

25 Paths to Acceptance

By David D. Burns, MD*

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The Acceptance Paradox is just one of a great many techniques to help you change the way you think and feel. It is definitely NOT, as so many “schools” of therapy wrongly claim, THE way or the ONLY road to recovery or enlightenment, but it is definitely hugely important and can be life-changing.

But it is so HARD to “get” at first, and it can be hard to teach, too. When you finally “get it,” oh my, it can be a game-changer. You suddenly “see” something mind-blowing that was previously invisible.

You have to “get” the Acceptance Paradox at the gut level. Intellectual understanding alone will not cut it. It’s a lot like seeing the Grand Canyon in person for the first time. It takes your breath away. Post cards and videos just cannot convey the splendor and magic of what is, after all, just a big hole in the ground!

What is the Acceptance Paradox? Here’s one way to describe it: Accepting yourself as you really are, right now, warts and all, is the greatest change a human being can make. The moment you really “see” what this means, and get it at the gut level, you will have grasped the Acceptance Paradox, and you may experience your first “enlightenment.”

But that’s not easy!

What’s enlightenment? There are many ways to think about it, but here is something simple that everyone can relate to. Have you ever had the experience of great joy, when you suddenly felt close to others and had no “territory” to defend and no fears of criticism, failure or falling short?

Most people have, and it seems so wonderful and easy when you're feeling it. That's enlightenment, and it seems like it will last forever. You can suddenly see with crystal clarity that the distorted negative thoughts that previously triggered so much pain are simply not true.

And have you ever noticed how that beautiful and blissful feeling has a way of disappearing, and several days later you're back to your irritable, unhappy self? The Buddha described this experience as "drifting in and out of enlightenment," and it happens to practically everybody.

That's why it so important to learn which specific tools can help you get back into enlightenment whenever you "lose it." These tools tend to be different for every person.

For some considerable time, I've been trying to figure out the best way(s) to teach acceptance, but kept falling short. I had a few ideas, but not a lot. In the last couple days, a flood of ideas suddenly came to me, so I'm listing them here.

If you have additional ideas or techniques I might include, let me know and I'd be happy to add them.

At the end, on page 16, I have a special vignette about one of the many paths to enlightenment, along with a couple quizzes you might enjoy.

Here are a few answers to questions people sometimes have about the Acceptance Paradox.

Is Acceptance the same as Enlightenment?

David's answer:

Yes, to my way of thinking they are, more or less, the same, and they are also the same as the "Great Death" of the "self" that the Buddha talked about 2500 years ago. However, there are many different forms of Enlightenment, and different "Great Deaths" that a person can experience, including:

1. The Death of the Special Self. This death is involved in recovery from depression.

2. The Death of the Fearful Self. This death is involved in recovery from all of the anxiety disorders.
3. The Death of the Angry, Blaming Self. This death is involved in recovery from troubled relationships, and is, to my way of thinking, the most painful of the four deaths. It involves interpersonal enlightenment, and the shocking discovery that we create our own interpersonal reality at every moment of every day, and that we are the source, or cause, of the very problems we've been complaining about in our relationships with others. But it leads to liberation from angry conflicts and opens to door to far more peaceful, loving, rewarding relationships.
4. The Death of the Entitled, Pleasure-Seeking Self. This death is involved in recovery from habits and addictions.

Why do people fight so hard against Acceptance, when it's the key to joy and enlightenment?

David's answer. I discussed this with Drs. Matthew May and Rhonda Barovsky on Feeling Good Podcast #294, and this is a partial list of the reasons we explored:

1. If I accept myself, I'll just be ordinary, or below average, and I won't be special.
2. Acceptance is a slippery slope. If I accept something bad about myself, or some awful thing I did, I might end up doing something immoral or wrong.
3. If I did something immoral or wrong, or even if I screwed up and failed to achieve my goals, I deserve to suffer.
4. If people see that I'm flawed or "less than," they'll judge me.
5. If I accept myself, I'll lose my motivation to learn, to grow, and to improve myself.
6. If I accept myself, I'll have to lower my standards. I may be unhappy, even miserable at times, but at least I have high standards!

