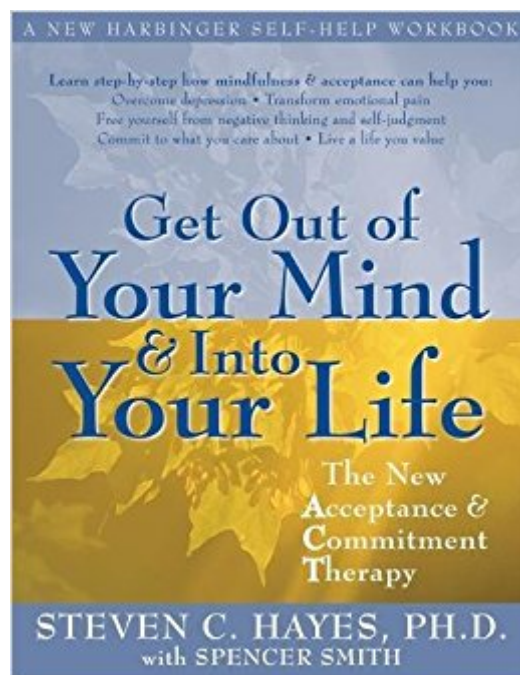




The book was found

Get Out Of Your Mind And Into Your Life: The New Acceptance And Commitment Therapy (A New Harbinger Self-Help Workbook)



Synopsis

Get ready to take a different perspective on your problems and your life—and the way you live it. Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) is a new, scientifically based psychotherapy that takes a fresh look at why we suffer and even what it means to be mentally healthy. What if pain were a normal, unavoidable part of the human condition, but avoiding or trying to control painful experience were the cause of suffering and long-term problems that can devastate your quality of life? The ACT process hinges on this distinction between pain and suffering. As you work through this book, you'll learn to let go of your struggle against pain, assess your values, and then commit to acting in ways that further those values. ACT is not about fighting your pain; it's about developing a willingness to embrace every experience life has to offer. It's not about resisting your emotions; it's about feeling them completely and yet not turning your choices over to them. ACT offers you a path out of suffering by helping you choose to live your life based on what matters to you most. If you're struggling with anxiety, depression, or problem anger, this book can help—clinical trials suggest that ACT is very effective for a whole range of psychological problems. But this is more than a self-help book for a specific complaint—it is a revolutionary approach to living a richer and more rewarding life. Learn why the very nature of human language can cause suffering Escape the trap of avoidance Foster willingness to accept painful experience Practice mindfulness skills to achieve presence in the moment Discover the things you really value most Commit to living a vital, meaningful life This book has been awarded The Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies Self-Help Seal of Merit—an award bestowed on outstanding self-help books that are consistent with cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) principles and that incorporate scientifically tested strategies for overcoming mental health difficulties. Used alone or in conjunction with therapy, our books offer powerful tools readers can use to jump-start changes in their lives.

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[View larger](#) [View larger](#) The self-help workbook format is uniquely effective in helping people work through and recover from a number of mental health conditions, from addiction to depression. Our evidence-based workbooks are written by leading professionals, are recommended by clinicians, and are designed to be effective when used alone or in conjunction with therapy. From the Publisher Who Created the Self-Help Workbook New Harbinger's pioneering self-help workbooks offer step-by-step guidance, and are highly effective in helping people work through difficult issues—from depression and anxiety to eating disorders and addiction. Our evidence-based self-help workbooks cover a variety of topics, including: Anxiety Depression Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) Eating disorders Self-esteem Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) And more!

[View larger](#) From the Book: An Example of a Daily Pain Diary Suppose someone who is stuck in a dead-end job and struggles with social anxiety filled out the Daily Pain Diary. It might look something like this.

[View larger](#) From the Book: What the pain in your head may look like? If you spent some time on it, you might end up with a head that looks something like this figure to the left. The head looks very busy. But must it be your enemy? As a physical metaphor for a real change in direction in your life, are you willing to put your head on paper into your pocket and carry it for a while? During the time you choose to carry it, pat your pocket periodically to remind yourself of what you are carrying. In this physical metaphor, see whether it is okay to have all that stuff on the paper and still do whatever you need to do in your life as you go about day-to-day living. Let carrying the picture of your head stuffed with your issues be a way of asking yourself whether the stuff on that paper really stands between you and living a powerful, vital life, or whether you can, in fact, carry it gently, lovingly, and willingly, as it is and not as it says it is.

