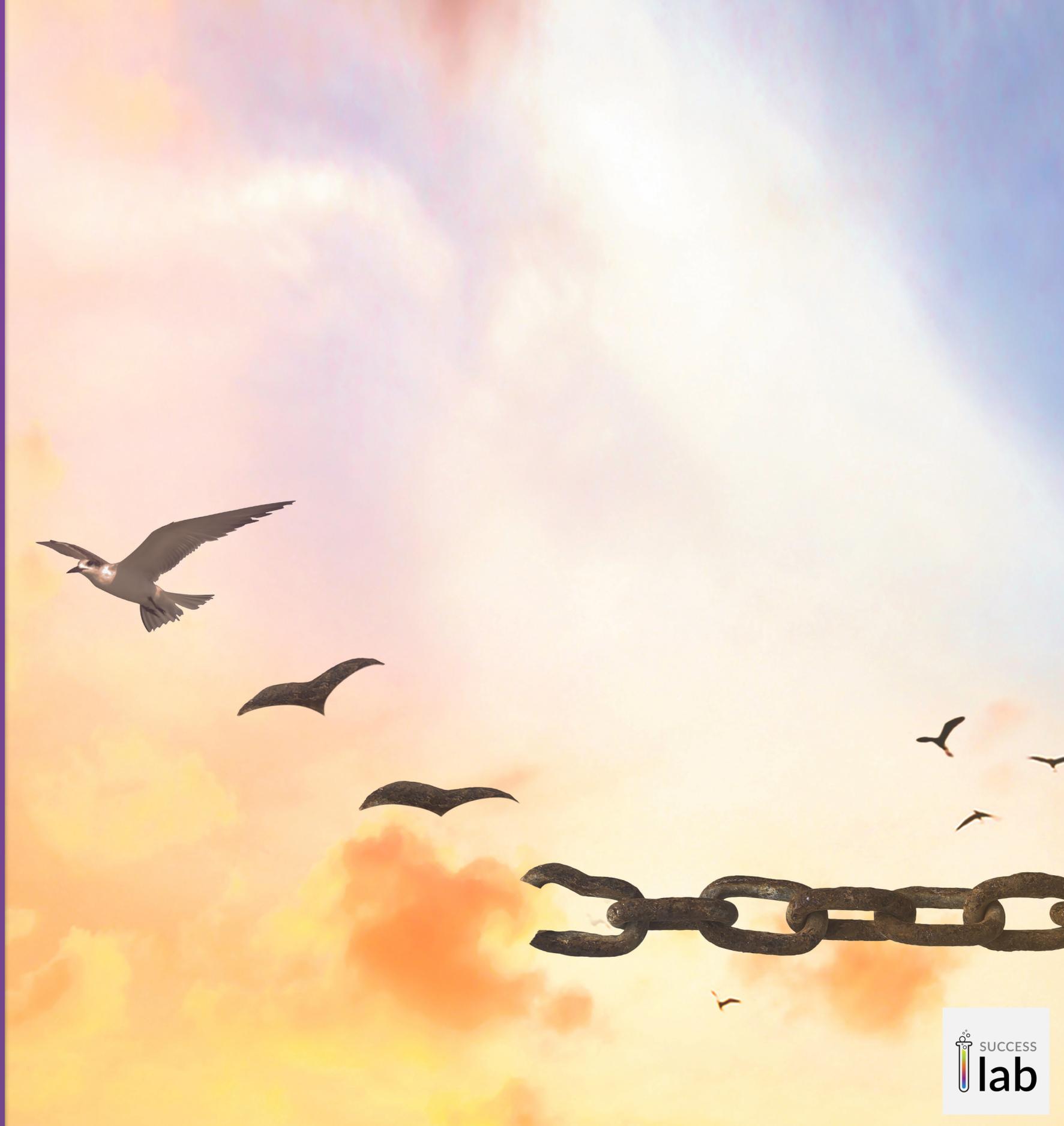


ACCEPTANCE



Acceptance is the opposite of judgement.

When Adam and Eve ate the apple, they became 'aware.'

This means they acquired the capacity to discriminate between good and bad, right and wrong.

It's a natural consequence of something being 'wrong' or 'bad' to want it - NOT to be that way.

Even though many aspects of our lives are outside our control - we spend massive numbers of hours wishing that they weren't.

Acceptance

Simply put - the largest drain of our energy is that used trying to control things that are outside our ability to control.

Most of us easily accept positive emotions...
eg: *being validated, excitement, or intellectual stimulation.*



Acceptance

We are less accepting of the negatives:
Boredom, loneliness, heartache, sadness,
disappointment, grief, despair...