7. When I beat up on myself, it shows that I'm honest about my flaws.
8. If I accept myself, I will end up accepting the fact that I might really be inferior!

How does the concept of Acceptance relate to Should Statements?

David's answer. Drs. Albert Ellis, Karen Horney, and others have persuasively argued that Should Statements are the cause of most of the suffering in the world, both in terms of internal mood problems, like depression, inadequacy and anxiety, and external relationships like anger, hatred, violence, and war.

They have suggested that there are four dysfunctional types of Should Statements, including:

1. Self-Directed Shoulds, like "I shouldn't be so screwed up." These shoulds trigger feelings like depression, anxiety, guilt, shame, inadequacy, loneliness, and hopelessness.
2. Other-Directed Shoulds, like "He's a jerk. He should be like that!" These kinds of shoulds cause anger and conflicts with others.
3. World-Directed Shoulds, like "It's not fair that I had to get sick the day before the marathon I've been training for!" These kinds of shoulds trigger feelings of frustration.
4. Hidden Shoulds, like "Why am I so anxious in social situations?" This really means, "I should be so anxious in social situations." Hidden Shoulds often result from Self-Defeating Beliefs, like Perfectionism, Emotional Perfectionism, or the Achievement or Love Addictions.

Can you see that these are all forms of non-acceptance?

Do you need to meditate to understand Acceptance or experience Enlightenment?

David's answer. I don't think so, but if people like and enjoy meditation, which has been around for thousands of years, go for it! But there are lots of paths to enlightenment.

In fact, when I’m doing therapy with the Externalization of Voices Technique, with role reversals illustrating the Acceptance Paradox, people are often catapulted into enlightenment in a matter of minutes. While this doesn’t happen for everyone, it does happen to the majority of people. Many other techniques that I’ve created can also trigger various types of “enlightenment” experiences, as you’ll see when you review the list.

Can you work on grasping the Acceptance Paradox on a general level, or is it only something you can experience at a specific moment when you’re resolving a problem?

I think both can play a role, and that’s why I’m working on this document, to provide a little of the intellectual understanding that be helpful. But to really “get it” on the gut level, it’s probably the case that you need to grasp it at a specific moment using a specific technique that just happens to work for you.

That’s actually good, because no one can maintain enlightenment forever. Sooner or later, we all get grump or insecure and drift out of enlightenment. That’s why it’s great to know which methods work for you when you’re upset, because typically those same methods will always work for you in the future as well. In fact, that’s an important key to Relapse Prevention Training!

Okay, here’s my list of various types of acceptance the techniques that can facilitate them. It’s fragmentary and incomplete, and if you can lower your standards and accept that, you might at least get something out of my efforts. And perhaps this can be a first stumbling step toward something that will be, and needs to be, a lot better.

Type of Acceptance	TEAM-CBT Technique(s)	How It Works
1. Resistance Acceptance	Paradoxical Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA)	You list all the really GOOD reasons NOT to accept yourself, and the equally GOOD reasons to keep beating up

		on yourself. Paradoxically, this sometimes makes it much easier to accept your flawed and imperfect self.
2. Emotional Acceptance	Magic Button, Positive Reframing, Magic Dial	This sequence can help you accept and even feel proud of your negative feelings, which you previously thought resulted from what was “wrong” with you, like a chemical imbalance in your brain, or one of the so-called “mental disorders” listed in the DSM., or some other personal defect or deficiency.
3. Instantaneous Acceptance	The Acid Test	<p>The Acid Test can sometimes help you accept your flaws and past mistakes. The basic idea is that the magic of the Magic Button is limited. If you press the Magic Button, you can feel joy and self-esteem, but the facts of your life won’t change. You’ll still be flawed and lacking in all kinds of internal and external things you thought you “needed” to feel happy and worthwhile.</p> <p>You kind of “settle” for your “second-rate” self. This decision can paradoxically catapult you into enlightenment. I have attached the story of Imani that illustrates this on page 16.</p>
4. Philosophical Acceptance	Let’s Define Terms	<p>You discover that terms like “loser” or “bad person” or “defective / worthless / inferior human being” have no meaning. In other words, they cannot be defined in a way that makes sense because there is no such thing.</p> <p>For example, what’s the definition of “a failure” or “a loser?” Is it someone who fails (or loses) at everything, or at some</p>

