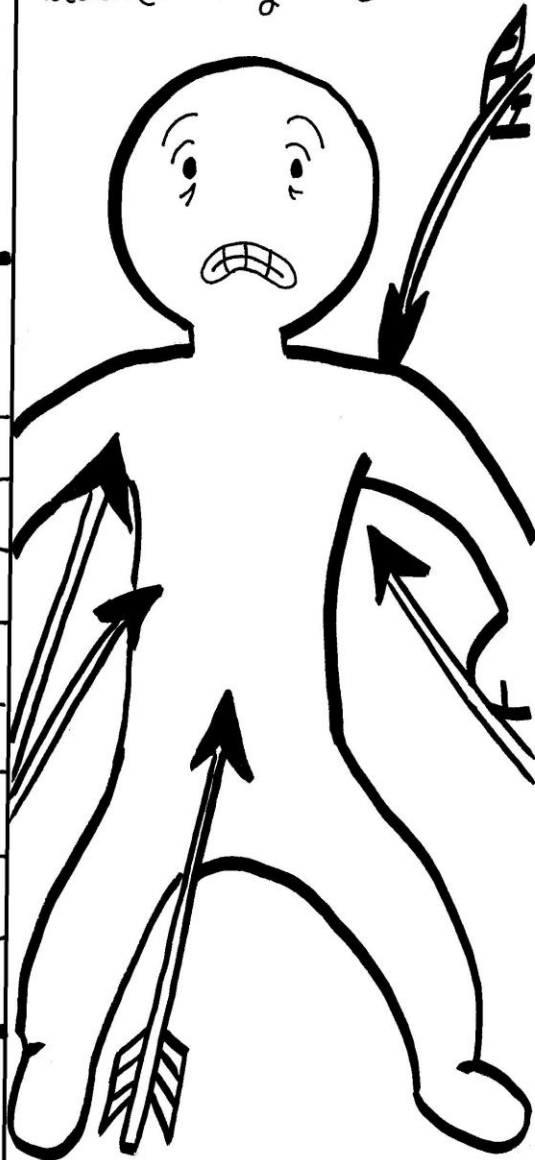
8. ABSOLUTES!!!

Absolute statements force you to do something, otherwise you are a failure.

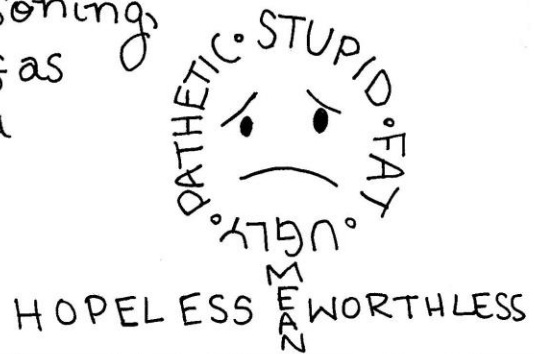


9.

PERSONALIZATION is thinking everything is an attack or is your fault.



10. Emotional Reasoning,
or seeing yourself as
the way that you
are feeling

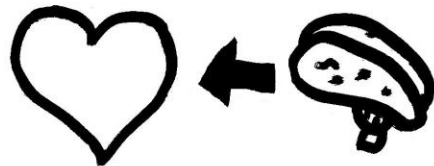


SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

When we feel
depressed, it is
easy to let our
emotions control
our thoughts.



Learning to
separate the
two can be a
helpful way to
feel better.



If you came to this manual,
chances are you were or are
feeling pretty down.



The negative thoughts
and emotions may have
started to affect your
daily life...



Your personal
relationships...



... And
overwhelm your
sense of
identity.

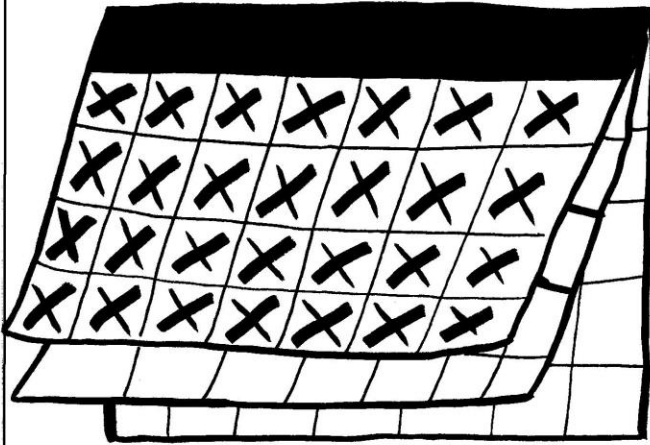
You're probably
thinking...



But what if I
said the most
effective way
to feel less
depressed ...

