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LETTING A LITTLE NONVERBAL AIR INTO THE ROOM: INSIGHTS FROM ACCEPTANCE AND COMMITMENT THERAPY PART 2: APPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT: Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and Rational-Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) seem to have much in common. For example, they both seek to increase client's willingness to accept inevitable, unpleasant experience. However, the techniques the therapies use to increase acceptance are often quite different. Building on the philosophical and theoretical framework presented in the previous paper, we discuss the major practical differences between ACT and REBT. We then suggest some concrete ways that the two approaches can be integrated. Such integration may greatly expand the sorts of techniques that a therapist can effectively use in the therapy room.

KEY WORDS: acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT); acceptance; mindfulness; relational frame theory; meditation; rational-emotive behavior therapy (REBT); cognitive behavior therapy (CBT).

INTRODUCTION

The first paper in this special issue argued that ACT and REBT have much in common in terms of targeting acceptance and avoidance. However, the way they achieve these targets are often quite different. REBT goes west (scientific method, argument), and ACT goes East (mindfulness). Can two therapies that go in such different directions ever end up in the same place?

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We suggested in the previous paper that REBT can be practiced in a way that is more consistent with ACT, if one does not assume that beliefs are the cause of believing, and if one shifts emphasis from changing cognitive content to changing the contexts in which the content occurs (i.e., contexts that influence how the content is related and transformed). How do these changes look in practice? One of the most dramatic differences in ACT is the lack of logical/empirical challenging of dysfunctional beliefs. Would REBT have to give up this kind of challenging to be congruent with ACT theory? We explore this issue now.

The Argument against Logical and Empirical (L-E) Challenging

Argument 1: L-E challenging may "entangle" people further in unhelpful language processes. Cognitive challenging is often based in logic (i.e., Does it makes sense to say, "I prefer things to be this way, therefore they must be this way?") and empiricism ("Where is the evidence that things must be a certain way?"). ACT theorists argue that challenging does not eliminate verbal relations, and may even elaborate them. That is, learning and memory appear to work by addition not subtraction (Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 1999).

Let us consider an example of empirical challenging from Neenan and Drydan (Neenan & Dryden, 2002).

Client: I never do the homework. I'm useless.

Therapist: You've done homework on two occasions. How does that square with your idea that you never do homework.

Client: So I did it twice. What does that prove?

Therapist: It proves that on two occasions you did not consider yourself to be useless. How did you see yourself on those two occasions?

Client: Maybe not so useless, like I used to be.

Therapist: So how might looking at the facts of each situation be more helpful to you than relying on these sweeping statements like "I am useless."

Client: Help me think straight again I suppose.

We should note that this kind of challenging is both pragmatic and empirical. An ACT theorist might argue that the empirical part may be "entangling," as people engage in more and more verbalizing about "useless." Each time clients search for evidence for or against "useless," they are creating relational frames between useless and

the evidence. More and more stuff thus comes to be connected to "useless" in some way.

L-E challenging might also implicitly reinforce rules like, "I have to challenge 'useless,' in order to act effectively." The problem with this sort of frame is that it specifies the to-be-challenged concept, gives it key behavioral importance, and relates failure to challenge the global evaluation to possible undesirable ends (Hayes et al., 1999). Further, in order to challenge the evaluation, one must keep an eye out for it, and this self-monitoring process may make the evaluation more likely to occur (Wegner, 1994). Thus, through attempts to challenge the evaluation, one may make the evaluation more and more prominent in one's life.

We reviewed evidence consistent with the harmful effects of avoidance in the first paper of this issue (Wegner, 1994). However, there is no direct evidence that L-E challenging is similar to experiential avoidance or that it has similar effects. Indeed, factor analytic research indicates that one can statistically distinguish between the tendency to suppress/avoid and the tendency to reappraise (e.g., "when I'm faced with a stressful situation, I make myself think about it in a way that helps me stay calm") (Gross & John, 2003). Importantly, the tendency to suppress is associated with poor well-being, whereas the tendency to reappraise is associated with high well-being. This research provides some evidence that people can engage in reappraisal of cognitive content (e.g., L-E challenging), without also engaging in harmful avoidance strategies. It is unknown whether the benefits of reappraisal are due simply to increased awareness of cognitive content (consistent with the ACT position), or to the ways that people seek to alter or reappraise cognitive content. Only future research will decide this issue.

Argument 2: L-E challenging does not undermine the whole "language machine." L-E challenging seems to imply that the solution to suffering is to become better at reasoning, i.e, to "think more straight." In contrast, ACT theorists argue that reasoning and sense making are often *the* problem. Reasoning can lead one to derive more and more relations, and to transform more and more stimulus functions. Thus, the world becomes more interpreted and experience becomes less important. If the reasoning process goes astray (e.g., as rumination spirals downwards), then people may become "trapped" in the interpreted world.

Reinforcing reasoning processes can also lead people to believe their reasons. As long as they have useful reasons, this may not be a

problem (e.g., "Nothing I do makes me useless, so I can take a risk"). However, things may become problematic when they believe unhelpful reasons (e.g., "if I fail, I am useless"). ACT introduces contexts where reasoning and sense making processes do not have to act as barriers to behavior. The idea is to undermine excessive reliance on reasoning/rule governance, and increase sensitivity to direct experience.

We should note that although ACT typically does not use L-E disputing, there is nothing in ACT theory and philosophy that would insist that such disputing is *never* useful. Indeed, ACT/functional contextualism suggests that one could us any technique, as long as it helps one to achieve goals. However, ACT theorerists have hypothesized (as described above) that L-E challenging will often not be the most efficient way to achieve one core ACT goal, namely, to undermine unhelpful language processes.

