

## **My Reflection on Magic ACT: Transforming Pain to Purpose with Clinical RFT,**

**24 February 2024, 8am-10am**

My journey on getting to know about ACT began 2 years back when I attended an Introduction training on ACT and group supervision sessions led by Ms Farah Gulamoydeen. This is second ACT trainer I am hearing about ACT, Mr Lou Lasprugato and my understanding on ACT is getting better. It is sought of a refresher session on my understanding on the purpose of ACT. What I learnt is accepting the thoughts and feeling, then choosing a valued life direction and doing the planned action. I also understood that the connection between ACT and RFT is as a bridge between Pain (accepting the thoughts and feelings) and Purpose (making a valued life direction).

The modern behavior analytic approach, whereby, how language and the way we think which is related to learned behavior. I got a better picture through the 'I love you' exercise. When I reflected on the word 'LOVE', I get the sense of love and hate all mixed up! I love both my family and extended family, at the same time the chaos that comes along is too much to chew. Putting that aside, I get the understanding how a 'word' is relating to my cognition and how I related to my world.

In my understanding Relation Frame Theory stipulates that 'the power of language' could transform a pleasant or unpleasant context through the way we relate and alters our respond to the context. Last year, during a job hunt which lasted almost 8 months, I had 2 options either to bury myself in depression or consider it as a time to self-care and spending quality time with loved ones. I guess this would be more of Temporal (relational framing). At times I was frustrated but when I think of it as a temporary period, I was able to move on in my context.

I tried to apply my past circumstances (job hunt experience) into the Clinically-Applied Relational Frame Theory Diagram and derived that my goals: was to begin working as a counsellor to gain exposure and experience. Approach was contextual circumstances: I newly graduated with no experience working as counsellor, economy was not doing well, and less job opportunities. Strategy to prevent from depression: altering how I relate to the circumstances by taking break to rest after 3 years Master's program before I begin my new career, such as focusing on my other functions as mother and spouse.

The RFT interventions that I tried on myself are as follows:

1. Conditional
  - a. If I could put my frustration aside, I could spend quality time with children and spouse.
  - b. If I could put aside the financial burden aside, and help reduce family expenditure by driving children to school and preparing healthier home cooked food.
2. Coordination
  - a. The rush to find a job, show that I care less about my health and self-care. Burdened with family needs.
  - b. The gap of being jobless, and going back to work actually will be a busy life and limited time for family.
  - c. If I stop focusing to getting a full time job, I may not be able to help daughter with schoolwork
3. Comparison
  - a. Worrying about a full time job reduce when I am occupied on the needs of family, being with children makes them happy.

4. Distinction:
  - a. When I was studying Master's past 3 years and not earning any money, family life somehow went on smoothly, no major crisis.
  - b. If I don't care about my passion, career fulfilment and better salary than I would have been at career stagnant/stunted state.
5. Opposition:
  - a. If getting an exciting counselling career was on one side of a coin, spending memorable time with spouse and children was the other side.
  - b. To improve myself becoming emotionally intelligent to equip myself to be a better successful and qualified employee.
6. Spatial:
  - a. Seeing the social media post about career achievements and success.
  - b. The waiting for employment is protecting me from giving up and to keep trying until I achieve my personal goals.
7. Temporal:
  - a. In the past I have learnt to never stop trying until I settle down in a good prospect.
  - b. I am able to understand the heart and mind of others who are seeking for job transitions and have career related issues.
8. Deictic:
  - a. I will take pride that I was daring to step out to pursue my dreams and passion.
  - b. I would respond that nothing is impossible and to keep pursuing the dream, not to be fearful and never think that "I am not good enough".
  - c. I would validate their situation and give full support to stand by them.
  - d. I prefer a person who would be silent and validate my hearts' cry.
9. Hierarchical:
  - a. I want to go after a career that I cherish and work wholeheartedly to give my very best.
  - b. I want to impact other's life with this knowledge and not suffer as I did in the past.

The above statements are my effort to apply the RFT interventions for transforming my own personal pain into purpose. In the past, I was unhappy on my career and wanted to do something more fulfilling. That is where I chose the counselling career. No doubt, I enjoyed the program to the maximum but other challenges like language, ageism, lack of jobs in counselling field, are still in the way. However the RFT interventions has clarified my purposes, even in the midst of this pain I could still strive by looking at other aspects of the pain and support my personal journey to a fulfilling career that meets all my needs.

Through the webinar, it became clearer and better understanding to me on using the relational framing tools. Lou's illustration and practice was clear, simplified and easy to understand. It became more meaningful and I desire to be efficient to use all the tools. I commonly use some tools like comparison or distinction, but knowing there are many more RFT Interventions that would be helpful to clients makes me wanting to find a way to memorize all of them. Thanks for the notes with the sample questions to ease the learning process.

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