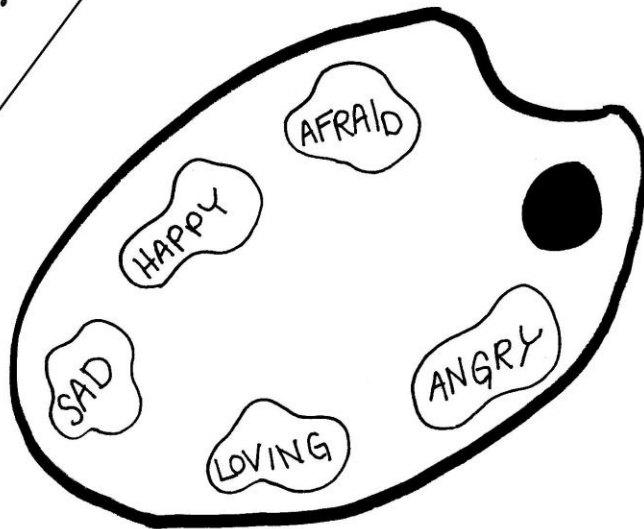
... Is to stop
trying to feel
less depressed
?





Try to think of someone who is happy 24/7. Can you do it? My guess is probably not. Why is this?

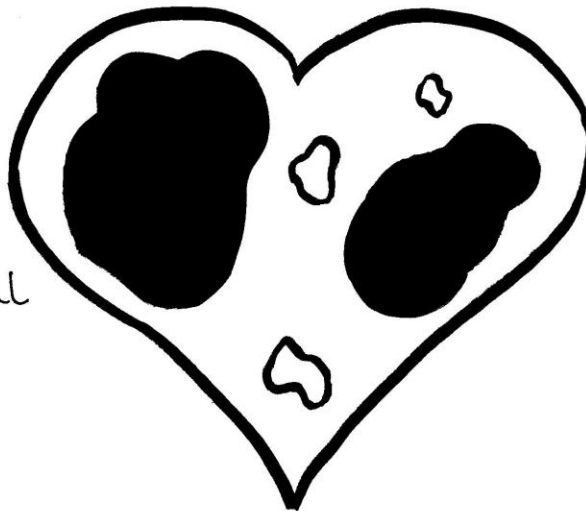
Negative emotions are a part of a normal human experience.



Because each person's genetic make-up and experiences are different, each person will have varying levels of different emotions.



Having many negative emotions may be your own individual "norm."



AND
THAT'S
OKAY

Sometimes it is our quest to get rid of negative emotions that makes us more miserable because we spend so much time thinking about them.



Often to no avail.