		<p>things? If you say “everything,” then there are no “failures” or “losers.” And if you say “some things,” then we’re all “failures” and “losers,” since we all fail at many things, starting from the very moment when we were born.</p> <p>Conclusion: if we’re all “failures” and “losers,” or if no one is a “failure” or “loser,” we don’t have to worry about it, because we’re all in the same boat, and these terms become meaningfulness.</p>
<p>5. Practical Acceptance</p>	<p>Be Specific</p>	<p>Instead of Labeling your “self” in some negative way, you focus on some specific flaw or screw-up. Then you can accept it or make a plan for learning from it or improving.</p> <p>This technique has been helpful for me personally. Suffering, for me, pretty much never results from my many specific flaws. I only suffering when I Labels my “self” or Overgeneralize, thinking that this or that mistake, shortcoming or failure make me “less worthwhile,” or some such vague notion.</p> <p>When I focus on something real and specific, I can take action, learn, and grow, which is usually pretty rewarding.</p>
<p>6. Physical Acceptance</p>	<p>Examine the Evidence; Experimental Technique / Feared Fantasy</p>	<p>Our culture places a strong emphasis on glamor and fitness, and lots of people obsess about their physical flaws and imperfections and do not want to accept them.</p> <p>I once treated a physician who was angry about his “below average” looks and felt he had no chance of dating anyone</p>

		<p>interesting or desirable. In my book, <i>Ten Day's to Self-Esteem</i>, I describe an experiment I suggested he could do in Fairmont Park on a Saturday, grading the looks of the men and women who were there as couples. He was surprised to discover that many of the men he rated as handsome were often paired with women he thought were only average or below average in looks, and vice versa.</p> <p>Then he focused on his real problem in dating was his sour attitude and poor communication skills!</p> <p>In my book, <i>When Panic Attacks</i>, I describe my treatment of a woman with severe Body Dysmorphic Disorder who was 100% convinced she had an ugly scar on her nose. Many techniques did not help, but Shame Attacking Exercises in the Stanford Mall, along with Smile and Hello Practice, and the Feared Fantasy Technique were incredibly frightening, but transformative, for her.</p>
7. Should Removal	The Semantic Technique	<p>You decide to stop persecuting yourself with shoulds, oughts, and musts, like “I shouldn’t have screwed up,” or “I should be better than I am.”</p> <p>Instead, you take the sting out with softer language, like, “I really wish I hadn’t screwed up,” or “It would be really cool to be better than I am at just about everything.”</p>

		This type of shift in language will only be effective if you make the decision to accept yourself, as well as the world, without “shoulding” all the time!
8. Compassion-Based Acceptance	The Double-Standard Technique	You decide to talk to yourself in the same compassionate and realistic the way you might talk to a beloved friend who’s just like you and struggling with a similar problem, instead of ripping yourself to shreds.
9. Behavioral Acceptance	The Pleasure-Predicting Sheet	<p>You schedule activities for pleasure and satisfaction and predict how rewarding each will be on a scale from 0 to 100. In other words, you reward yourself and treat yourself the way you might treat a beloved friend or someone you greatly admire who was visiting you.</p> <p>You may discover that some of your most exhilarating moments involve doing things that others might not see as especially important, like petting your cat who is purring enthusiastically and looking at you with loving eyes! Or hiking with friends and students on an “average” Sunday morning and getting to know them on a deeper and more personal level.</p> <p>When you’re doing things that you really enjoy, you might discover that you do not need a “self,” and that you do not need to feel especially “worthwhile” or “special” in order to enjoy life to the max.</p>

