

Learning to Accept Reality

Many people have a difficult time accepting reality and unfortunately that can lead to a variety of problems.

Some people rewrite their past, interpreting events based on what they wished had happened rather than considering them from a realistic point of view. For example, Jennifer, a 35-year old woman who had problems with long-term relationships, said the following about her father: "My Dad wasn't around very much, but I know he loved me and wanted to see me more." The reality was that Jennifer's father only saw her a few times a year, and never offered any excuses for his absence. But Jennifer wanted to believe she had a loving father, so she assumed that he loved her, even though his behavior did not support this. Can you see how her inability to accept the reality of her past might affect Jennifer's relationships with men?

Other people rewrite the present. Bob was constantly passed over for a promotion at work and he let his supervisor know how angry this made him by constantly complaining and being late for work at least once a week. At performance reviews, Bob was continually told that his "bad attitude" was holding him back, but he still insisted that his manager just had it in for him. Bob refused to see the reality that the people in his life judged him by his behavior and then acted accordingly. By refusing to accept reality, Bob also refused to accept responsibility for his behavior.

Some people distort the future, but not the way you might think. After her divorce, Sharon said to her best friend, "I will always be alone for the rest of my life. I just have to accept it." But this is *not* an example of accepting reality. Sharon felt that she was incapable of having another relationship, but that was a feeling, not the reality of her situation. Things that will happen in the future are not reality; obviously, they haven't happened yet. By predicting her future, Sharon did not see that her actions and decisions were the most important factors in shaping her future.

This worksheet has three parts:

- Worksheet #1 will help you accept difficult things from your past.
- Worksheet #2 will help you accept difficult things in the present.
- Worksheet #3 will help you see ways you can act to help determine your future.

Creating Your Future

Date _____

Of course, you can't change certain things in your future associated with aging, but these pale when compared to the things that you can change. Use this worksheet to think about the concerns and worries you have about the future and what actions you can take to create the kind of future you want.

| Worries About Your Future | Actions to Have Positive Future |
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