This is called the

HAPPINESS TRAP



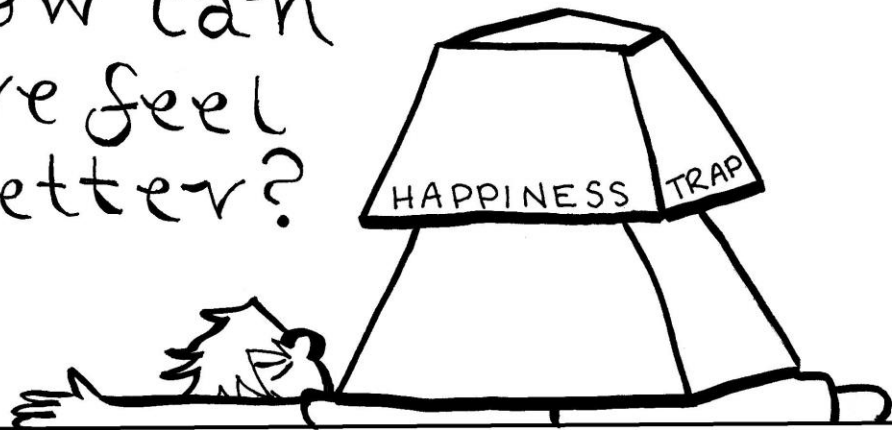
But if our emotions
make us miserable,



And working to
remove them makes
us more miserable,



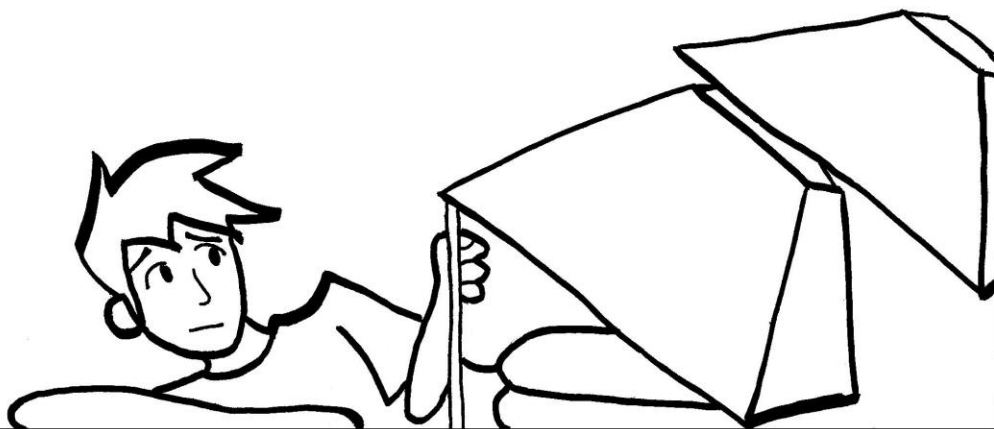
How can
we feel
better?



Acceptance and Commitment Therapy
or

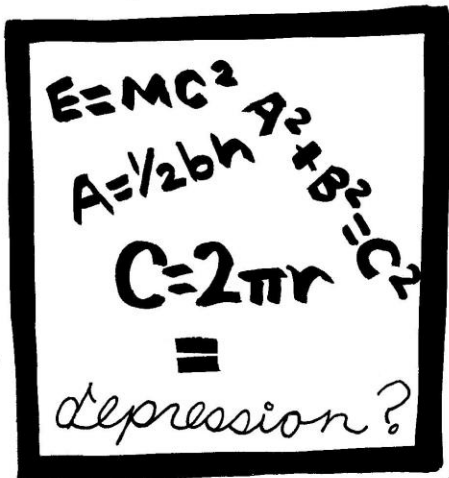
A C T

for short
can help you cope
with negative emotions



ACT

follows a unique theory of depression.



First of all, negative emotions do not cause depression;

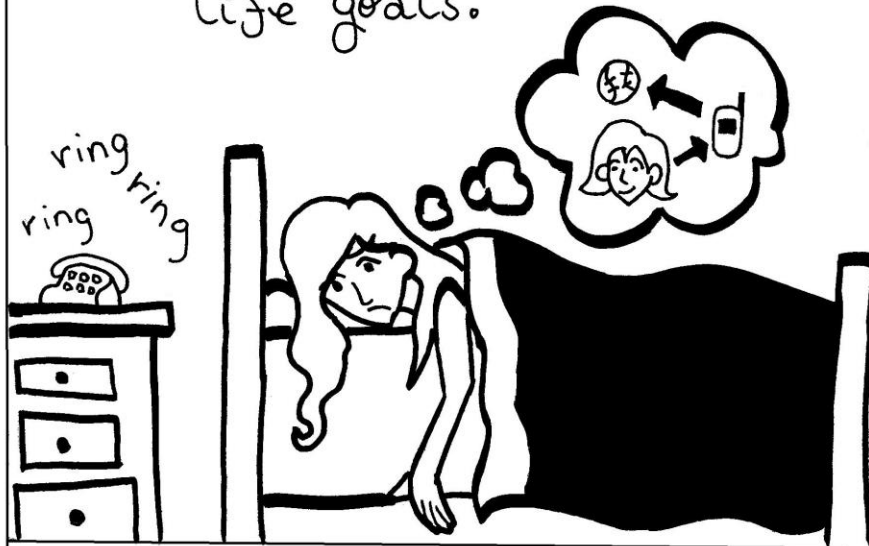


Problems in functioning do.

ACT outlines 6 problems in functioning

inaction
avoidance values
thinking fusion
conceptualizing

Inaction and impulsivity block your ability to move toward your life goals.



Experiential avoidance is avoiding any situation that may trigger negative emotions.



It may be helpful to look at the actions you take when something upsets you to see why you do it and what other actions can be done.

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS WHEN YOU ARE UPSET?

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU HAVE THESE THOUGHT?

HOW DO YOU FEEL AFTER YOU TAKE THAT ACTION?

WHAT ARE ACTIONS THAT MAKE YOU HAPPY?

CAN YOU THINK OF WAYS TO IMPLEMENT THESE ACTIONS WHEN YOU ARE UPSET?

Problems in the conceptualization of the self occur when you exaggerate the negative things you think about yourself. Are you being realistic?



SMART
UGLY
FUNNY
ATHELETIC
KIND
CREATIVE



Lacking clear values can make it easy to lose sight of who you are as a person.

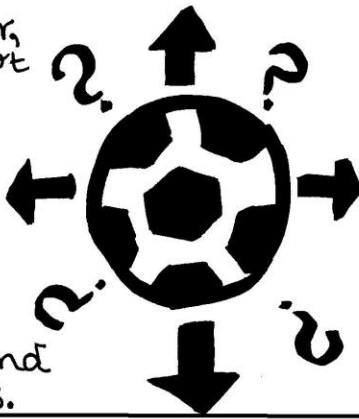
Defined values can help you decide.



