

Radical Acceptance

Saying Yes to Your Life

Rachel Fleischman, LCSW, REAT | Dance Your Bliss®

Key Feature: Identity

Radical Acceptance is actively engaging with life as it is, rather than how we think it should be. It is not passive resignation, but a courageous willingness to meet reality with clarity and compassion.

At the Ranch, this may mean allowing your body, energy, emotions, or pace to be exactly what they are - and discovering that acceptance itself is liberating.

Core Elements of Radical Acceptance

- Letting go of control - recognizing that we cannot control everything and loosening the habit of fixing or managing experience
- Compassion and empathy - treating ourselves and others with kindness, especially in moments of difficulty
- Feeling what is true - allowing emotions to be felt rather than avoided
- Breaking the cycle of suffering - much suffering comes from resisting reality
- Empowerment through acceptance - clarity allows wise response rather than habitual reaction

Our False Prisons

Whatever we struggle to accept with compassion can imprison us. A core obstacle is the belief that we are unworthy or flawed.

Human Truths

- Everyone experiences suffering - it is part of being human
- Self-criticism narrows joy and aliveness
- Freedom begins with awareness, tenderness, and presence

The Gateway to Freedom

- Seeing clearly - noticing without distortion
- Recognizing - naming what is here now
- Compassionate allowing - holding experience with kindness

Wisdom Voices

- Pema Chödrön: "Compassion is a relationship between equals."
- Tara Brach: "Radical acceptance is the willingness to experience ourselves as we are."
- Jon Kabat-Zinn: "You can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf."

Reflection

- What am I being asked to accept right now?
- Where do I notice resistance?

Mindful Presence

The Art of Coming Home to Yourself

Rachel Fleischman, LCSW, REAT | Dance Your Bliss®

Key Feature: Actualization of Potential

Presence brings our full resources - body, breath, awareness, and choice - into this moment.

Focusing on one thing at a time helps us step out of rumination and anxiety and return to the life that is here now.

What Mindful Presence Is Not

It is not about clearing the mind or rejecting the future or past. We need thinking. Mindfulness is about awareness of thought, not absence of thought.

What Mindful Presence Is

Paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and without judgment. When you breathe and think, “I embrace this moment,” you are actualizing your potential.

How It Works

- Thoughts - learning to engage useful thinking without being hijacked by mental chatter
- Intentions - choosing focus reduces overwhelm
- Awareness - presence restores richness to life
- Filters - noticing judgments and worries that distort experience

What We Achieve

- Awareness of choice
- Freedom from habit
- Insight into tendencies
- Capacity to respond wisely

Reflection

- Where does my attention most easily rest?
- What happens when I slow down?
- What moment can I savor today?

Self-Compassion & Gratitude

Becoming Your Own Ally

Rachel Fleischman, LCSW, REAT | Dance Your Bliss®

Key Feature: Love

Self-compassion means treating ourselves with the same kindness we would offer a dear friend - transforming the inner critic into an inner ally.

Gratitude does not deny pain. It widens awareness, helping us notice nourishment, goodness, support, beauty, and moments of enoughness.

What Self-Compassion Is Not

- Not self-pity
- Not self-indulgence
- Not narcissism

Three Core Components

- Self-kindness vs. judgment
- Common humanity vs. isolation
- Mindfulness vs. over-identification

Why Gratitude Belongs Here

Gratitude can awaken us from the trance of unworthiness by gently shifting attention toward what is sustaining us. It improves mood, sleep, focus, immunity, and relationships.

Common Obstacles

- Pessimism
- Self-criticism
- Comparison and envy
- Perfectionism

Practices

- Speak to yourself as you would speak to someone you love
- Notice one small kindness you received today
- Take a gratitude walk and look for tiny moments of beauty
- Write down three micro-gratitudes before sleep

Benefits

- Healthier relationships
- Improved physical health
- Greater resilience and performance
- More joy, steadiness, and emotional spaciousness

Reflection

- How do I speak to myself when I struggle?
- What would kindness sound like instead?
- What feels nourishing right now?

INNER FITNESS CLASS 4

Rest & Renewal

The Healing Power of Deep Sleep

Rachel Fleischman, LCSW, REAT | Dance Your Bliss®

The Heart of This Practice

Sleep is the foundation of health, emotional balance, creativity, and joy. It is not a luxury or a reward for productivity - it is essential nourishment for the nervous system.

