

Curriculum Week Four Resource.

Bus of life' Theory of acceptance and commitment for bus passengers

One way to think about barriers is to think about them as passengers on the bus of life.

Imagine life is like a journey, and you're the driver of your bus. You want to go places and do what's important for you. Over the course of your life, various passengers have boarded your bus.

Passengers reflect your thoughts, feelings, and all kinds of inner states. Some of them you like, such as happy memories or positive thoughts, and some you feel neutral about. And then there are passengers that you wish had not boarded the bus; they can be ugly, scary, and nasty.

In other words passengers come from all of our unique life experiences, and form constellations of feelings, beliefs, bodily sensations, impulses, etc, we can think of them as everything that goes on inside us. The road, on the other hand, represents the situations and people we encounter. These things are on the outside but they may have an impact on you

So, you are driving your bus of life with all sorts of passengers on board. The scary passengers can threaten you and want to be at the front of the bus where you see them. You take this very seriously and stop the bus to struggle and fight with them. You may try to avoid them, distract yourself, or throw them off the bus, but they are your inner states, so you can't get rid of them. However, while the bus is stopped, you're not moving in the direction that's important to you.

You may also try to make deals with the passengers; you'll give in and do what they tell you to do if they agree to keep quiet in the back of the bus. This may feel a little easier than fighting with them, but it means the passengers are in control of the direction your bus is heading.

Passengers tend to come into awareness whenever we need to move in the direction of something of importance to us; a new relationship, a new job, change of some kind. They make us quite uncomfortable when they come into awareness. So, we develop strategies to ensure that these passengers stay at the back of the bus, and out of our awareness.

By fighting and struggling with the passengers or giving in to them, you, the driver, are not in control of your journey of life, and it's likely that you are not heading in a direction that is important to you. But what if, even though these passengers look scary, nasty, and threatening, they can't take control unless you allow them to?

There can be different ways to respond to the passengers so that you can drive in the direction that is important for you

So try to answer these question?

- What are your passengers?
- What objective facts trigger passenger reactions in you?
- How are they diverting you from moving in the directly of the life you want?
- What facts on the road trigger old passengers in you?
- Can you recognize when this is happening and respond mindfully, rather than reacting in auto-pilot?