In order to live by your values, you must have goals.

However, you cannot act out values.

Values can only guide your goals and actions.

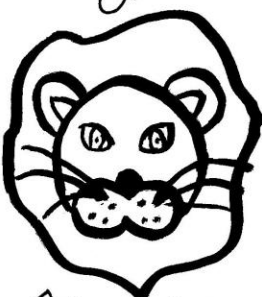


Clarifying your goals can be easy - what is the first thing you think of when asked what is important?

Goals can be anything, like...

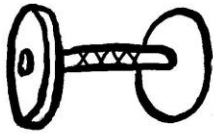


Love



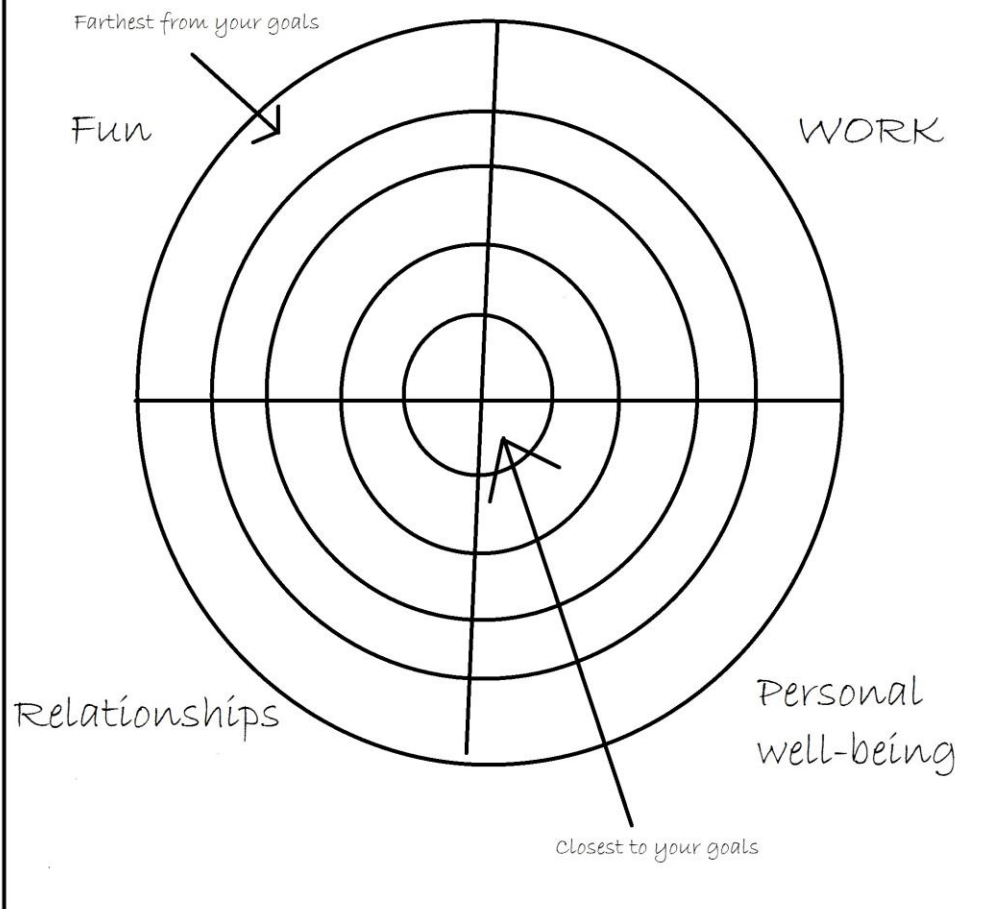
COURAGE

FITNESS



RELIGION

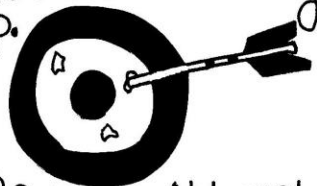
Here is an easy way to access how closely you are living to your goals. Try to complete it everyday.



When trying to come up with your goals, remember this acronym:

SMART.

Think of **S**pecific actions - vague promises are hard to keep.



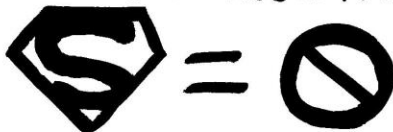
Is it **M**eaningful? If it will not help you live out your goals, what is the point of it?



Will it help you be **A**daptive?
Will it make your life better?



Is it **R**ealistic? Be down to earth. Goals that are unrealistic will make you feel worse.