Trying to "change" negative thoughts through cognitive gymnastics is like trying to win a war

single-handedly. Why waste a life trying the impossible? In *Get Out of Your Mind and Into Your Life: The New Acceptance and Commitment Therapy*, advocate Dr. Steven Hayes escorts the mildly depressed, angry, and anxiety prone through a new approach to handling suffering--universal human suffering caused by language's illusions. Rather than fighting off bad thoughts and feelings with internal pep talks, Hayes beautifully explains how to embrace those pessimistic and foreboding mental voices (much like welcoming home one's cranky, play-worn children), "defuse" them with respectful attention, and commit to leading a purposeful life that includes their occasional ranting. Intriguing exercises help readers identify their core struggles, parse these into manageable pieces, and develop effective ways to move beyond rumination. The work progresses easily, thanks to Hayes' engaging style and his grace in coaching readers. Critics of cognitive and behavioral therapies will warm to Hayes' logical explanations of language's pitfalls (even language used by other therapeutic approaches); his sometimes goofy--but surprisingly effective--exercises; well-timed etymology lessons; and his uncanny ability to predict and skillfully address reader reactions throughout the workbook. Ironically, the path to life clocks many hours in the mind; plan to dedicate an intensive month of introspection to this program. Anyone who has been accused of thinking too much, who begrudges compliments, pines for a different life, or feels trapped at a mental dead end can benefit from Hayes' superior guidance.--Liane Thomas

Dr. Steven Hayes answers a few questions about his book, and describes how his research was inspired by his own struggles with panic and anxiety. Questions for Steven Hayes .com: Can you give us a lay person's primer on acceptance and commitment therapy? Steven Hayes: Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is based on a rather remarkable fact: when normal problem solving skills are applied to psychologically painful thoughts or feelings, suffering often increases. Our research program has shown this in thousands of patients, in almost every area of human suffering. Fortunately, we have discovered why this is and we have developed some ways of correcting it. The basic research underlying ACT shows that entanglement with your own mind leads automatically to experiential avoidance: the tendency to try first to remove or change negative thoughts and feelings as a method of life enhancement. This attempted sequence makes negative thoughts and feelings more central, important, and fearsome--and often decreasing the ability to be flexible, effective, and happy. The trick that traps us is that these unhelpful mental processes are fed by agreement OR disagreement. Your mind is like a person who has to be right about everything. If you know any people like that you know that they are excited when you agree with them but they can be even more excited and energized when you argue with them! Minds are like that. So what do you do? ACT teaches you what to do. I will say what that is, but readers need to