The Argument in Favor of Logical and Empirical Challenging

The arguments against L-E challenging must be considered speculative, until research directly evaluates them. Similarly, the arguments made in this section are speculative. Our hope is not so much to resolve a dispute, but to present both sides of the argument.

The previous paper argued that REBT can be done from within an ACT perspective, if it abandons the notion of "beliefs" as the "cause" of believing. The crucial thing is to not assume that there is some static thing in individuals (i.e., beliefs) that needs to be modified or removed. Rather, following ACT theorizing (Hayes, Barnes-Holmes, & Roche, 2001), REBT can go to work on certain aspects of the context in which unhelpful "believing" is occurring.

REBT creates a context where verbal formulations become the objects of empirical and logical investigation. Thus, the client learns that the verbal formulations are not literal truths that one must obey. This kind of intervention is similar in purpose to ACT defusion interventions, in which people go from looking through their thoughts (fusion), to looking at their thoughts as an object (defusion).

REBT seeks to create contexts that influence the way relata (e.g., "I," "useless") are related (Crel) and how the functions of the relata are transformed (Cfunc; see previous paper for discussion of these terms). How do logical and empirical challenges attempt to do this? Empirical disputes ask individuals to compare their "thoughts about

experience" to their actual experience. Consider this example of a Socraticly posed empirical dispute, "Your theory is that your father absolutely must not call you a 'stupid bastard.' If this were true, could he have called you a 'stupid bastard'?" Doesn't it fit our experience better to say that what he did was inconsistent with our preferences, but that such "wrong" things are allowed to happen in this universe?

This dispute asks the client to compare thoughts about how the world works to actual experience. The aim is to create a relation of distinction (i.e., thoughts *do not* equal experience) between these particular "thoughts about the world" and this particular "experience of the world" while encouraging the individual to lean toward the latter. With adequate exemplars, this type of relational framing might also be generally increased. Ultimately, the empirical dispute is designed to undermine the power of verbal formulations ("people must not insult me") to act as barriers to effective action.

When one takes the pragmatic definition of truth seriously, i.e., "true" no longer means "corresponds to really true reality" but instead means "what works," then empirical disputes become efforts to get clients to consider "what works, namely," their theories about the world or their actual experience with it? The "rational philosophy" in REBT can be described as symbols designed to function as contextual cues for "what works" with regard to the clients goals, namely, the reduction of needless suffering and the fulfillment of long-term desires.

Logical disputes have the same basic aim, i.e., to create contexts that influence the way certain things are related and the transformation of stimulus functions. However, they may be more difficult to make effective. There are two problems. First, logic often requires specific training, which many clients may not have had. Second, it is the practical, rather than the formal, implications of logic that makes it of interest to people other than logicians. This fact is often overlooked. Nevertheless, such logical disputes may change the way relata are being related and produce different transformations of functions. "Is it logical to go from, 'I don't like it' to 'Therefore it absolutely must not exist'? Is it logical to go from 'It is bad' to 'Therefore it is as bad as can be'? Is it logical to go from 'I don't like it' to 'Therefore I can't stand it'? Is it logical to go from 'I did a bad thing' to 'Therefore everything about me is bad'?" Although from the point of view of logic the answer to all these is "No," one hardly knows what answer one will actually get in either the consultation or semi-

nar room. If one does get a "No" or is willing to spend the time teaching logic in order to get one, it may still be necessary to press the point of logic in the practical world, "Is it helping you to take such illogical thinking seriously? Wouldn't it be more helpful to, instead, take logical thinking more seriously?" Yes, this is returning to direct pragmatic disputing, but, outside the world of logicians, "logic" that "doesn't work" is "not logical."

An ACT theorist might argue that logical-empirical disputing is likely to entangle people in further unhelpful language processes (see above section). For example, one may respond to thinking illogically or anti-empirically with "It's awful to think illogically, I can't stand it, I MUST stop and never do it again and I'm no good because I thought irrationally." REBT fully recognizes these responses as "secondary disturbances" and tertiary disturbance. Thus, individuals can, and do, become disturbed about their disturbances about their disturbances (e.g., angry over being depressed about being anxious or anxious about being anxious about being anxious). Empirical as well as logical and pragmatic disputes may often help to stop the escalation. "If your theory that you absolutely must never make thinking errors were true, could you make thinking errors? Wouldn't it fit the facts better to say that making thinking errors is allowed to happen in this universe?"

These moves may not always undermine the entangling nature of language. Whether, and when, such moves do and do not work is an empirical question. We suspect that logical-empirical disputing is not necessarily inconsistent with ACT technology. For example, it might be possible to help people become mindful of their unhelpful thoughts (an ACT congruent move) *and* to challenge them. Both mindfulness and L-E challenging may help create contexts where private experience does not act as a barrier to effective action. It may also be the case that some kinds of disputes do encourage "entanglement," whereas other disputes do not. Future research is needed to investigate these possibilities.

In summary, we believe L-E challenging can be done in a way that is consistent with the philosophy and theory underlying ACT. The crucial thing is not to focus on changing the form or frequency of certain relata (e.g., "awful," "can't stand it," global self-evaluations such as "useless") or relational terms (e.g., "musts," "shoulds"). Rather, the focus should be on undermining the power of verbal (and nonverbal) formulations to act as barriers to effective action. Thus, the verbal formulation "I am useless" is welcome

to show up, but the therapist can engage in challenging that is designed to undermine the believability of this statement. For example, through empirical challenging, a client can come to see that nothing they do makes them a "useless" person. It is probably more rational (i.e., pragmatic) for them to rate their behavior, but not their entire personhood. Importantly, the client comes to realize that "I am useless" will continue to show up, and that that's a fact of life. Clients can learn through empirical challenging that they don't have to believe this verbal formulation. They can have the verbal formulation show up *and* act effectively.