10. Truth-Based Acceptance	Identify / Explain the Distortions	You show that the negative thoughts that trigger your feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and so forth are distorted and do not map onto reality. You explain, using clear and specific examples, why each distortion in a negative thought is unrealistic.
11. Humor-Based Acceptance	The Externalization of Voices	Humorous acceptance can sometimes be demonstrated during the Externalization of Voices, using role-reversals.
12. Belief-Based Acceptance	Techniques to identify and modify Self-Defeating Beliefs (SDBs), spelled out in the right-hand column.	<p>You identify your Self-Defeating Beliefs, like Perfectionism, Perceived Perfectionism, or the Achievement, Love, and Approval Addictions, using the Individual Downward Arrow Technique,</p> <p>Then you can select and challenge any SDB using this sequence: Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA), Semantic Technique, Experimental Technique and Feared Fantasy.</p> <p>You may decide that you do not need to base your feelings of worthwhileness on your achievements, on love, or approval, or on anything. You may even decide that you no longer need a “self” and no longer “need” to be “worthwhile.”</p> <p>You can use the Interpersonal Downward Arrow to identify the Self-Defeating Beliefs that trigger relationship problems, and the What-If and Hidden Emotional Techniques to identify and confront the core fears and hidden conflicts that trigger the anxiety disorders.</p>

<p>13. The “Great Death” of the “Special” self</p>	<p>Self-Removal</p>	<p>You discover that the concept of “self” has no meaning. You also give up the idea that you’re “special” or need to be special. You discover something that my cat, Obie, taught me. When you no longer need to be “special,” life becomes special.</p> <p>You also discover that when you lose your “identify,” or “self,” you lose nothing, because you can suddenly see that there was nothing there in the first place. You realize that the concept of a “self” was just a gigantic cosmic joke.</p> <p>Would you like to develop unconditional self-esteem? I can show you how to do that if you like. And once you finally develop unconditional self-esteem, I can show you how to get rid of it as fast as you can, along with your sense of “self,” because you’ll see that unconditional self-esteem is just another perfectionistic trap!</p>
<p>14. Average Acceptance</p>	<p>Dare to Be Average</p>	<p>You accept—with joy—the idea that you’re average or even below average in many or even in most areas of your life.</p> <p>I also like to aim for average in my work. Makes things way easier, and I paradoxically get higher ratings that way. When I aim for perfection or try to impress people, it usually just turns people off!</p> <p>I’m aiming for average right now. This is not going to be a polished or completed document. I need to get something</p>

		<p>done so I can include it in the Show notes for a precent podcast.</p> <p>As time evolves, this document might evolve into something useful or exciting for people. And if it doesn't . . . I can accept that, too!</p>
15. Accepting (and Befriending) the Monster You Fear the Most	What-If Technique / Cognitive Exposure	You discover that even if your worst fears came true, it would actually not be a big deal, since you would see that the "monster" has no teeth, and is a bit of a fraud.
16. Shades of Gray Acceptance	Worst, Best, Average Technique	<p>If you think you're a "bad father" (or a bad X) you list the specific qualities of a "good father" or a "good X). Then you rate yourself in each quality (0 to 100) when you're at your worst, your best, and on average. When you review your ratings, you'll see that things are not fixed or frozen, but constantly changing, and rarely or never 0 or 100, but somewhere in -between.</p> <p>If your ratings are low in some category, you can make a plan to improve in that area.</p>
17. Fantasy Acceptance	Feared Fantasy Technique	You write out a dialogue (or do a role play) with the worst thing some imaginary critic could say to you, like "I judge you!" And then you can use the Five Secrets of Effective Communication to show that the monster you feared is kind of an absurd jerk!

