

# Mindfulness Practice

## ~ Acceptance ~



Mary has a best friend named Sarah. They've been friends since they were 2. They've always gotten along, but Sarah has changed ever since they became teenagers. Sarah puts Mary down a lot. She'll say things like, "That new hairstyle looks bad on you," and "Are you really going to wear that shirt?" or "That boy will never like you." This really hurts Mary's feelings. Mary has talked to Sarah numerous times asking her to stop criticizing, and Sarah will apologize, but she always goes back to doing it.

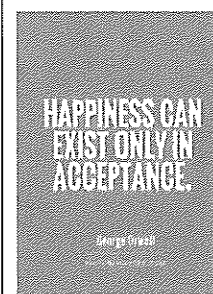
Mary has talked to Sarah, fought with her, cried about it, been depressed about it, etc. She can't accept that her friend Sarah won't stop criticizing her, but she also wants to continue the friendship because they've been friends for so long and Sarah wasn't always like this. Even though it's causing her a lot of pain, she has to figure out a way to change Sarah. Right?

What is causing Mary the most pain in this story? (The answer is not that she is being criticized by Sarah.)

### Accepting, Even When It's Difficult

Acceptance is recognizing the way things are right now. This does not mean you have to *like* the way things are. When you don't accept things and try desperately to change things you have no control over, you create suffering for yourself. When you accept things, even if you don't like them, you then are in a position where you can make choices.

So what would acceptance look like for Maria in the story? As long as Maria is trying to change someone who won't change, she is putting herself in a place of suffering. If Maria accepts Sarah for the way that she is, even though she hates Sarah's behavior, she is actually putting herself in a place where she can make some choices. She can choose not to be Sarah's friend anymore, or to spend less time with her. She could even choose to continue to inspire Sarah to change her ways, knowing that could cause herself more pain. Whatever she chooses, it is her choice because she accepts Sarah the way that she is.



1. Is there a person or situation that you have a really hard time accepting? Explain.

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2. How would it feel to accept person or thing? (This does NOT mean you have to *like* this thing—it means you accept that it exists, so that you can make a choice about it.)

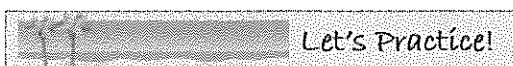
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**Reflection.** Write a reflection on your experience today. Write anything that comes to your mind. *Questions to consider:* What did you learn? What thoughts or feelings do you have about this lesson? How can you apply this to your life? Do you have any questions about today's practice? **Write 3-5 sentences.**

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**Challenge!** How can you use this lesson in your life this week?



You know that thing you wrote down on the other side of this paper that you can't accept? Try accepting it this week. You might say the following:

"I know that my little brother is going to drive me crazy this week by stealing my XBOX controller. Today I decide to accept my brother for who he is. I won't change him by yelling at him. And I'm going to make the choice to let him borrow my XBOX controller for one hour each day."

**Now you try it:**

"I know that \_\_\_\_\_ is going to drive me crazy this week by \_\_\_\_\_. Today I decide to accept \_\_\_\_\_. I won't change him/her/this by \_\_\_\_\_. And I'm going to make the choice to \_\_\_\_\_."

P.S. Maybe you are finding that this is too difficult and you just aren't ready for it. In the spirit of acceptance, just accept that this is hard for you! But try it anyway, just once.