understand that these mere words will not be useful in and of themselves. Minds are too clever for that! That is why the book has so many exercises and why we have a free discussion group on line for people working through the book (http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/ACT_for_the_Public/). What ACT teaches is acceptance of emotions, mindful awareness of thoughts, contact with a transcendent sense of self, and action based on chosen values. This constellation of skills has shown itself in controlled research to help with an amazingly large range of problems, from anxiety to managing the challenges of physical disease, from depression, to stopping smoking. .com: Some of this work is said to have come from your own battles with anxiety and panic. How did these ideas apply to your own struggles? Steven Hayes: It was my own panic disorder that first put me on to the problem we have now confirmed in our research. My panic disorder began a little over 25 years ago. I watched in horror as it grew rapidly, simply by applying my normal problem solving skills to it. Anxiety felt awful and seemingly made it impossible to function, so it was obvious to me that I first needed to get rid of it before my life would improve. I tried lots of things to do that. But this very effort meant I had to constantly evaluate my level of anxiety, and fearfully check to see if it was going up or down as a result of my efforts. As a result, anxiety quickly became the central focus of my life. Anxiety itself became something to be anxious about, and meanwhile life was put on hold. After two or three years of this I'd had enough. I began to experiment with acceptance, mindfulness, and valued action instead of detecting, disputing, and changing my insides. I remember a moment that symbolizes the change in direction. In the middle of a panic attack, with a guttural scream like you hear in the movies, I literally shouted out loud to my own mind. "You can make me feel pain, you can make me feel anxiety," I yelled. "But you cannot make me turn away from my own experience." It has not been a smooth path and it was several years before anxiety itself was obviously way down (getting it to go down was no longer my purpose, remember, but ironically when you stop trying to make it happen, often it does), but almost immediately life opened up again. ACT is the result of over 20 years of research, following the lead this provided. .com: You are a language researcher and chapter two of Get Out of Your Mind and Into Your Life is called "Why Language Leads to Suffering." Can you tell us why you suggest that language is a source of human suffering? Steven Hayes: Human language (by that I mean our symbolic abilities generally) is central to effective human cognition. It evolved to keep us from starving or being eaten--and it has done a pretty good job of that. The key to symbolic processes is the ability to relate events in new and arbitrary ways. Our research program has shown this ability even in 14 month old babies, and we now know it comes from direct training from parents and others as part of normal language development. It is a wonderful skill. It allows us to imagine futures that have never been, and to

compare situations that have never actually been experienced. That is the every essence of human verbal problem solving. But that same process has a downside for human beings. For example, it allows us to fear things we have never experienced (e.g., death). It allows us to run from the past or compare the dull present to a fantasized future and to be unhappy as a result. And in my case it lead to the common sense but ultimately unhelpful idea that I needed to get rid of anxiety before I could live well. We get a lot of training in how to develop and use our minds, but we get very little training in how to step out of the mental chatter when that is needed. As a result, this mental tool begins to use us. It will even claim to BE us. The overextension of human language and cognition, I believe, is at the core of the vast majority of human suffering in the developed world and human technology (the media) is only amplifying the problem by exposing us to an ever increasing stream of symbols and images. Learning how to get out of your mind and into your life when you need to do that is an essential skill in the modern world.

“With kindness, erudition, and humor, the authors of *Get Out of Your Mind and Into Your Life* educate readers into a new way of thinking about psychological issues in general and life satisfaction in particular. Their combination of cutting-edge research and resonance with ancient, tried-and-true practices makes this one of the most fascinating and illuminating self-help books available. If you’re tired of standard psychological parlance and still frustrated with your quality of life, this book can be a godsend.” • Martha Beck, columnist for *O Magazine* and author of *Finding Your Own North Star* and *Expecting Adam*. “This manual, firmly based on cutting-edge psychological science and theory, details an innovative and rapidly growing approach that can provide you with the power to transform your very experience of life. Highly recommended for all of us.” • David H. Barlow, professor of psychology, research professor of psychiatry, and director of the Center for Anxiety and Related Disorders at Boston University. “This is the quintessential workbook on acceptance and commitment therapy. Written with wit, clinical wisdom, and compassionate skepticism, it succeeds in showing us that, paradoxically, there is great therapeutic value in going out of our minds. Once released from the struggle with thought, we are free to discover that a life of meaning and value is closer at hand than thought allowed. This book will serve patients, therapists, researchers, and educators looking for an elegant exposition of the nuts and bolts of this exciting approach.” • Zindel V. Segal, Ph.D., the Morgan Firestone Chair in Psychotherapy and professor of psychiatry and psychology at the University of Toronto and author of *Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression*. “This book is a user-friendly tool for clinicians who may be looking for adjunct handouts for

clients with a wide variety of issues. Exercises found within can help deepen, structure, or guide experiences contacted in session. As a stand-alone self-help book, it brings to light the guiding principles that make ACT such an empowering approach. I highly recommend this book to clinicians and laypeople alike. — Sandra Georgescu, Psy.D., assistant professor at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology.