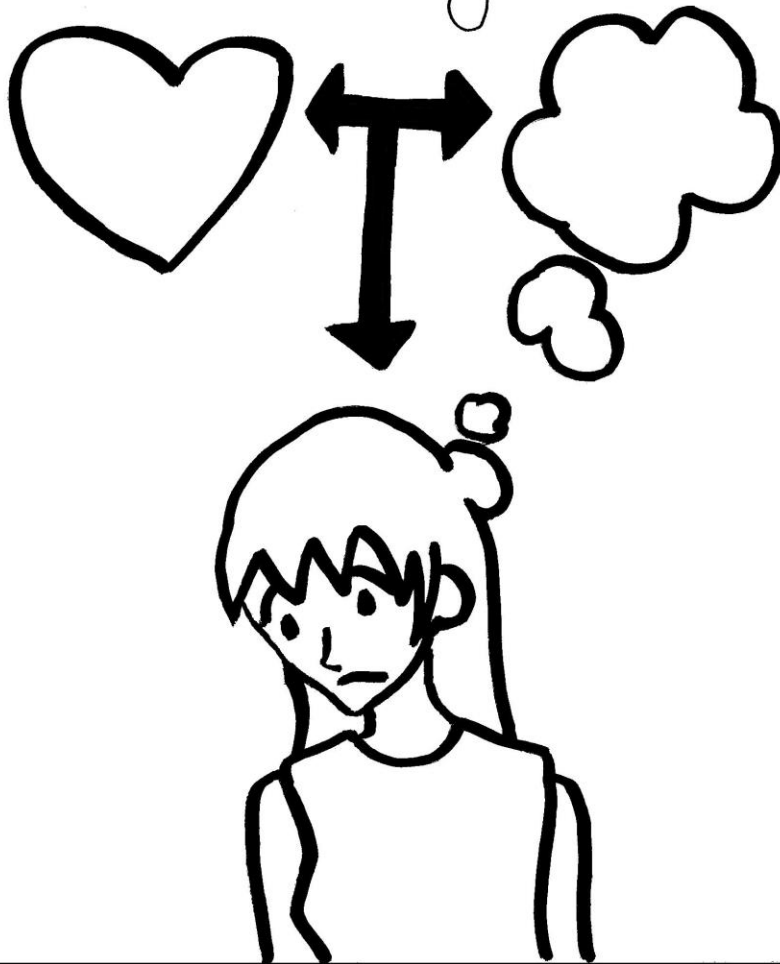


What **T**ime will it take place?

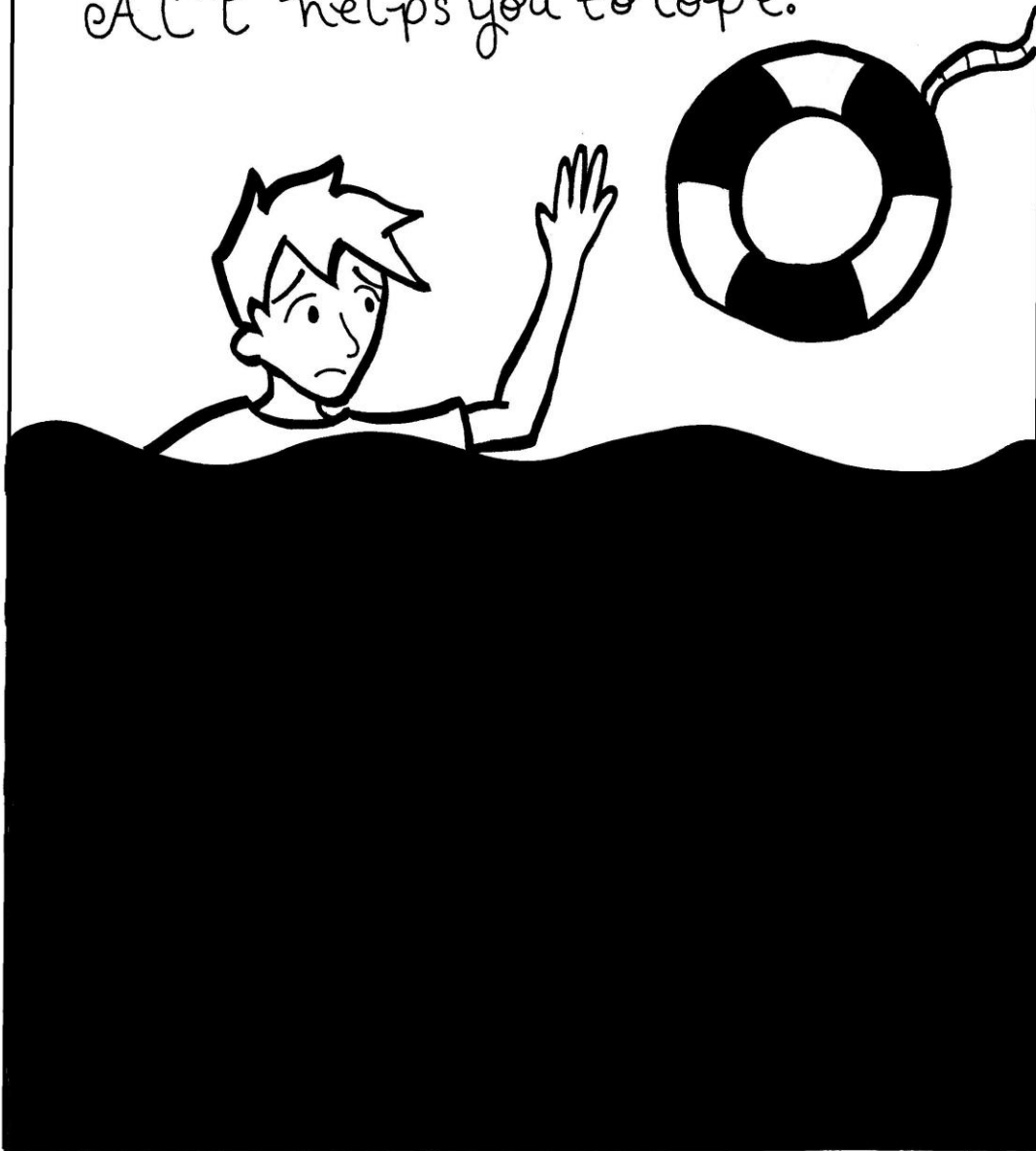
Having a specific time or date can help ensure it occurs.