The Importance of Considering both Context and Content

ACT emphasizes the context in which believing occurs. REBT tends to focus more on the content of those beliefs. Though the content/context distinction is important, we wish to emphasize that context and content are inexorably linked. There can be no figure without ground, and no ground without figure.

The ACT practitioner may help modify the context in which private experiences occur. But the question is, what private experiences? What should the practitioner focus in on? The ACT practitioner would suggest that one should hone in on the private experiences that are acting as barriers to valued action. Again, what particular private experiences are these? Clients may talk for 40 or more minutes in any given one hour session. The practitioner needs to sift through all the content to get to the core of the problem.

This is where we believe the REBT knowledge of content comes into play. This knowledge can help the practitioner to discover what it is that the client is refusing to accept. The REBT practitioner learns to focus in on content that reflects demandingness (e.g., musts; shoulds, needs that are not really needs), global evaluations of the self, low frustration tolerance ("I can't stand it"), and awfulizing (Ellis, 2001; Walen, DiGiuseppe, & Dryden, 1992). Why focus on these contents? They provide clues about what the client is avoiding and the source of the clients suffering. Consistent with this view, we presented evidence in the previous paper that the REBT unhelpful beliefs were strongly linked to experiential avoidance and lower well-being.

INTEGRATING ACT AND REBT: AN ABC APPROACH

Now that we have argued that ACT and REBT can be integrated in principle, we will discuss how the approaches might be integrated in practice. The REBT therapeutic approach has been organized into an ABC framework, which guides the practitioner through a series of therapeutic stages (Bernard & Wolfe, 2000). The stages involve identifying the activating events or adversity (A), the irrational beliefs (B), and the unhealthy and self-defeating consequences (C) of A and B. Once A, B, and C are identified, the practitioner engages in Disputing (D) of the irrational beliefs, and helps the client to develop effective new philosophies, behaviors and emotions (E).

Given that many practitioners are familiar with the ABC framework, we took the liberty of recasting this framework in a way that integrates parts of ACT and REBT. This ABC framework represents ACT quite imperfectly. We hope however that it is helpful, and can be used as a tool for understanding the implications of an ACT/REBT synthesis. The form in Figure 1 is a modified from the REBT self-development form published by Bernard and Wolfe (2000).

Activating Event (A)

This represents the particular external situation that is connected to the unhelpful consequences. This part of the form is identical to the standard REBT form.

Unhelpful Consequences (C)

A crucial part of ACT involves unhooking thoughts and emotions from behavior. The practitioner helps the client to discover that emotions and thoughts don't have to lead to dysfunctional consequences. This unhooking is essential, because it frees the client from believing they have to change thoughts or feelings in order to act effectively (e.g., "I have to be confident, before I can try"). It creates space for them to accept whatever thoughts and feelings show up *and* do what works.

Two changes have been made to the original REBT form to facilitate "unhooking." First, emotions and behaviors have been listed in separate sections, rather than placed in a single section, in order to highlight that the two do not need to occur together or cause each other. REBT practitioners clearly recognize this unhooking of emo-

ACTIVATING EVENT OR ADVERSITY (A)

An **A** can be an event in the *past, present, or future*

An **A** can be internal or external, *real or imagined*

Now, briefly summarize the situation you are displeased about in the space provided (what would a camera see?).

UNHELPFUL CONSEQUENCES(C)**

Unhelpful Emotions (Potential consequence 1)

Anxiety Depression Rage Hurt Guilt Shame Anger High Frustration

Unhelpful Behaviours (Potential consequence 2)

Not being assertive; procrastination; avoiding activities that you value; behaving in ways that cause resentment in others; unhelpful aggression; destroying valued relationships; alcohol or substance abuse

BELIEVING UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS (B)**

THOUGHTS	EXAMPLES
DOGMATIC DEMANDS (Musts, absolutes, shoulds; "needs" that are not really needs).	I must not have a particular emotion or thought I must succeed. I need approval. I need to be in control. I must make all uncertainty go away. Other people should treat me well and look after my best interests
GLOBAL RATING OF SELF, OTHERS, AND LIFE	I'm not good enough, I'm bad, I'm unworthy; You are evil
LOW DISTRESS TOLERANCE	I can't stand it; it is unbearable. I can't stand feeling frustration
AWFULIZING	The event is awful, terrible, horrible, catastrophic. Anxiety is horrible

**There might be times when the above emotions, thoughts, and behaviors are helpful. There are no absolute rules about what is and is not helpful

DEFUSING and DIRECT EXPERIENCING EXCERCISES (D)

- Defusion involves seeing thoughts and feelings for what they are---streams of words, passing sensations-- not what they say they are (dangers; facts).
- Notice when you struggle with your private experiences (emotions, thoughts, memories, images). Notice your "rules" about controlling private experiences (e.g., Think positively; don't worry). Look to your experience and see if the rules work. Do they work in the short run, but not in the long run?
- Notice unhelpful thoughts. Say them slowly. Write them down. Say them in funny voices.
- Label unhelpful thoughts and emotions (e.g., "an evaluation " " a prediction," "a feeling", a sensation." " A justification," "a memory.").
- Lean towards the thoughts and feelings that seem to be barriers to valued action. e.g., write about the feelings; do the tin-can-monster exercise
- Practice mindfulness: 1) meditation, yoga, breathing exercises; 2) Each day do at least one activity mindfully (e.g., eating a meal).
- Use metaphors to help get a different view of your thoughts, feelings, and self-evaluations
- When faced with adversity: STOP. STEP BACK. OBSERVE (what are you feeling and thinking; how is the other person acting). ACT consistently with values