18. Semantic Acceptance	Healthy (vs Unhealthy) Acceptance	This is a list that debunks common misconceptions about acceptance. For example, healthy acceptance is associated with feelings of joy, openness, hope, creativity and intimacy, whereas unhealthy acceptance is associated with feelings of bitterness, cynicism, hopelessness, paralysis and alienation.
19. Story-Telling Acceptance	Indirect Hypnosis	You tell stories illustrating how others discovered acceptance and enlightenment, like the story of “Imani” on page 16. In the Feeling Good App, you can listen to the story of Bill, the painter, or Jeffrey the attorney, or Marilyn and Amy, who both had terminal cancer, or Bennie, a violent gang member who threatened me during a group session at our hospital in Philadelphia, or Jake, a college pitcher who froze in panic, and a host of others who discovered something unexpected when they accepted themselves.
20. Fault Acceptance	The Disarming Technique	2,000 years ago, Marcus Aurelius said: “If someone criticizes you, you can tell them that ‘if only you knew me better, you’d see that there was a lot more than just that to criticize!’”
21. Punishment Acceptance	The How Many Minutes Technique	If you feel bad and wish to punish yourself from some shortcoming or past moral failure, you can ask yourself how many minutes per day of guilt and shame you think would be appropriate. Then you can schedule times to suffer

		<p>every day, and focus on living happily and lovingly the rest of the day.</p> <p>For example, you might schedule two five minute periods to beat up on yourself with negative thoughts, and you can dictate your relentless self-criticisms into a recording device for 2 ½ minutes and then listen to them for 2 ½ minutes.</p> <p>This often take the sting out of the urge to beat up on yourself relentlessly.</p>
<p>22. Interpersonal Acceptance</p>	<p>Relationship Journal (RJ) (Interpersonal Downward Arrow can be used first)</p>	<p>You discover that you are actually causing the exact relationship problem that you’ve been complaining about. For example, if you believe that “my husband won’t listen” or “ just can’t express his feelings,” you may suddenly discover, with the help of the RJ, that you forcefully prevent him from listening or expressing his feelings by criticizing him every time he tries.</p> <p>This is the most painful and controversial of the four “Great Deaths” of the “self.” But there is a reward for those with the courage and humility to use the RJ and take a look at the role they’ve been playing in the conflict. Once you see what you’ve been doing, you can use the Five Secrets of Effective Communication to make a radical change in how you respond to the other person. In fact, if you do this with humility, the very moment you change, she or he will nearly always change.</p>

		This is based on the Buddhist notion that we are all one, and that the basis of evil is the belief that we are separate from an “external” reality, and that we are the victims of the other person’s “badness.”
23. Uncertainty Acceptance	Decision-Making Tool; Coin Flip or Stop It! Technique	This one is for individuals with OCD who are addicted to constant reassurance as well as seeking endless guidance on making the so-called “correct” decisions when there is no single “correct decision.”
24.		Others can be added.
25.		Others can be added.

The Acid Test

One of the universal causes of feelings of depression and inadequacy is the belief that you're convinced that you're not "special," or just not good enough. For example, you may believe that you're not intelligent, attractive, or successful enough to feel happy and fulfilled. Or you may feel you're not sufficiently popular, or confident, and so forth. Or perhaps you haven't found your life partner, and you're wondering if you'll always be alone.

Do you ever have insecurities like that?

If so, I'd like to tell you a story that might interest you. At one of my summer intensive workshops for mental health professionals, I asked for a volunteer to help with a quick role-play demonstration of a therapy technique five minutes before the lunch break. A woman named Imani volunteered, but when she came up to the stage, she began to cry and said she needed help.

I was taken aback because I hadn't intended to do live therapy. I explained that I couldn't really treat anybody in just four or five minutes, but said I might be able at least to empathize and provide some support.