Most of us stuff these things down with a smartphone.

We also avoid feelings and traits in ourselves that we judge others for, such as laziness or neediness.

Paradoxically, acceptance is the first step for any radical change.

By acknowledging the feeling, thought or sensation and going into it, the experience changes.

Even with physical pain, try experimenting by actually feeling it.

Research has found that the pain dramatically reduces.

Principle 1

ACCEPTANCE DOES NOT MEAN LIKING,
WANTING, CHOOSING, OR SUPPORTING

You're choosing to allow it to be there when you
can't change it in that moment.

To make space for it.

To give yourself permission to be as you are, feel what
you feel, or have experienced what you've experienced
without creating unproductive shame or anxiety.

Principle 2

ACCEPTANCE IS AN ACTIVE PROCESS

It's an active process, one that must be practiced consciously.

It's rare that we one day choose to accept our emotional or physical pain, our bodies, our difficult relationships or our pasts, and never think about it again.

Principle 3

ACCEPTANCE DOESN'T MEAN THAT YOU CAN'T WORK ON CHANGING THINGS

Practicing acceptance does not necessarily mean you won't be able to make a change.

You can accept your body and still change it, accept your emotions and acknowledge their impermanence, and accept your behaviour one day when you might change it tomorrow .

Principle 4

ACCEPTANCE DOESN'T MEAN YOU'RE ACCEPTING IT IS GOING TO BE THAT WAY FOREVER

Sometimes imagining practicing acceptance forever can seem daunting, overwhelming, or impossible.

Try to find that sweet spot where you're accepting the current moment, but not under the pretence that things will change in the future.

There are 3 primary methods of practicing acceptance:

Detachment

Letting go

Stoicism

Don't attach who you are to any goal.

Take a step back and simply allow things to unfold.

Become an impartial observer who is just taking in what happens.

You need to have the attitude:

- If you achieve your goal, you'll be fine.
- If you don't achieve your goal, you'll be fine.

Detachment

Your happiness doesn't depend on achieving a certain goal, having someone else's love, or how a situation unfolds.

Your love, respect, and appreciation of yourself do not depend on any particular outcome.

Things, other people, and situations don't define you.

Detachment is realising that you're okay as you are.

You can find wholeness within.

Practice acceptance by practicing detachment.

Letting Go

If there's something that you're refusing to let go of, ask yourself:

- Am I wasting my time and effort?
- Am I limiting myself?
- Am I deceiving myself by thinking I can change the way things are?
- Is it better for my mental, physical, financial, and/or emotional well-being to just let this go?

When the answer to one or more of these questions is 'yes' it's time to let go.

Take a deep breath, begin to loosen your grip, slowly open your hands, and let go.

“A cucumber is bitter.
Throw it away.
There are briars in the road.
Turn aside from them.
This is enough.
Do not add,

‘And why were such things made in the world?’”

~ *Marcus Aurelius*

Stoicism

You can think of whatever you're refusing to accept as an obstacle.

When you come across an obstacle, you can stand there and stare at it as you whinge your fate, or you can accept that you've come across an obstacle and deal with it as quickly as possible.

REMEMBER: you're not acknowledging a feeling to get rid of a feeling.

That's not acceptance.

You need to acknowledge the sensation, feeling or thought without trying to change it at all.

Pure acceptance of it, just as it is.

PRACTICE

Relax into the discomfort is by courageously turning to the sensation of discomfort.

