Six processes, one process.

The six processes are shown in the hexaflex (a nickname for the ACT model), which lead to psychological flexibility. In an ACT treatment, or other ACT approaches aimed at behavioral change, we stimulate these six processes in the person or persons who want to change their behavior. So we speak of six processes, but in fact it is only one process that we subdivide for the sake of workability or didactics. From Steven Hayes is the ACT question, which summarizes all six processes into one question: given the distinction between you and the stuff you are struggling with and trying to change (yourself), are you willing to have that stuff, fully and without defense (acceptance) as it is and not as it says it is (defusion) and doing what takes you in the direction (committed action) of your chosen values ​​(values), at this time and in this situation (current moment )? If the answer is yes, you are building on psychological flexibility

How are the six processes related then? Let's see how the processes are interconnected. We will consider how acceptance relates to the other five processes.

Acceptance and defusion are related because acceptance is facilitated and only helpful if it is acceptance of our inner experiences as experience and not acceptance of its content. A thought is a thought, the result of a process of thinking, whether consciously or not. Its content is usually not the truth, which it may seem to be. Conversely, acceptance makes defusion easier if we open ourselves to our thoughts, dare to think about it. Also, or precisely when thoughts are accurate, acceptance means letting go of the struggle with how it is.

Acceptance and contact with the present moment are related because acceptance takes place in the present moment. We can and need only accept what is happening to us now, from one moment to the next. By being in the moment, we already make contact with those experiences and that means turning towards. By naming what we experience, an important ingredient in contact with the present moment, we make acceptance easier. The names we give our experiences can serve as a sign to apply acceptance.

Acceptance and self are related in the sense that we come to self-acceptance if we can allow all our experiences to be there. We are, in a sense, our experiences. If those experiences are not allowed to exist, it means that part of ourselves cannot be there. Self-as-context helps to experience that we are more than our inner experiences. No matter how difficult those experiences are, we can admit them, safe in the knowledge that we can always fall back on our observing perspective. The willingness to reflect on difficult experiences increases from the observing perspective.

Acceptance and values ​​are connected because we can only consider our values ​​if we are prepared to make way for the intensity and painfulness of our experiences, which are brought about by values. Realizing that you care about something brings you into contact with vulnerability, such as uncertainty, the fear of loss, and you can be touched. Values ​​can help us to accept pain, the pain that is evoked when you care. If you realize that a value can only be lived when you allow yourself to be vulnerable, you get a different relationship with that emotional pain. It becomes easier to carry.

Acceptance and dedicated action are related because acceptance is only required from us in the context of committed action. We do not have to accept everything we experience or go through. If it contributes to a valuable life, acceptance leads to more flexibility. If we want to do something that is important, that gives meaning, what we want to stand for, this is only possible if we accept that we will start to feel vulnerable. We can only move if we are willing to take with us the emotional pain that emerges.

This thought exercise to investigate the relationship between acceptance and the other processes is not exhaustive. You may see even more links between acceptance and the five other processes. And you can continue this exercise yourself with the other processes with each other.