Totally redoing the review because so much has changed since I wrote this one a few years ago. I still leave it at four stars. Why? The content can be very confusing at times. There are a LOT of metaphors that are used in the book. It would be best to have a therapist help with some of the metaphors. At first, it was very hard for me to understand the chess board metaphor and your head is the chess board. There is also the metaphor of riding the bus, taking your brain for a walk, and others. Some were a lot easier for me to understand than others. The nice thing about ACT, is that it doesn't say that something is wrong with you. Instead, it embraces on the Buddhism principle that suffering is inevitable. It engages mindfulness, noticing the moment and not acting on it. The metaphor of riding on the bus is a lot easier for people to understand. But taking the brain on a walk is a good one too. In the end, I think this book is really good. It would best be utilized with a therapist present. Despite it being a self-help book, there will be some confusion about the topics and what the author meant.

Excellent way to get started with a mindfulness/meditation practice, especially if you are scientifically minded or purely pragmatic, with no patience for the religious trappings in which mindfulness is often wrapped with. Lots of excellent and very effective exercises are included in the book, and it is written very clearly and convincingly.

Great stuff in here. It combines the techniques with the why -- based on research of how the mind works. It's a workbook so ... the exercises are needed to understand the material. I'm working with a PhD candidate from Rutgers with this -- we were doing CBT/ERP for panic disorder and depression was interfering with my compliance to the therapy (I wasn't doing the exposures) so.... he switched yo this to first address that. I found chapter 7's '3 senses of self' to be difficult to understand -- my psychologist (PhD candidate) helped. I also found that I needed to get more info on the web about the term, 'cognitive fusion', because it wasn't clear to me from the book. My psychologist selected this book so ... it could be just me.

I had a much better time reading *The Confidence Gap* and *The Happiness Trap*, which are also ACT books, than I did this one. It was not very well thought out or well done. The information is invaluable, but it's not given in a way that is realistically digestible. This book needs a complete reworking with someone more interested in getting the reader involved in a realistic way.

This is a wonderful book/workbook for people who are chronically anxious and/or depressed. It gives "tools" for living in the moment, not the past or not the future. Besides having very beneficial ideas to help you live with anxiety/depression, the book has activities on which to work. Some of the activities are brief. Some take a week to complete. If you or a loved one has tried meds and counseling to help these conditions, and those things haven't worked, please ask them to try this book. I found it beneficial.

The title makes this book sound like yet another "feel better" style self-help narrative, but I was pleasantly surprised. Dr. Hayes wrote this more as a workbook that allows the reader to better highlight negative impacts of anxiety, pain, or anger and then retrain the brain. His teaching style is rather effective; and clearly he wants his reader to engage with their own story in place of superimposing his theory as absolute truth. He doesn't spend pages of introduction grandstanding with false modesty, but delves right into the subject. He doesn't drone on about the efficacy of the therapy, or waste half the content seeking to convince us (the reader) of some newfound truth. Instead he presents a finding, explains how our brains process that information, and provides examples until we can apply it with our own inputs. For a man that was integral to the foundation of this modality of Cognitive Behavior Therapy, is a leader of his field, and wrote a book (this one) that once overtook *Harry Potter* on the Best Seller's list, it is refreshing to have his focus on the subject at hand in place of himself. If you've read self-help books by many of the talk circuit gurus, this writer will stand in sharp contrast. A joke about Psychologists says that if you go to them with one problem, you'll leave with two. The author demonstrates that often the echoes of negative stimuli carry through and have an even greater impact on how we live our lives. While he might show you the man behind the green curtain he also teaches us to understand those brain pathways, and how to redirect them to a more positive outcome. Whether you were recommended to buy this book, or it is "homework" from your Counselor or Therapist, you will gain far more value from these pages than the price you paid.

I highly recommend this book for anyone who is interested in overcoming their own internal

struggles or who wishes to help others with their struggles. ACT adds some important elements to Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, adding to our knowledge and perspective in dealing with internal issues. The use of metaphors is effective. So are the sections that break down and focus on the different aspects of this therapy technique, including acceptance (willingness), mindfulness, and valued action. As a mental health worker I am excited to utilize this technique (and have some here and there already) and was able to benefit from it myself. After all for those of us that work in the mental health field, it often seems to be the case that it is our own struggles and growth that lead us in this direction.

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