**Pain, Suffering & Control (An introduction to ACT)**

Please find a comfortable position in your chair; one where you can stay relatively still for about 5 to 10 minutes. I recommend feet flat on the floor with arms on your legs or folded in your lap, but feel free to do whatever is most comfortable for you.

If you feel comfortable closing your eyes, please do so; or you can simply pick a spot in the room to focus on.

Take a few moments to mentally scan your body from head to toe… Notice if there are any areas of tension such as your jaw or shoulders… If you notice any tension, see if you can let some of that tension go… If not, that’s okay, just notice what’s there.

Take a few moments to connect with your sense of touch… Notice what physical sensations are happening in your hands… See if you can feel where your hands make contact with each other or with your legs… See if you can feel your feet on the ground…

Next, take a few moments to notice what you can hear… There may be several sounds, or just one, or it may be silent. Just notice whatever is there…

When you’re ready, move your attention to your breathing… Watch the breath come in and go out on its own, without you having to control it… See if you can feel your breath in your nose or your belly…

As you breathe, you will notice that thoughts may come into your mind… They may be pleasant thoughts, or unpleasant thoughts, or neutral thoughts… This is what the human mind does, it is a thinking machine… Just see if you can notice the thoughts without getting caught up in them, and then return your attention to your breathing… Each time a thought pops up, notice it and then return your attention to your breath… This will happen over and over and over again, and that’s okay, it means you’re normal… With practice you can get better at noticing your thoughts, rather than getting carried away by them.

As you continue breathing, you will notice that certain feelings or emotions will also show up… Some of these may be pleasant feelings, unpleasant feelings, or neutral feelings… See if you can notice these feelings the same way you notice your thoughts… There is no need to try and change what’s there, just try to notice what you feel… When you notice a feeling, see if you can locate where it is in your body… Notice what sensations come along with the emotion… There may be heaviness, lightness, warmth, coolness, tingling, or tension… You may find these sensations in your head, shoulders, arms, legs, or abdomen…Whatever you feel and wherever it happens, just notice what’s going on and see if you can let it be…

And now see if you can return your attention to your breathing… See if you can notice that there is a part of you that’s able to watch your breathing, watch your thoughts, watch your feelings, watch the sensations that happen in your body… There is a part of you that does the thinking and feeling, and a part of you that can notice the thinking and feeling… Take a few moments to experience what it’s like to connect with the part of you that just notices… And now take a few moments to consider what brought you here today… There is something you care so much about that you took steps to get here… Just reflect for a few moments about what it is that you really, truly care about most in your life… Recognize and appreciate the fact that you made a choice to take action for change…

And as the exercise comes to a close, see if you can bring to mind an image of what kind of person you want to be when you are handling your pain effectively… Consider how you’ll be acting toward other people… How you’ll be acting toward yourself… And when you’re ready, slowly bring your attention back to the room and back to where we are now. If you like, move your fingers and toes around and have a nice stretch.