EFFECTIVE NEW WAYS OF BEING (E)

• CREATIVE LETTING GO	If I am not willing to have a private experience (e.g., anxiety), I probably have it. I can not always control my unpleasant emotions, self-evaluations, and thoughts. If I try to force them to go away, they will often come back with more force. I can let go of unhelpful control strategies
• UNHOOKING THOUGHTS/FEELINGS FROM ACTION	I can take valued action, despite my thoughts and feelings. I can strive to be socially effective, even if I'm feeling frustrated, angry, or anxious.
• CHOOSING WILLINGNESS IN THE SERVICE OF VALUES	I am willing to make room for any thoughts, feelings, memories or sensations that arise as a result of taking valued action
• NOTICING DOGMATIC DEMANDS & NOT ALWAYS BELIEVING THEM	I prefer to do well and have people's approval and love. Based on my experience, I see that there is no law that says I *must* do well, or that others *must* treat me with affection or respect. I will notice when "musts" and "shoulds" are showing up. I will notice whether believing these demands will be helpful.
• NOTICING LOW DISTRESS TOLERANCE THOUGHTS & NOT ALWAYS BELIEVING THEM	The thought "I can't stand it" is welcome to show up, but I don't have to believe it. I can choose to be willing to "stand it," if doing so helps me to achieve my goals
• NOTICING "AWFULIZED" EVALUATIONS & NOT ALWAYS BELIEVING THEM	"Horrible" and "Awful" are evaluations that occur in me, not in the world. I can welcome the "awful" evaluation in me and still do what works. I can focus on dealing with unfortunate events, without letting "awful" freeze me in my tracks
• NOTICING GLOBAL RATINGS OF YOURSELF OTHERS, AND LIFE & NOT ALWAYS BELIEVING THEM	Evaluations are not facts. They are fleeting reactions that come and go. My evaluations are not me. My evaluations are like passing clouds. I am like the sky, containing the clouds. Negative self-valuations will often show up when I think about failing or not getting someone's approval I don't have to believe the evaluations. They don't have be barriers to my chosen path
• ENGAGING IN VALUED ACTIVITIES	Focusing on the task instead of avoiding it. Doing what works in difficult social situations. Reducing self-destructive behaviour. Pursing values, and "inhaling" unpleasant thoughts and feelings along the way.

Figure 1. ABC form designed to integrate some of the components of ACT and REBT.

tion and behavior and use behavioral principles (e.g., exposure) to undermine such apparent links.

Second, we have described the events under C as "potential" consequences. This is intended to undermine the notion that certain behaviors must follow from certain thoughts. In some contexts, particular thoughts are linked to behavior, and in other contexts, they are not.

One other change is worth noting. We have described the emotions as unhelpful rather than unhealthy. REBT practitioners often provide clients with a list of unhealthy (depression) and healthy (sadness) emotion labels (Dryden, 2001). Examples include anxiety versus concern, depression versus sadness, guilt versus remorse, and anger versus annoyance. The benefit of this technology is that it shows the client that some negative emotions are healthy. The client may then be more willing to accept these emotions. It also highlights that there is a distinction between what ACT labels clean discomfort (the healthy emotions that result from what life dishes up) and dirty discomfort (discomfort caused by our ineffective relationship to our emotions).

We have retained the REBT emotion labels, but preferred to refer to them as "unhelpful" rather than "unhealthy." The former label emphasizes the pragmatic focus of ACT. It suggests that although something might be unhelpful, it is not necessarily harmful. Thus one does not have to get rid of it. However, we wish to emphasize that whether it more useful to use "healthy" or "helpful" is an empirical question.

Believing Unhelpful Thoughts (B)

This section is normally labeled "irrational beliefs" in the REBT self-development form. We have made several changes to make it more ACT consistent. First, we have changed the word irrational to unhelpful. This again emphasizes the pragmatic criterion (though we acknowledge that REBT practitioners often use "irrational" to mean "not pragmatic"). We believe that by labeling these beliefs as irrational we might be encouraging the client to attempt to become more "rational" by trying harder and harder to reason things out. As we have argued above, excessive reasoning may be problematic.

A second change involves using the verb "believing" rather than the noun "belief." "Belief" implies that there is a static thing in the person that needs to be changed. It might motivate people to use lan-

guage and reasoning to attack and vanquish the belief. In contrast, the term "believing" shifts the focus into the present moment. It helps people to shift from a "here and now" context ("I am bad") to a "there and now" context (I am having the evaluation "I am bad").

ACT distinguishes between thoughts (I am no good), and whether are not the thought is believed (or fused with). Believing a thought means one sees the world through it and responds to it as if it is a literal truth. For example, the thought "I'm worthless" might be responded to as if it really describes ones essence. Or, one can notice the thought and not buy it (e.g., I just had the thought, "I'm worthless." Isn't that interesting). The distinction is between looking through a thought (being fused with it) versus looking at a thought (defused). In the former perspective, there is no distinction between the person and the thought. In the later perspective, the thought is seen as an object "there" that can be observed like anything else.