Imani explained that most of the therapists in the workshop seemed pretty high powered, including Stanford graduate students, post-doctoral fellows with grants from the National Institute of Mental Health, and so forth.

She said she felt intimidated because she'd grown up in a poor area in South Los Angeles, and never had the chance to go to good schools. And although she'd earned a master's degree in counseling from a community college, she said she'd never had any great training and was just an average, second-rate therapist.

I asked Imani what she was hoping for at the end of our demonstration. For example, if a miracle happened, what miracle would she be hoping for?

She said she'd no longer be feeling inadequate and inferior. Instead, she'd feel happy and confident.

That's what I was hoping to hear, and here's what I said next:

Imani, I might be able to offer you the miracle of happiness, because I've got some powerful tools, to help you change the way you think and feel, but I can't turn you into a world-class therapist in just three minutes, or even by the end of today's workshop.

So, you have a choice of how you want to feel at the end of today's training. You can walk out of the workshop feeling like a depressed "second-rate" therapist, or a happy and joyous "second rate" therapist.

Clearly, you have a lot of learning to do, and that's why you're at this workshop. So, how do you want to feel while you're learning? Do you want to feel joyous and self-loving, or you would you prefer to feel miserable and inadequate? What's your choice?

For a moment, Imani looked puzzled, and then she suddenly "got it." She burst into laughter and said, "I think I'll go for happy!"

She said that her depression suddenly vanished.

I think that might have been my fastest "cure" of all time!

Why? How did that happen? If you have any ideas, you can share them here, and then I'll give you my take on it. If you're puzzled, just put, "no ideas" in the text box.

Why did Imani's feelings of depression and inadequacy suddenly disappear?

Thanks! Here's my take on it. I asked Imani the Acid Test question. It's one of my favorite techniques.

Let me ask you the same question. Are you willing to feel happy right now, just as you are, or if would prefer to postpone your feelings of happiness until you make some pretty profound changes in your life?

Imani's depression did *not* result from her lack of therapy skills, or from her inadequate schooling, but from her Negative Thoughts about herself. She'd been putting herself down because she wasn't "good enough," instead of giving herself loving support and encouragement.

And, of course, her self-criticisms showed some really beautiful things about her, including her humility as well as the fact that she had really high

standards and wanted to give the very best to her patients. And the very moment she accepted herself, warts and all, everything suddenly changed.

I call that the Acceptance Paradox. I'll repeat it. Accepting yourself as you really are, warts and all, is actually the greatest change a human being can make.

Imani's stunning recovery was miracle #1. Miracle #2 happened right after the lunch break.

I asked the audience work in dyads for a 30-minute empathy exercise. One would act as the therapist and the other would act as the patient. The one in the role of "patient" would talk about a real problem, and the one in the role of "therapist" would empathize and try to form a compassionate relationship with the "patient."

At the end of the exercise, I asked if any audience members would like to share their experiences. What did they learn? What happened?

I called on a woman who had raised her hand enthusiastically. She said that she'd been in the role of "patient" and had a mind-blowing experience with one of the most fantastic therapists on the planet.

I asked who her therapist was.

She pointed to Imani, and tears came to my eyes as the audience gave Imani a standing ovation.

Like so many of us, Imani had been busy beating up on herself for what she thought she *didn't* have. She was convinced she wasn't good enough. When she decided to accept herself, her feelings of anxiety and inferiority disappeared, and her gift of incredible compassion emerged.

Of course, Imani was just a beginner, and she did have a great deal to learn about therapy. But once she accepted herself, warts and all, she felt joyful and motivated, instead of intimidated and demoralized. And then she was able to convey the same magic to her "patient."

As you can see, accepting your mediocre self might sound incredibly drab and unappealing, but it can catapult you into enlightenment. The "Great Death" of the perfect "self" you've been aspiring to can actually be the "Great Rebirth" or your real self. This death is not a funeral, but a mega-celebration.