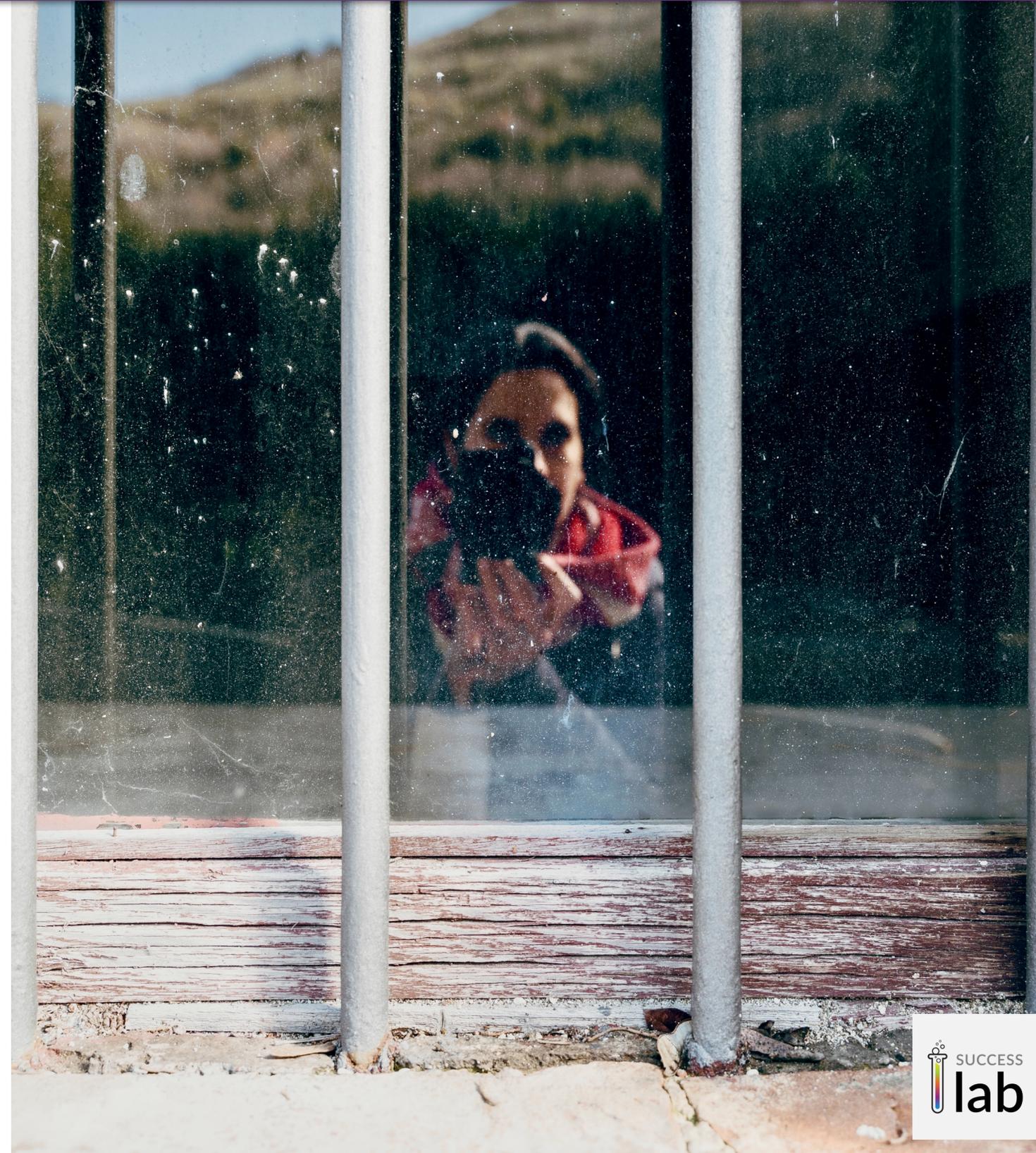
PRACTICE

*Simultaneously feel the sensation of your own breath.
With each out-breath, allow yourself to move closer and soften the tension around the discomfort.*

Acceptance

Acceptance is the willingness to experience ourselves and our lives as things are.

It is a move away from self-deception towards reality.



Acceptance

When we practice acceptance, we are deliberately choosing to slow right down to all experiences that appear on the radar.