Rest also includes the many small moments that signal safety to the body: pauses, breath, stillness, warmth, and permission to stop striving.

The Science of Sleep - Simple & Empowering

Sleep flows in 90-minute cycles, repeating 4-6 times per night. Your body naturally prioritizes the sleep stage you need most.

Light Sleep	Deep Sleep	REM Sleep
Heart rate, breath, and temperature slow. The nervous system shifts toward rest and digest.	Cellular repair, immune restoration, and brain detox - the glymphatic system, like the brain's dishwasher.	Emotional processing, memory and learning integration, creativity, and insight.

Sleep Starts with Light

Your internal clock listens to light through the eyes. Light timing is one of the most powerful sleep tools we have.

- Wake at a consistent time
- Get natural light within 30-60 minutes of waking
- Dim lights in the evening
- Avoid bright or overhead lighting at night

Chronobiology: Living in Rhythm

Humans are diurnal beings - meant to be awake by day and asleep at night. Rest begins long before bedtime.

- Light: bright mornings, real darkness at night
- Temperature: warm by day, cool by night; ideal sleep is often 60-67°F
- Meals: eat at consistent times and aim to finish eating 3 hours before bed
- Movement: earlier movement supports deeper sleep
- Thought timing: protect evenings from stress, news, and difficult conversations

The Stanford Sleep Clinic Hack: The 3-2-1 Rule

No food 3 hours before bed

No screens 2 hours before bed

No work 1 hour before bed

Simple. Powerful. Life-changing.

Why Sleep Matters So Much

Even one poor night can increase:

Anxiety and emotional reactivity

Sugar cravings and impulsivity

Brain fog and low mood

Consistent sleep supports:

Immunity and metabolism

Emotional regulation

Focus, creativity, and relationship ease

Sleep & Hormones - Especially for Women

During perimenopause and menopause, drops in estrogen and progesterone can disrupt sleep.

Common experiences

- Early morning waking, often between 2-4 a.m.
- Night sweats or overheating
- Anxiety or restless thoughts
- Aches, restless legs, or frequent urination

Supportive practices

- Cool sleep environment, ideally below 68°F
- Breathable sheets, fan, or a cooling eye mask
- Magnesium glycinate for calming and muscle relaxation
- Gentle breathwork or Yoga Nidra
- Melatonin: less is more; consider 0.3-1 mg if needed - Pls note, it is not regulated - so be mindful.

Gentle Practices for Rest & Renewal

- Create an evening wind-down ritual: dim lights, slow movement, softer sound
- Try a warm shower or gentle stretching
- Lengthen the exhale with calming breathwork, such as 4-7-8 breathing - I'll teach you!
- Place a hand on heart or belly to signal safety
- Practice the phrase: "I'll return to this tomorrow." Rest does not require solving.

Reflection

- What helps my body feel safe enough to rest?
- What habit could I soften tonight?
- What would it mean to trust rest as wisdom?

INNER FITNESS CLASS 5

Embodied Joy

Tools for Living with Passion and Purpose

Rachel Fleischman, LCSW, REAT | Dance Your Bliss®

The Heart of This Practice

Living your best life is not about perfection, constant happiness, or becoming someone else. It is about becoming more fully yourself.

At the Ranch, we remember something essential: the body is not an obstacle to wisdom. The body is a doorway.

Embodied Joy Means

Joy we can feel - not just think about. It may arrive as breath, movement, ease, laughter, warmth, tears, music, rest, appetite, aliveness, or the simple feeling of being present.

Six Doorways to Your Best Life

Presence Slow down enough to feel your life.	Self-Compassion Speak to yourself as an ally.	Gratitude Train the heart to notice nourishment.
Courage Choose what is true over what is familiar.	Embodiment Trust sensation, breath, and movement.	Joy Allow delight to matter.

A Gentle Reframe

Your best life is not a future achievement. It begins in small choices: a kinder thought, a deeper breath, a walk in beauty, a hand on the heart, a true yes, a protective no, and a moment of movement that brings you home.

Reflection • What part of me feels most alive right now? • What kind of joy wants more room in my life? • What is one small practice I want to bring home?	Closing Practice: The Embodied Yes Place one hand on your heart and one hand on your belly. Take a slow breath. Ask quietly: What is my body saying yes to? Then complete: I am saying yes to...
---	--

Wisdom to Carry Forward

You do not have to become someone new to live your best life. Your body knows the way back to bliss.