

Acceptance

How do you actually do it?

Take on the following attitude:

This is how it is.

Not how it...

- Was
- Might have been
- Should have been

Not how I ...

- Wanted it to be
- Hoped it would be
- Planned it would be

I accepted that this is how it is.

Now I get on with my life in a *helpful* way

Life can get pretty hard sometimes and sometimes there something we can do about it (like if we're depressed we can go out and try to get some exercise or meet up with friends), but other times we just have to accept some of the crappy aspects of our lives, like the fact our brother or sister is addicted to drugs or alcohol (and trust us, there is not a lot you can do to change this – it's often just a case of waiting and hoping they get through it).

Acceptance is an attitude to take on in the moment. Acceptance doesn't mean you're passive in your life, it just means that you stop struggling with your situation so much. When we struggle with our experience, wishing it were different, we feel resentful, dissatisfied and caught up in regretful thoughts. It can often feel like we're struggling to stay afloat. Acceptance means we stop struggling to treat water, and just float on the surface of the water. In this position, we can view things more calmly, and more clearly.

Thomas talking about acceptance

I used to feel so resentful towards my brother. I always wished I had a happy family, where everyone got along. I'd get caught up in fantasies of a 'better life' and then come out of them feeling even angrier and upset about my situation. I heard about the idea of practising acceptance, and gave it a go. I found that when I accepted my situation, I felt calmer about it, and it was like I got more clarity on the issue. It sounds stupid, but it felt like I'd been stuck in a jungle in my head, and now I was at the top of a mountain where it could see more clearly. I was also told to accept my emotions and the way I felt about things. This seems counter-intuitive, but rather than seeing emotions as 'good' or 'bad', I now drop the judgement and accept the way I feel. This doesn't mean the feelings go away, it's just they don't seem to hang round as much, and I don't worry about them so much.