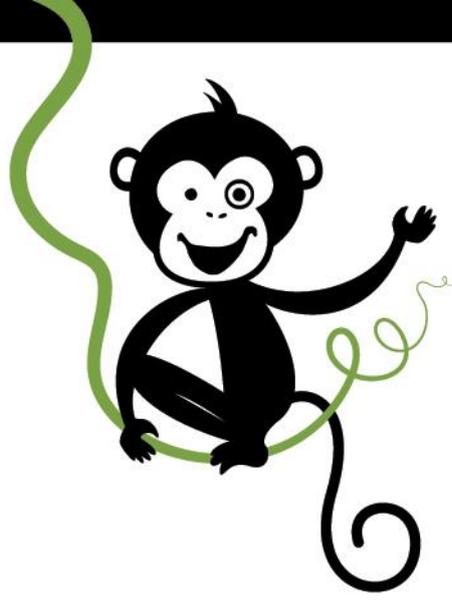




MODELS

How to keep working when you're dying on the inside

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INTRODUCTION TO MODELS

As part of the 'how to keep working when you're dying on the inside' course, you will find four models of communication referenced.

They are included in this booklet as your reference. That way, you can always review them when you see them attached to exercises.

LAER

LAER is four simple steps (or beats to take in your head) that helps you ground yourself and the other person. That way, you can start to listen and respond to each other rather than waiting to speak and reacting instead. It's great for customer service situations or for making people feel valued generally.

CFRED

CFRED is a model to help people in crisis cope, and uncover opportunities, sources of relief and/or remedies they may have forgotten about. It's used in strength-based counselling, crisis intervention and can be applied to a lot of other wibbly, wobbly situations in life. It involves a lot of open-ended questions and allowing the person to speak.

ABCD

We don't have to accept the opinions of other people in our lives, even if they want us to. We also don't need them rattling around in our head like a bad Dickensian Ghost, activating negative self-talk. That's where a grounding exercise like ABCD excels. You can actively acknowledge those hot thoughts, examine the beliefs and consequences. And then you can take time to detect evidence against them and dispute them. Not only does it lower the temperature on any button pressing moments, it also gives you a great framework to think things through.

ACT

ACT is acceptance and commitment theory. It's another interesting cognitive behaviour therapy to help you change your thinking. Like ABCD, it looks at those hot or strained thoughts we have and gives us a framework to make sense of them.



LAER – Listen, Acknowledge, Explore and Respond.

LAER is four simple steps (or beats to take in your head) that helps you ground yourself and the other person. That way, you can start to listen and respond to each other rather than waiting to speak and reacting instead. It's great for customer service situations or for making people feel valued generally.

Listen to what the person is saying. Don't close your mouth, imagining what you'll say next. Be present and listen

Acknowledge their reasons for how they feel. Even if you don't agree, having empathy for how they feel matters

Explore the possibilities as you drift away from the emotions. Ask questions, reflect their meaning back to them. Explore solutions and potential outcomes

Respond instead of reacting. Collect your facts and deliver them in a way that makes the person feel heard. Let them know you understand their situation and explain yours.

You don't have to give them the outcome they want for a person to feel valued. You do have to listen. And listening in its truest form means you haven't decided the outcome before the conversation began.



CFRED

CFRED is a model to help people in crisis cope, and uncover opportunities, sources of relief and/or remedies they may have forgotten about. It's used in strength-based counselling, crisis intervention and can be applied to a lot of other wibbly, wobbly situations in life. It involves a lot of open-ended questions and allowing the person to speak.

It stands for:

Connect - connecting and building rapport through creating space. And making a space where you don't judge or second guess the person is crucial.

Focus - uncovering the focus of the issue. For example, they may have a lot going on, but usually, there's an underlying core issue that underpins their distress. Don't forget to reflect meaning back to people and clarify you have the situation correct. Don't assume. A good way to do that is to summarise what they've said and posit a theme. And keep them present. There's nothing you can do about what Bob encountered in 1986.

E.g. *"It sounds like you have a lot going on right now with late bill payers, your partner's redundancy and your parents sending you job ads in response to a request for financial support. How is your money situation at the moment?"*

Relieve Distress - let them get it out. Share their feelings. Asking questions like *"how did that make you feel?"* or *"how are you coping?"* really help. Listen with intent, again hearing what the person says instead of formulating your response in your head as they talk.

Enable Coping - by the time you have arrived here, if you have you have built your rapport, established the focus of the conversation, listened to their pain, you will have collected clues you can use to enable coping. The person is bound to have told you what they think are the potential issues, how they've coped previously, and what is making today harder to deal with than other times. Now is the time to remind them that they have some great skills and shine a light on their courage.

E.g. *"I'm sorry you are going through such a tough time at the moment. It must feel like a lot of pressure. But it also sounds like you are good at pressure situations. You*



mentioned this isn't the first time you have had to make do with very little money. How did you cope?"