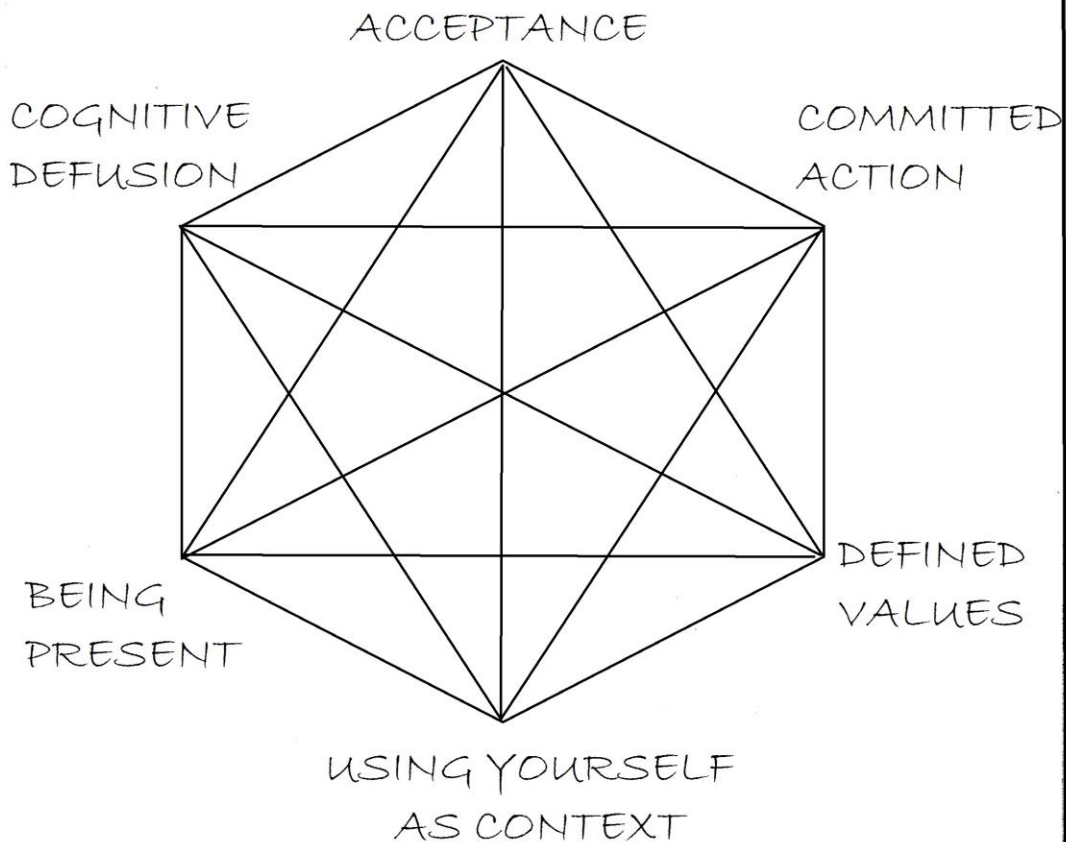
Cognitive fusion can be explained as seeing your thoughts and emotions about yourself as the same thing.



