

What is ACT?

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) isn't about fixing your brain or pretending everything's fine.

It's about learning how to carry on with the things that matter, even when life, or your thoughts, feels a bit of a shambles.

Developed in the 1980s by psychologist Steven C. Hayes (a man who famously tried to sort his own panic attacks *by reading too many books about panic attacks*), ACT gives you research-backed tools to act with purpose.

No mantras. Just grounded psychology, requiring a bit of guts and commitment.



7 Skills to quiet the noise and help you ACT

1. Name Your Thoughts

 **The Concept:** *Cognitive Defusion*
You are not your thoughts. You're the one noticing them.

✎ **Try this:** Write down your mental blockers, and rephrase them: Instead of "I'm not good enough...", try *"I'm noticing my mind is telling me...I'm not good enough"*

🚫 **Why it matters:** This gives you freedom to choose how to act, rather than obeying old thought patterns.

2. Let the Weather Pass

 **The Concept:** *Acceptance*
You don't have to feel great to live meaningfully. Trying to "push through" feelings often makes them worse.

✎ **Try this:** Do an emotion body scan. Notice where discomfort shows up physically – without fixing or judging, just observing.

🚫 **Why it matters:** Feeling discomfort doesn't mean you're off-track. Acceptance means you keep going without waiting to "feel better first."

3. Drop the Labels

 **The Concept:** *Self-as-Context*
You are not your roles. You are the one choosing how to live them.

✎ **Try this:** List 3–5 old labels you hold. **Ask:** *"Are these helping me live how I want to live?"* Reframe them with kindness: *"I've learned to be this way, but I'm allowed to change."*

🚫 **Why it matters:** Old identities can quietly steer your life. This exercise helps you loosen their grip so you can live by choice, not habit.

4. Get Present, On Purpose

 **The Concept:** *Getting Present*
You can't choose what matters if you're not present to notice it.

👉 **Try this:** Pick a basic task (dishes, walking, brushing teeth). Narrate it in your head as you go. Your mind will wander. Good. That's the practice. Catch it, bring it back to the task.

🚫 **Why it matters:** Attention is the gateway to meaningful choices. If you're not present, your choices won't be either.

5. What Matters More?

 **The Concept:** *Values Clarity*
When fear shows up, clear values remind you that something else matters more.

👉 **Try this:** Write down one NB thing you've been avoiding. Then fill this in:
"Even though I feel ___, I want to do it anyway. Because ___ matters more."

🚫 **Why it matters:** Values don't erase fear. They just outrank it. Doubt doesn't go away on command. But values help you act anyway.

6. One Tiny Step

 **The Concept:** *Committed Action*
Don't wait to feel ready. Start before that

👉 **Try this:** Choose one value that matters to you today. Pick one behaviour that fits. Do it in the next 12 hours. Then say: *"That was me, living my value of ___."*

🚫 **Why it matters:** Change isn't built on insight alone. It's built on action. Over time, your small steps become the shift you're looking for.

= 7. Psychological Flexibility

You can't control everything.
But you can stop letting chaos make your choices for you..

👉 **Try this:** Ask yourself –
1. When did I react out of habit this week?
2. When did I choose instead?
3. What value do I want to show up with tomorrow?

🚫 **Why it matters:** This is the real muscle: noticing, pausing, and choosing in real time. It's not about flawless days. It's about more purposeful responses. One choice at a time.