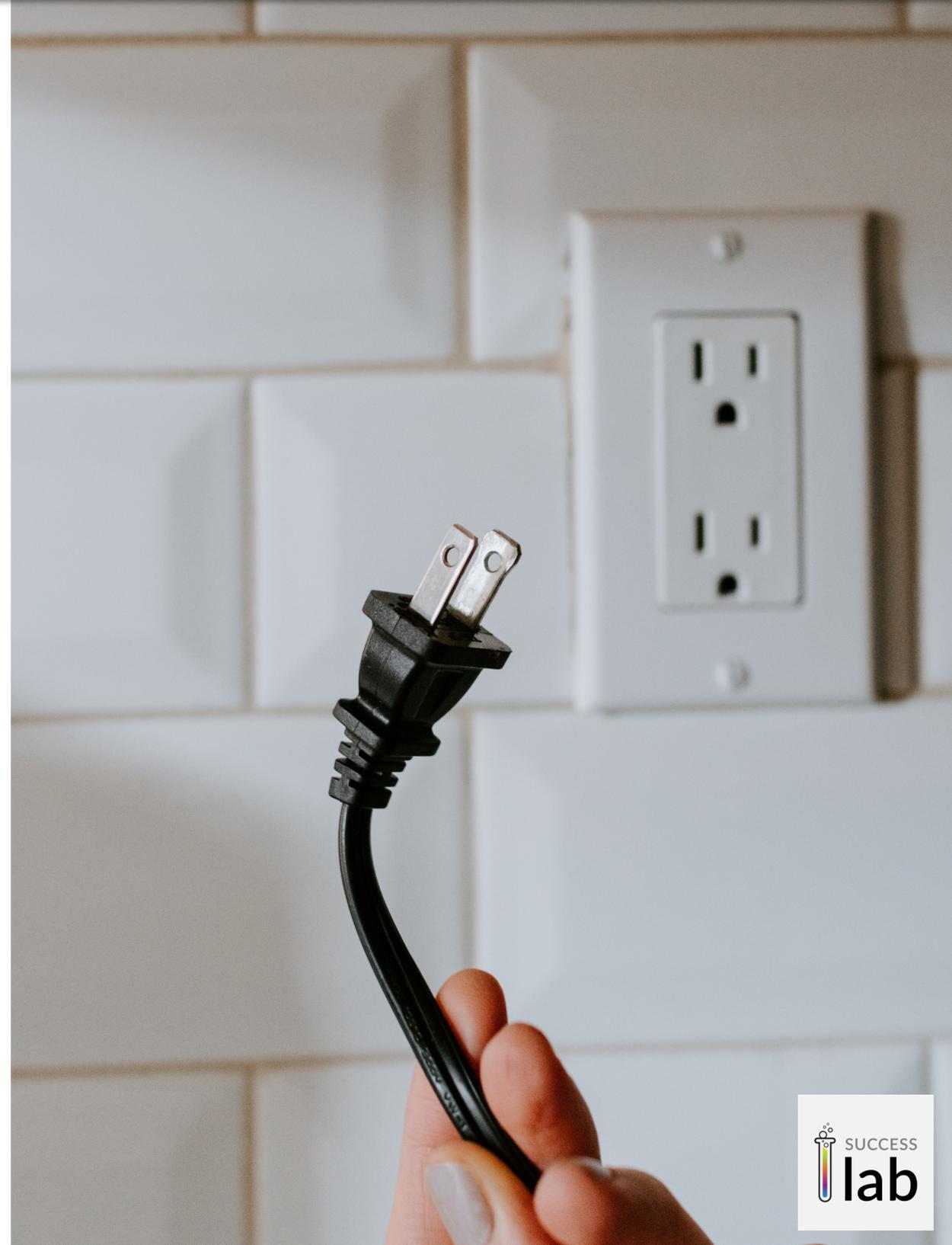
We actually welcome harder emotions and explore them with curiosity.

Not only is this quite a radical departure from the standard position, it may even sound totally crazy.

There are grave consequences to remaining at arm's length to our emotions.

Acceptance

A lack of acceptance makes us disconnected from ourselves, processing reality solely through our heads instead of through our hearts and feelings.



Acceptance

One thing that keeps many of us feeling helpless and unhappy in life is not having control over our own behaviour.

Compulsive habits are big red flags that we aren't accepting something.



We grow up believing that judging and evaluating ourselves negatively is how we improve.

This is a long way from the truth.

You develop EQ by letting yourself feel what you need to feel, so that you can decide what you want to do about it.

Exercise

- 1 Start by sitting yourself comfortably upright in a chair, in a relaxed position with no crossed arms or legs.
- 2 Close your eyes slowly and gently, then quietly feel your breath as it moves in and out your body. Note any physical sensations across your body with relaxed detachment.
- 3 Take several minutes to notice how it feels in your chest, in your lungs, as it moves through your nose, throat, and stomach. Don't worry about the pace or depth of your breathing, and as you take some time to be in the moment, other thoughts will drift along—just recognise their existence and try creating some space inside for them.
- 4 As you breathe in, visualise yourself making more room in your body for these thoughts. Recognise that they are simply thoughts. Memories are just memories, and emotions are just emotions that come and go. If it helps, label them for what they are and gently bring your attention back to your breathing.
- 5 Worries or fears might also come along, and you can label those too before once again returning your mind to the present. You might catch yourself thinking self-critical thoughts, but there is space in your body for these before you let them go again. See if you can observe them while not taking them as truth. If they persist, remind yourself that you're only observing your own experience.
- 6 When you're ready to wrap up, try to end with the feeling of detached acceptance. Throughout your day, you could try bring to mind being an observer, rather than a reactor.

The fastest way to begin to understand what you routinely **do not accept** is to start practicing mindfulness.

Mindfulness is what makes the unobservable, observable.
From that, you can see when and how you avoid your life.

Assignments

1	What do you need to accept that you haven't yet?
2	What do you need to let go of?
3	What obstacle do you need to transform?