Now you know what I'm offering. The goal is not a magical transformation of any of the facts of your life, but the way you think about yourself and your world. And if you decide to turn down the intensity of that bullying inner voice that causes your angst, real miracles are sometimes possible.

We are often taught that our feelings of depression and inadequacy are the result of what's "wrong" with us, like a "chemical imbalance in the brain," a troubled childhood, or a so-called "mental disorder." And you, too, may sometimes dwell on your failures and shortcomings, and tell yourself that you have to be way better to feel truly happy and worthwhile.

However, Imani's negative feelings were the actually the expression of some really beautiful things about her and her core values. What were they? There could be one or more correct answers to this quiz. You'll find the answers on page 20.

Quiz #1

1. Her high standards.
2. Her honesty and integrity.
3. Her frugality.
4. Her humility.
5. Her compassion.

In this class, you'll learn that your negative thoughts and feelings are also the result of what's most awesome and beautiful about you and your core values as a human being. You'll also learn that your negative thoughts and feelings can sometimes be entirely healthy and appropriate, and even helpful to you in many ways that you're not yet even aware of.

Quiz #2

Now, I have another quiz for you. Why do so many people resist self-acceptance?

There could be one or more correct answers to this quiz as well. You'll find the answers on page 21.

1. Because we don't want to give up on our goal of becoming special or perfect. We don't want to accept our mediocre and flawed "real self."

2. Because we think that beating up on ourselves is the best way to reach our high standards.
3. Because we think we that our flaws and shortcomings *are* bad.
4. Because other people will judge you and look down on you if you accept your flaws and shortcomings.
5. Because people can't grasp how liberating and mind-bending acceptance can be.

Thanks for reading about the Acid Test. This technique can be very helpful for some people, and not at all helpful for others! Fortunately, it's just one technique among many that can help on your path to enlightenment.

Answers to Quiz #1

1. Her high standards.

Correct. Correct. Imani definitely had high standards, and they had motivated her to work hard and achieve a great deal. For example, in spite of her humble origins, she'd worked hard and was pursuing some additional training at the workshop.

2. Her honesty and integrity.

Correct. Correct. Imani was vividly aware of her shortcomings and wasn't trying to con others or promote herself as anything she wasn't.

3. Her frugality.

Incorrect. Good guess, but perhaps a bit off. She may, indeed, be frugal, and she probably didn't have any luxuries when growing up and learned to be frugal, but frugality is not one of the qualities conveyed by her negative thoughts and feelings.

4. Her humility.

Correct. Correct. Imani was humble and vulnerable, and I found those qualities immediately appealing. She seemed incredibly warm and kind.

5. Her compassion.

Correct. Correct. Imani's dream was to help others who were suffering.

Answers to Quiz #2

Why do so many people resist self-acceptance?

1. Because we don't want to give up on our goal of becoming special or perfect. We don't want to accept our mediocre and flawed "real self."

Correct. The need to be "special" can be highly motivating, but it's also one of the greatest causes of suffering and loneliness.

2. Because we think that beating up on ourselves is the best way to reach our high standards.

Correct. We beat up on ourselves when we fall short, thinking this will help us. In reality, you can waste a lot of energy beating up on yourself. Self-acceptance, in contrast, can trigger greater productivity as well as much greater joy along the way.

3. Because we think we that our flaws and shortcomings *are* bad.

Correct. People do resist for this reason. But our judgments, and not our flaws, are the true source of our suffering as well as our stuckness.

4. Because other people will judge you and look down on you if you accept your flaws and shortcomings.

Incorrect. This is another common belief, but the truth is the exact opposite. When you accept yourself in a spirit of warmth and joy, others will nearly always accept you, too!

Once you grasp it, this powerful phenomenon can be life-changing.

5. Because people can't grasp how liberating and mind-bending acceptance can be.

Correct. Many people cannot "see" or grasp what healthy acceptance is actually like. You have to experience it to comprehend it. That's when you'll have your own "ah-ha" moment.