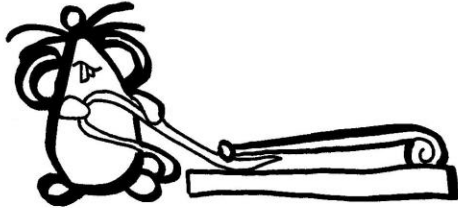
The ACT theory of depression does not aim to rid you of your depression. Instead ACT helps you to cope.



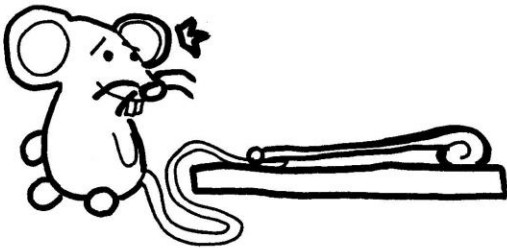
ACT outlines six solutions to its definition of mental dysfunction:



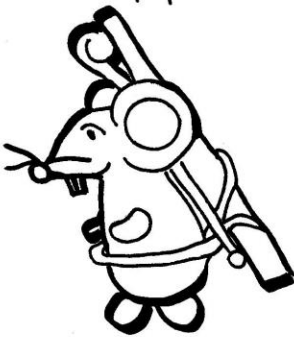
Acceptance is vital.



Once you accept your low mood,



You can free yourself from the happiness trap.



Cognitive defusion allows you to separate your thoughts from your emotions.



When you separate your thoughts and emotions, it becomes easier to put your emotions away.



Being present in the moment allows you to make decisions



With problems as you face them so that you do not become overwhelmed.

Using yourself as context helps you to judge yourself based on your consistent traits over time.

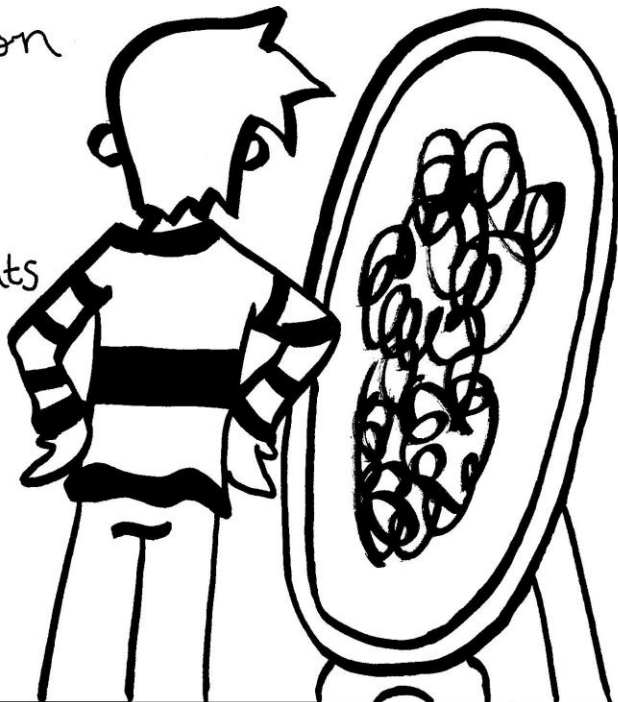
This makes it less easy to become trapped in the short-term negative opinions you may have of yourself.



