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## Applying Perspective-Taking to Acceptance

This is an exercise that allows you to use your perspective-taking ability specifically to assist with acceptance of a particularly difficult experience. You should go through this first by applying it to a past experience that you struggled with.

Then, by practicing it repeatedly, you will find that you are able to engage in a version of it even in the midst of a new difficult experience. It will become a powerful drill that you call to mind when hard things are happening in real time.

To follow the instructions, record them on your phone, leaving gaps between each bullet, and play it back.

- Close your eyes and get in contact with whatever you struggled with. Take some time to feel what you feel, think what you think, and remember what you remember. Don't try to fix it – try to contact your pain.
- As you do that, notice that there's a part of you noticing that suffering.
- Take that noticing part of you awareness and imagine leaving your body and looking back at yourself. Notice what you look like from the outside but realize that inside you are hurting.
- Ask yourself (but do not answer ... just hold the question in awareness): *“What do I think of that person I see called ‘me’? Is this a lovable person? Is this a whole person?”*
- Take that point of consciousness to the other side of the room, leaving yourself sitting there. Now look back at yourself from afar. See yourself sitting there, suffering. You might notice also that there are others not too far away (in your house or neighborhood) and for sure some of them are right now suffering as well.
- Ask yourself again (but do not answer ... just hold the question in awareness): *“What do I think of that person I see called ‘me’? Is this a lovable person? Is this a whole person?”*



- As you picture yourself from across the room, imagine that you are reading a book that asked you to look at yourself from across the room while feeling something that was causing suffering. But it is 10 years from now and you have grown far wiser. If you could pass back two or three sentences from that wiser future about how to be with yourself with this issue what would you pass back to yourself?
- Sit with that for a few moments and mentally write yourself a short note of advice. Then come back to your body and open your eyes.

One of the interesting things about this exercise is that the notes people write usually conform to the wisdom the flexibility skills teach us: Just be you; go for it; it's OK – this will pass; you are lovable; you can let it go.

I believe this is an indication that our natural consciousness is psychologically flexible, which means you have a constant ally in learning how to develop your own psychological flexibility: you have you. The whole, complete, genuine, authentic you.