

Say “Yes”

A core skill in acceptance is to be willing to have events be what they are. You can start practicing just by looking around. As your eyes land on anything, see what it feels like to look at it from the point of view of “no” meaning “*no, that’s no good; that has to change; I want that the hell out of here; that is unacceptable.*”

Simply look at a specific thing you see, and mentally adopt a “no” approach to it, then move to another item as you scan the room and do the same, over and over. Do this for a couple of minutes.

Now repeat the scan but this time do it from the perspective of “yes” meaning “*yes, that’s OK; that is just like that; it does not have to change; I can allow that to be just as it is.*” Simply look at a specific thing you see, and mentally adopt a “yes” approach to it, then move to another item as you scan the room and do the same, over and over. Do this for a couple of minutes.

Take a pause and see if you can sense how different the world seems inside “yes” versus “no.”

Put yourself in a physical posture expressing you at your best and then you at your worst when faced with difficult experiences. If you were like most people, at your best your body assumed a more open posture (e.g., head up, arms out). The “yes” and “no” ways of looking at the world tap into a similar mindset the open and accepting one and the avoidant and controlling one.

A way to ratchet up this “yes/no” exercise is to add to it the physical postures exercise. This time, when you are doing the “yes” cycle, put your body in an open position – standing or sitting tall, palms up, arms out, head up, eyes open, legs apart – and when you are in the “no” cycle put your body in a closed position – arms in, head down, eyes lowered, legs closed, fists and jaws clenched, stomach muscles tightened. Notice very carefully how your experience differs.

You can move on to do this exercise with specific thoughts, emotions, urges, and memories. Over time, you will begin to notice as you go through your daily routines that sometimes you settle mentally and maybe also physically into a “no” posture without meaning to. Noticing the mental and physical cues can help you catch yourself and consciously adopt a “yes” posture instead.