Decide Next Steps - this is pretty much as it sounds. It's about mining out the conclusions the person is coming to and helping them decide how to tackle them. It's not about you giving solutions. The steps in the action plan are theirs and theirs alone.

E.g. "While it sounds like times are tough with money, you mentioned that you thought getting an overdraft could help. What would you need to do to find out if that is suitable?"

E.g. "You mentioned you had considered getting a financial planner, taking part time work until the dust settles, using a debt collection app, or entering a payment plan with your parents. Which option is the right option to try first?"

By using LAER and CFRED, you can help your clients and friends lower the temperature on negative situations. It also gives the opportunity to find out what you need to help them feel less stressed and tackle the situation at hand.

There's a bonus round here, too. Once you learn these frameworks, you'll also be able to spot the people in your life who are genuinely hearing you and want to help over those who simply have something to say.



Grounding yourself with ABCD

Activating event – keeping the focus on an event helps give clarity and makes our feelings and reactions to even long-term triggering people manageable. Describe the event. Write down the hot thoughts you have about the situation. Then expand that to how they treat you in general

Beliefs – list the beliefs you have attached to that person or situation. What are you thinking about? What are you telling yourself? How is that inner dialogue attached to your beliefs? What assumptions are you making?

Consequences - what are the consequences of these thoughts? What emotions do you feel? Write out the emotions you experience. Do the same for the physical reactions the person elicits. Rank them in terms of strength and impact.

Detective work and disputing the narrative – is there a factual basis to your hot thoughts? Are they based on reality or assumption? What can you introduce as evidence to dispute these thoughts? Are you thinking these outcomes based on previous experience? Or are you amplifying your reactions by imagining more dramatic and damaging stories than you should? What factors might be influencing you to lean in on hot thoughts? Are you tired? Overwhelmed? Stressed? Sick of the person? Are your negative feelings being enhanced by outside forces such as drugs, alcohol, gossip, or the opinions of others?

Review the hinky or downright irrational opinions you hold about the situation at hand. Challenge them.

By using ABCD, you move away from the red mist of emotion and can see a way forward. It helps to articulate and validate your feelings without carrying additional baggage. The perspective gained can also help you find a way to communicate your unhappiness in a way that helps you get the result you want.



Accepting decisions and committing to action with ACT

ACT is acceptance and commitment theory. It's another interesting cognitive behaviour therapy to help you change your thinking. Like ABCD, it looks at those hot or strained thoughts we have and gives us a framework to make sense of them.

ACT consists of:

Connecting with the present moment- this is another grounding exercise. Pay attention to where your focus goes. Take note of the roadblocks your brain may be throwing up. Connect with the thoughts.

Defusing – is the art to inviting a little distance between you and those thoughts. Step back. Don't try to control your thoughts, let them come as needed. In the defusing state, we can see the flickering images, impulses, and sensations we'd normally avoid, run from, or deny. This is learned detachment. It's about getting breathing space from the emotions clouding our view.

Acceptance – we have to lean to accept our deepest, darkest, and even scariest thoughts. Now you need to open yourself up to unwanted private experiences that you may usually avoid or deny. Instead of resisting your thoughts, feelings, emotions, and memories, allow them to flow. Accept that resistance is a blockage that may be preventing us from moving forward. Instead, lower the fences and explore the emotions and feelings safely using learned detachment. Accept yourself with unconditional positive regard.

Noticing the self- when we're stuck with our decision-making processes, we think but we don't notice ourselves thinking. Tripped out? This is the time to do just that. Be aware of what you think but give yourself space enough to evaluate why. How are they coming about? What automatic thoughts are potentially hampering the process? Look beyond what you jump to think or believe. Understand the meaning or your automatic conclusions so you can challenge them if needs be.

Values as a means to know what matters – why are you here? What matters to you? How do you want to be seen as treating others? What defines you as a person and the way you behave?



Committing to action – once you have viewed the decision and feelings through the ACT lens, you should be able to define what action needs to be taken. That also means making a timely commitment to taking that action. Breaking the cycle of rumination and worry means taking steps. The weird thing is, we often hesitate here. Yet once we begin, we often wonder why we hesitated so long. Make yourself accountable.



“Let go of who you think you’re supposed to be;
embrace who you are.”

BRENE BROWN



The Freelance Jungle is an Australian online support community aimed at ending the isolation inherent with freelance life and self-employment. A place for information sharing, stress reduction purposes and deals with the daily life of being a freelancer. We're low on sales and high on relationship and community building.

OUR AIMS

- » Build community and end isolation.
- » Raise the bar for Australian freelancers (and our adopted Kiwi cousins) through information sharing and strength building as an industry.
- » Remind freelancers that stress has a productivity cost- and to give practical strategies to combat the stress, mental health issues and suicidality within self-employment.
- » Replace the lost camaraderie of 'working for da man' with online and offline places to go.
- » End the stigma associated with self-employment and create a viable and prosperous future industry.

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