Believing a thought can also involve responding to it as if it is an "actuality." It is like responding to the thought of milk as one would respond to the actual milk. Or, it is like responding to the thought of an insult as if one is receiving an actual physical injury in "actuality". For example, someone may deeply offend us by saying "you are useless." These words may feel like they are damaging us. Every time the words show up in our own heads, we feel "wounded" or "hurt." We then believe that we have an "injury" they we must repair. Thoughts and actuality can thus become fused.

Every REBT practitioner will be familiar with the major belief categories presented under B in Figure 1. The changes we have proposed involve context not content. That is, we hope that this form might help REBT practitioner relate differently to the things that they already know (if this is useful).

Defusing and Direct Experiencing Exercises

This stage is normally labeled disputing in REBT. We have presented the ACT case above that some logical/empirical disputing might reinforce sense making, reasoning, and language processes, all of which are often considered to be problematic from an ACT perspective. However, we also presented counter-arguments that some disputing might be helpful in undermining unhelpful language processes. These arguments will only be resolved by future research.

We chose to focus on techniques that do not involve logical/empirical disputing, in order to look at points of agreement between ACT

and REBT. We will now discuss some of the major interventions. These interventions generally have at least one of two goals. First, they seek to help people defuse from private experiences, when these experiences are functioning as barriers to effective action. Second, the interventions seek to shift people away from an over reliance on language processes and reasoning, towards a greater sensitivity to the contingencies in the actual environment (experiencing).

Metaphor

Metaphors are used quite extensively in ACT. There are several reasons for this (Hayes et al., 1999). First, metaphors are not specific and proscriptive, and therefore it is more difficult for clients to simply comply with them. Compliance is seen as a major problem from an ACT perspective, because it involves the client accepting new rules rather than learning to distrust rules and discover what works via direct experience. Second, metaphors are easily remembered and can be used in many settings. Finally, metaphors are not forms of reasoning: they are more like pictures that help people look at their experience differently (Hayes et al., 2001). For example, consider the metaphor "Struggling with anxiety can be like struggling against quicksand." This not only gets people to look at their struggles (defusion) via the metaphor. It helps them to become aware of their own experience of struggling against anxiety and falling deeper and deeper into an anxious state.

Metaphors in ACT are organized around four major themes. These themes include creative hopelessness (letting go of unhelpful attempts to control private experience), defusion, discovering the self-as-context (discussed below), and values. A comprehensive set of verbal metaphors can be found in the main handbook on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (Hayes et al., 1999). We provide one metaphor example here (Hayes et al., 1999).

Imagine that you are driving a bus towards your valued direction, and all your thoughts and feelings are passengers. Your valued direction involves taking some risk (e.g., asking for a promotion). Whilst driving, many scary passengers show up (e.g., a feeling of "anxiety," the thought, "I might fail"). You don't want to look at these passengers. You know you want to drive straight ahead, but the passengers keep coming up to the front of the bus, demanding that you "turn left! turn left!" (e.g., don't go for the promotion). They are telling you not to take the risk. They are scary, and you want them to go away, so you make a deal. You agree that if they go to the back of the bus

and hide from you, you will do what they say. So they hide in the back of the bus, and you don't take the risk. The only catch is that now you are driving where they want you to go, rather than where you want to go.

The important thing to recognize is this: These passengers can't really take control of the bus without your permission. All they can do is come to the front of the bus and look scary. Metaphors such as this one help to physicalize thoughts and feelings. This makes it easier to look at them, rather than through them. The metaphor also illustrates that one can try to make the passengers hide, but in doing so one may give up traveling in a valued direction.

The passenger-on-the-bus metaphor can be used to help get a different perspective on many kinds of problems. Consider speech anxiety. Let's say you want to give a speech to an important group of colleagues. A number of scary passengers show up when you think about the speech. "Anxiety" shows up, and the thought "they may think me a fool" shows up. You don't want to see these unpleasant passengers, so you make a deal with them. You won't give the speech, if they don't show up. Unfortunately, now you are failing to achieve your goals. All you get in return is that the anxiety and unpleasant thoughts hide in the back of the bus for a little while.

This sort of metaphor does not "tell" a client what they should be doing. It simply makes them aware of what they are getting by listening to the "passengers" and what they are giving up. Once aware, people are then freer to choose.

Creative Hopelessness

A substantial portion of ACT technology is designed to help people to "get," experientially, the difficulty of trying to control their private experiences (Hayes et al., 1999). Clients are helped to become aware of the many strategies that they've used to make unpleasant private experiences go away and how, despite all their efforts, the private experiences keep showing up, and sometimes have gotten worse. They discover that their failure to control experience is not due to a lack of trying or to a lack of specific tactics. Rather, the purported "solution" (the control moves) may be part of the problem.

The client may discover, via their own experience, that their public and private worlds work by different rules. The rule of public experience is: If you're not willing to have it (e.g., an ugly sofa), you can usually get rid of it. In contrast, the rule of private experience is: If you're not willing to have it, you usually have it. For example, if

you're not willing to experience anxiety, you might actually experience more and more anxiety (Barlow, 1988).

During the creative hopelessness phase of ACT, clients often become aware that they are "stuck" and that all their control moves just get them more stuck. To use a metaphor (Hayes et al., 1999), it is like they are stuck in a hole, and they keep digging to get out of it. They come to therapy hoping to find a bigger or better shovel. The problem is, the more they dig, the deeper they get into the hole. Perhaps the solution is not to dig, but to let go of the shovel. Once the client gives up their hopeless change agenda, they may make room for something new and creative to happen.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness has been defined as maintaining awareness in the present moment, on purpose, nonjudgmentally (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). A core mindfulness exercise in ACT involves noticing each thought as it shows up, placing it on a leave in a stream, and watching it go by. Other exercises that are intended to increase mindfulness include yoga, meditation, body scans, and breathing practices. A more detailed description of these technologies can be found in the works of Linehan (1993), Hayes et al. (1999), Kabat-Zinn (1990), Segal, Williams, and Teasdale (2002), and Hanh (1987).

