

A Visual Metaphor: Carrying the Stone



NEW PATHS COUNSELLING

Imagine you're walking through life carrying a stone in your pocket.

You didn't choose it – it formed over years of experiences:

- moments when you felt criticized
- times you weren't understood
- relationships where you had to guess what others felt
- situations where you learned that being “too much” or “not enough” had consequences

This stone represents the **stories your mind tells you** when something feels personal.

When someone's tone shifts

Your stone gets heavier.

When a text goes unanswered

You feel the stone pressing against you.

When someone seems distant

The stone becomes all you can feel.

You're not reacting to the moment – you're reacting to the weight of the stone.

How ACT Helps You Put The Stone Down

Notice the Stone

“Oh – this is my stone. This is that familiar story again.”

Hold It Gently

Instead of gripping it tightly, imagine placing it in your open palm.

You don't have to throw it away.

You just don't have to carry it pressed against your heart.

Make Space Around It

Breathe.

Let the feeling be there without letting it take over.

Choose Your Path

With your hands free, you can choose:

- to ask for clarification
- to give the benefit of the doubt
- to respond from your values
- to let the moment pass
- to care for yourself instead of spiraling

The stone may still exist – but it no longer controls your steps.

Gentle Reminder

Taking things personally doesn't mean you're fragile.

It means you care deeply, you feel deeply, and your nervous system is trying to protect you.

ACT doesn't ask you to stop feeling.

It helps you **feel without being carried away** —

and to choose actions that reflect who you want to be.

*With care,
Christine*



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