

Willingness = Acceptance. Acceptance = Willingness

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In ACT the word willingness is often used as a more active synonym for the word, “acceptance.” Being willing is about choosing to be open to, and accepting of, all that you experience so that you can move your life forward in valued life directions. Willingness is not a feeling or urge; it is a choice to open to everything in life, the good and the bad, including painful memories, emotions, thoughts, or bodily sensations. Instead of struggling against the negative experiences you do not want, willingness means accepting them without defense or resistance.

Willingness is all or nothing. You are either willing or you're not.

Willingness is like jumping. You either jump or you don't. As soon as you jump, you're in midair, fully committed to whatever happens next.

Willingness is not wanting. Willingness is different to wanting. Being willing to have something in your life doesn't mean you want it in your life.

ACT sees willingness as a pragmatic choice. You don't choose to be willing because you want to experience painful, disturbing, or negative thoughts or feelings. Rather, you choose to be open to and accepting because resisting them doesn't work and comes at a cost – it stops you doing the things you want to, and it uses up precious time and energy that's better spent living in line with your values.