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FORM 6.2

Defusion Practices for Everyday Living

Directions: The following techniques are samples of different methods that you can use to help see thoughts and feelings for what they are, and not what *they say they are*. This week, use at least one of the defusion techniques each day. As the week progresses, jot down any observations that might arise about your experience, stepping outside of your thoughts and looking at them in these new ways. You may wish to employ these techniques when you feel caught up in your thoughts, find yourself either lost in ruminations about the past or consumed by worries about the future, or notice that you are stuck in the habit of making evaluations and judgments about yourself and others.

1. Breaking Identification with Thoughts

Your foot is a part of you, but it isn't all of you. When you have a dream, that dream unfolds in your mind, but it isn't "you." Similarly, our thinking, verbal minds are a part of who we are, but they aren't all of who we are. For this exercise, act as if your mind was something outside of yourself. For these purposes, we are almost thinking of our mind as something or someone separate from who we are. For example, "My mind is telling me that I need to stay inside today" or "Oh, my mind is doing it's old familiar pattern of regretting my last break-up."

2. Thanking the Mind

Take a moment to recognize that we humans evolved to possess a fascinatingly powerful problem-solving machine, which we call the mind. This problem-solving machine has been designed by evolution to be "always on," constantly seeking out possible threats and difficulties. It has also been designed to have a "better safe than sorry" mode of operating, so that it will interpret even ambiguous things in the environment as possibly negative. We carry this commentary in our minds about possible threats and problems.

When your mind is catching you up in worry and rumination, it really is just doing its job. So the next time you notice your mind offering up negative thoughts, step back from the thoughts, recognize them as a flow of mental events, and thank your mind for doing its job. For example, "Thanks, mind, for trying to warn me of the dangers of being rejected at this dinner party. I'm choosing to go anyway, but I know you are just doing your job, so thanks."

3. Taking Your Keys with You

Grab your key ring and match each challenging thought and feeling to one of the keys. As you go about your day, recognize that you are carrying these sometimes troubling mental events with you, just like you are carrying your keys. You need to carry your keys to function in your day, just like you need to carry these thoughts. Notice the thoughts, and your ability to carry them, whenever you notice the keys.

The techniques in this form are adapted from a number of acceptance and commitment therapy sources (such as Hayes, 2005; Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 1999) and can also be found at *www.contextualpsychology.org*.