From an ACT perspective, mindfulness can involve several fundamental shifts in one's relationship to private experience. First, it involves accepting whatever unpleasant experiences shows up, rather than actively attempting to modify and change them. Second, it involves a shift to present experience (whereas language processes often carry one off into the distant past or future). Finally, it increases awareness of private experience and facilitates the shift from looking through private experience (fusion), to looking at private experience (defusion).

Thought Objectifying and Labeling

Another way to help people to look at, rather than through, there thoughts is via labeling the thoughts. One can listen to a client's stream of thoughts and provide labels as appropriate. For example, a client might say, "I hate my mom. She won't let me do anything. Yesterday, she would not let me go out of the house." After each sentence, the practitioner might provide a label like "an evaluation," "a prediction," "a memory."

Like ACT, much REBT technology uses thought objectifying. When practitioners draw attention to unhelpful verbal formulations, they are making people aware of them and objectifying it. They are providing labels like “musterbating” and “shoulding.” Essentially, they are helping the client to notice and defuse from the thoughts and to look at the consequences of believing the thoughts. The objectifying can also be used with other types of private experience. For example, the healthy and unhealthy emotion labels used in REBT (Dryden, 2001) help people to look *at* their emotional reactions, and notice that some of those reactions are less helpful than others.

Exposure

ACT sees avoidance of private experience as a core pathogenic process (Dahl, Wilson, & Nilsson, 2004; Hayes et al., 1999) (see first paper in this special issue for discussion). Consequently, ACT expands exposure to include private experiences such as sensations, negative cognitions, emotions and memories. This focus on exposure to internal cues is consistent with recent developments in exposure-based treatments for anxiety disorders (Cater & Barlow, 1993). However, ACT exposure interventions are also utilized outside the domain of anxiety disorders (e.g., workplace stress, etc.). ACT involves facilitating a mindful and accepting posture with respect to avoided psychological content (Dahl et al., 2004).

A core exposure/defusion exercise in ACT is called “Tin Can Monster” (Hayes et al., 1999). It involves “dissembling” a unpleasant private experience into its component parts (i.e., disassembling the “monster”) and practicing an accepting posture to those parts. For example, one may gradually expose oneself to the different thoughts, sensations, memories, and evaluations associated with “panic.” The key in this exercise is to “make space” for the unwanted private experience and to practice letting go of the struggle with it.

Self as Context

Both REBT and ACT are distinctive in that they do not seek to improve people’s self-esteem. Rather, they seek to help people to give up the whole self-esteeming game. One major development in ACT involves technologies that help people make contact with what has been termed the “observer self” (Hayes et al., 1999).

The ACT chessboard metaphor helps people to contact this sense of self. Imagine that all our positive thoughts, feelings, and sensations are white pieces on the board, and all the negative private experi-

ences are black pieces. What people often do is they try to get on the white pieces (e.g., "confidence") and ride off to war with the black pieces (e.g., "self-doubt"). The problem is, the war never seems to be won (i.e., avoidance often does not work). Besides, a war zone is no place to live.

The metaphor helps people contact the experience that they are not the chess pieces (the content of their life). Rather, they are the chessboard. They are the context that holds all these positive and negative pieces as they come and go. They are in intimate contact with the pieces, but they are not equivalent to the pieces. To use another metaphor, the observer self is "...like a vast, clear sky. All our feelings, thoughts, and sensations are like the weather that passes through, without affecting the nature of the sky itself. The clouds, winds, snow, and rainbows come and go, but the sky is always simply itself, as it were, a 'container' for these passing phenomena" (Segal et al., 2002).

The self-as-context technology is seen as crucial to getting people to give up attachment to unhelpful self-concepts. As long as people believe that the content is equal to themselves (I = worthless), they will be reluctant to give it up, because it will seem like they have to destroy themselves to give it up. Self-as-context is the place where one can notice the self-evaluations as they come and go and not get attached to them.

REBT also seeks to undermine attachment to unhelpful self-concepts, but generally does not help people to make contact with the self-as-context. We believe this technology can be easily added to REBT and would potentially make it easier for clients to give up attachment to their self-evaluations.

Values

Values are central to every aspect of ACT (Hayes et al., 1999; Wilson & Murrel, 2003), and indeed would deserve a section of their own if space permitted. They are needed to answer the fundamental ACT question "What is that in the service of?" ACT has one of the most developed technologies for helping people to discover their values. REBT also focuses on values to some extent, although these values are generally put into a framework of "long-term desires."

In ACT, values are seen as never being fully satisfied, permanently achieved, or held like an object. It is a direction one heads but never reaches. For example, having a trusting relationship is not a static achievement. It must be constantly sought (Hayes et al., 1999).

In ACT, values are chosen *with* reasons, but not *for* reasons. Values never need to be justified. Thus, one may have reasons or other verbal events show up when one chooses a valued direction, but these verbal events don't form the basis for the values. The ACT focus on "unreasoned" valuing is again consistent with the general attempt to undermine over reliance on symbolic processes. Also from a functional contextualist perspective (the philosophical core of ACT), an important insight about values is that they cannot be evaluated unless from another set of values. One must start with a set of assumptions or values before one can began to assess workability (works for what?).

