



Unconditional Self-Acceptance (USA)

Unconditional self-acceptance is the idea that you have worth, just as you are. This explains what separates “you” – your character, traits, personality, strengths, and weaknesses – from your behaviors. This is why SMART doesn’t use labels. You may have addictive behaviors but you are *not* an addict. While this might seem like a game of words, it’s important to recognize how powerful words and labels are.

The same labels that may carry internally – “failure,” “disappointment,” or “loser” – led to your unhealthy behaviors. Attaching new labels won’t help.

If you can’t accept yourself, can you really expect others to? Even if they do, would you believe them?

Accepting yourself may be difficult. You may have caused others and yourself extreme harm and pain. You may have ruined the lives of others, plunged your family into debt, brought diseases into trusting relationships, or squandered your life savings. Who can forgive that? not everyone can, but you can forgive yourself and accept that you are a worthwhile person in spite of your past behaviors.

Be patient with and kind to yourself. Be honest about what you’ve done. Accept that you can’t change the past, but you can create your future.

You may be tempted to compare yourself to others or hold yourself up to some arbitrary standard. There is no standard or universal measure of your value. You stand alone in your self-worth.

Comparing yourself to others is as meaningless as judging one color against another: Is red good or bad? Is blue more valuable than green?

Unconditional Other-Acceptance (UOA)

You may judge other people inaccurately and in an exaggerated way, just as you judge yourself. Once you accept that other people are capable of making mistakes, then you can accept that they may fail at things, too. Judging another as totally bad – no matter how badly they treat you – is as exaggerated and as damaging as making the same judgment about yourself.

Unconditional Life-Acceptance (ULA)

You can judge life in the same way, as being completely unfair or totally terrible. When you find yourself thinking, “Life sucks! It couldn’t be more awful!” Remind yourself of the good things that have happened in your life.

If you can accept that there are many things you can’t control, it may help you to better accept what life throws at you, even if you don’t like it.