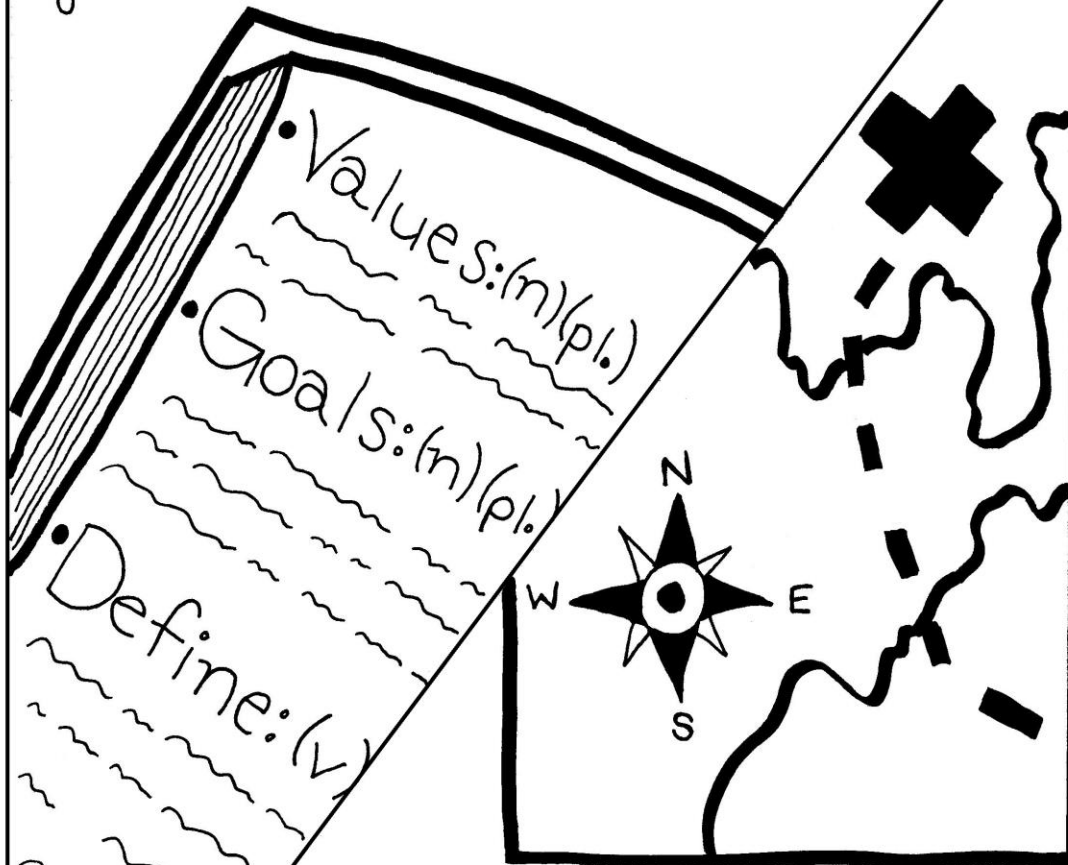
The problem with the dominance of past and future thinking is that you focus too much of your energy on things you cannot control.



Cognitive Fusion
can be explained
as melding
your emotions
with your thoughts
and sense of
self - you see
yourself as
all the
bad things
you feel



Define your own values. Doing this helps you to figure out your goals.

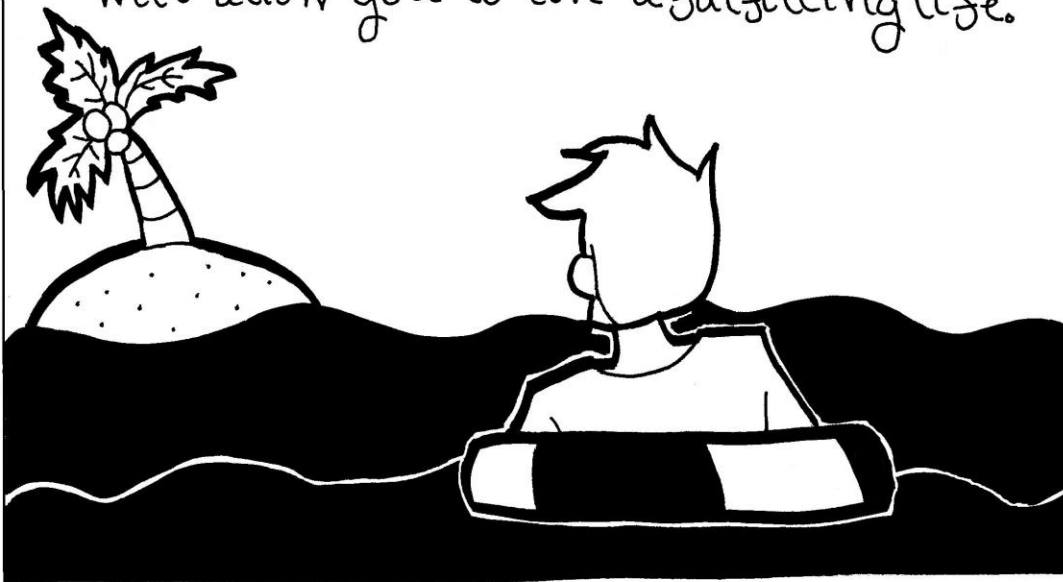


When you know your goals, you can make committed actions. This will help you to move closer to the ACT model of psychological well-being.

Following these criteria does not mean you will never feel depressed again. In fact, you may continue to feel depressed for much of your life.



However, practicing these criteria will allow you to live a fulfilling life.



Although you will likely still feel depressed, it is important to keep up with daily activities.



They don't have to be big. Take pride in the small achievements you make, like cooking or getting dressed.



As you stay committed to
your goals and values, you
will probably notice
that you are starting to
feel better.



And even amidst your
depression, you can
have a good life.