Some aspects of REBT are quite consistent with the ACT view of valuing. For example, REBT never seeks to challenge preferences or desires. One does not have to justify them with evidence or logic. They do not require the right "shoulds, oughts, or musts." In fact, basing one's life on "shoulds" rather than on one's deepest desires, is the fundamental error that REBT poses as the source of needless suffering.

There is at least one crucial distinction between ACT and REBT notions of goal directed behavior. ACT interventions often discourage goals/values that are about reducing unnecessary suffering. Such values are expected to be ineffective in the long run and to potentially lead to a paradoxical rebound effect (e.g., attempts to reduce anxiety lead to increases in anxiety; see discussion of avoidance and creative hopelessness above). Suffering may be reduced by an ACT intervention, but such reductions are only an indirect consequence of defusing and engaging in valued activities.

In contrast, REBT encourages clients to explicitly attempt to reduce emotional suffering. REBT seeks to undermine rebound effects by also encouraging clients to first accept whatever emotions show up and to ultimately accept the possibility that they may not be able to reduce their suffering. Thus, REBT simultaneously encourages acceptance and change. Future research is needed to evaluate whether the ACT "acceptance approach" is more or less effective than the REBT "acceptance and change" approach.

Other Techniques

The are numerous other techniques in both ACT and REBT that are likely to undermine fusion, avoidance, and reason giving. For example, ACT practitioners often use paradox ("don't believe anything I say"). Paradox can help undermine sense making. For exam-

ple, how can one not believe anything you say? If you believe this statement, you should not believe it. Paradox and confusion may leave you distrusting your verbalizing and shifting towards a greater reliance on experience.

Other techniques will be quite familiar to REBT practitioners. One can say troublesome thoughts slowly, or in funny voices. This presumably helps one change the context in which the thought normally occurs and to look at the thought, rather than through it. One REBT technique involves singing funny songs about ones unhelpful thoughts. Again, this may serve to change the context in which the unhelpful thoughts occur, thereby undermining the power of the thought to act as a barrier to valued behavior.

Effective New Ways of Being (E)

The last stage on the typical REBT process is the development of healthy new emotions, and effective new philosophies and behavior. In contrast, ACT focuses almost exclusively on "ways of being" or behaving. ACT does not attempt to teach new philosophies, because such philosophies are not seen as essential for effective action. Also, there is the danger that people will simply comply with the new philosophies, rather than learning to look to experience to discover what works for them.

We believe that a compromise between REBT and ACT is in order. Although ACT practitioners do not make philosophies explicit, these philosophies are certainly implicit in everything they do. We believe that making such philosophies explicit will help the client to remember the things they have discovered in therapy and to carry those things into their everyday life.

One danger of making the philosophies explicit, as REBT does, is that clients may come to rely on the new "rules," rather than learning to distrust rules and look to their experience. We believe that the practitioner can do much to undermine simple compliance to the philosophies. For example, a client might be told to: "...remember, don't *believe* anything you read in this worksheet. It is designed to point you toward experiences that you can have on you own. Trust your own direct experience. (Don't believe your mind about whether or not any of the claims made in the worksheets are true)" (derived from Blackledge, 2003).

Some major ACT and REBT congruent philosophies are presented under E (Figure 1). These philosophies all involve verbs and focus on

what is happening in the present moment. They are not static things that one has or does not have. They are constantly in flux.

Notably absent from E is healthy new emotions. We felt it was more ACT congruent to leave this out, because it might encourage clients to try to control their emotions to make them healthy. However, we believe it would still be useful to discuss the unhealthy or healthy emotion types (perhaps calling them unhelpful and helpful). Such discussion is likely to help people defuse from their emotions and to notice that they don't have to "listen" to unhelpful emotions.

LIMITATIONS TO THE ABC FRAMEWORK

The ABC worksheet captures both ACT and REBT quite imperfectly. Hopefully it will aid practitioners in their exploration of the ACT–REBT link, but it may not be the most efficient tool for use with clients. One clearly does not need to use the ABC worksheet to carry out interventions that target defusion, acceptance, getting into the present moment, identifying valued life directions, and the other therapeutic goals discussed in this paper.

There are several aspects of ACT that are underrepresented in the ABC worksheet. First, we have labeled some things as "believing" and other things like emotions as "consequences." However, from an ACT perspective "believing," "emoting," and "overt actions" are all types of behaviors (see the first article). They can all be considered "consequences" of environmental/contextual conditions. Second, the ABC formulation does not represent the importance of values in every stage of ACT therapy. Third, the B section focuses on verbal formulations, but ACT techniques help people to get perspective on many other forms of private experiences, including sensations, memories, and images. Essentially, ACT can target any private experience that might be acting as a barrier to effective action.

In order to capture some of these underrepresented aspects of ACT, we have provided a "client worksheet" that is based on ACT principles and makes use of the REBT forms of unhelpful believing (Figure 2). This worksheet illustrates how every technique in ACT—including exposure, defusion, and willingness—is in the service of values. Values give dignity to the clients' struggles. The worksheet also illustrates that any number of private experiences may show up when one is engaging in a valued activity. The process of writing

Willingness and commitment worksheet

What value do you want to put into (more) play in your life?

Values are like guiding stars. You set your course by them, but you never actually reach them, or permanently realize them.

Now pick a goal that you would like to achieve, with respect to the value, that would let you know that you are "on track."

Now pick an action (s) that will lead you to accomplish that goal.

What private stuff is likely to arise as a result of your committed action?

Emotions and sensations?

Unhelpful and/or negative thoughts and self-evaluations?

Memories and images?

The key here is to look at this private stuff as what it is (just stuff), not what it says it is.

Private stuff seems more powerful than reality sometimes. It often says it is something that is dangerous, or something that is literally true.

Take anxiety. It says it is powerful, like you have to run away from it or listen to what it says. Notice how "anxiety" is just a word that describes a bunch of fleeting thoughts and feelings. Notice how you can have those thoughts and feelings and still do what you value.

Are you willing to make room for the thoughts and feelings that shows up as a result of your committed action?

Yes (Go forward withyour journey and experience it!)

No (Go back and choose a different valued action, and repeat this exercise.)

Figure 2. The willingness and commitment worksheet.

these experiences down on the worksheet is itself a defusion exercise. The reader will note that the REBT "musts" and "shoulds" and other verbal formulations would be entered in the part of the sheet labeled "Unhelpful and/or negative thoughts and self-evaluations."

Essentially, the worksheet attempts to capture part of "the ACT Question," which is as follows. Given a distinction between you and

the stuff you are struggling with and trying to change (self-as-context), are you willing to have that stuff, fully and without defense (acceptance), as it is, and not what it says it is (defusion), and do what takes you in the direction (committed action) of your chosen values (values), at this time, in this situation (contact with the present moment)? If the clients answer this question "yes," then they can go forth and experience their journey (Figure 2). If they answer no, then they might want to pick another valued direction.

THE THREE PERSPECTIVES: ANOTHER POTENTIAL WAY OF INTEGRATING ACT AND REBT

I (Hank Robb) now use an integrated treatment induction process with almost every client as a sort of advanced organizer for the work ahead. It introduces both ACT and REBT perspectives on thoughts, images, sensations, and overt behavior with the aim of developing, from the beginning of treatment, several skillful means of relating to them. I have dubbed these three perspectives: Umpire, Observer, and Actuality. The Umpire perspective is most consistent with traditional REBT and is described more fully below. The other two are more consistent with traditional ACT. The Observer perspective, a term taken directly from ACT, helps individuals notice that whether a thought is true or false, it is still only a thought just as whether a sensation is pleasant or unpleasant it is still only a sensation. Similarly, even a true thought is still nothing more, or less, than a true thought. The Actuality perspective helps individuals see that thoughts, images, and sensations "about" actual "things" are not the things themselves and that persons "have" thoughts, images, and sensations but "are not" the thoughts, images, or sensations they are having.

My induction begins by distinguishing thoughts (those "radio programs" inside one's head), images (anything with a picture—like the contrast between radio and television), and bodily sensations (heart beating faster or slower, and stomach feeling more tense or more relaxed). I note that while one can "make" one's self have a thought, image, and even a sensation, (TIS) they mostly just "arrive unbidden." I first asked individuals to practice reporting TIS as they arrive using the "there's the" formula (e.g., "there's the thought," "there's

the image," "there's the sensation") and to give a little description about each (e.g., "There's the thought, 'I have to get the groceries'").

I next note that TIS tend to come and go, and come and go much like a tennis ball going back, and forth and back and forth across a net. With the tennis ball analogy, we can also be reminded of a tennis match. Such matches have an umpire. Umpires do not "play in the game" but "make calls about it." This is done by taking a large category such as "tennis shots" and dividing it into two smaller categories such as "in bounds" and "out of bounds."

There are many categories that could be used to divide the categories of thoughts, images, and sensations such as funny and not funny. However, I suggest true and false for thoughts; attractive and unattractive for images, as well as pleasant and unpleasant for sensations. In truth, there are times when "calls" cannot be made (e.g., with the thought "black is higher"). Additionally, some images and sensations may be absolutely neutral with regard to attractive and unattractive or pleasant and unpleasant, but, mostly, we can "get a call." I show individuals how this works while they are sitting in my office by asking them to have a thought such as "I'm sitting in a chair in Hank Robb's office" and then listening for "the call" they get about this thought in terms of "true" or "false." I then ask them to have the thought, "I'm sitting in a rocket ship going around the moon" and, again, listen for "the call." There are usually no problems in getting a call of "true" for the first and "false" for the second.

I next point out that anyone familiar with umpires knows they sometimes make "bad calls." For examples, individuals reared in a particularly sexually repressive environment may get "unpleasant" as the call for a sexual sensation. This is a "bad call" because sexual sensations are pleasant and not unpleasant. However, I point out, experience shows that most "bad calls" have to do with thoughts rather than images or sensations. Individuals are next shown why calling "true" to the four traditional "irrational beliefs" of awfulizing, frustration intolerance, person-rating, and demandingness are all examples of "bad calls." I also include entitlement (Robb, 1992). Because an individual's Umpire often calls "true" to thoughts such as "This is awful," "I can't stand this," "I'm a louse and so are you," "I absolutely must succeed," and "I'm entitled to at least one good choice in difficult circumstances," individuals are encouraged to be on the lookout for "bad calls," especially about thoughts, and to correct them.

CONCLUSIONS

We believe that both REBT and ACT have much to offer each other. It would be a pity for one group to ignore the insights of the other group. One of the most noticeable differences between the therapies is that ACT places much less emphasis on reasoning and logical-empirical challenging than REBT. ACT theorizing suggests that at least some forms of challenging may be counterproductive. Future research is needed to evaluate if and when challenging is counterproductive.

Our review has raised many questions. We hope these questions will provoke empirical research and will help REBT and ACT to continue to develop. Ultimately, we believe that therapeutic approaches are like sharks: they have to keep moving forward or they die. We are confident that both ACT and REBT are moving towards exciting new places.

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