

Expanding the Truth Gap: Dialectics

The Dorm Parent Collective

What is a Dialectic?

- The word “dialectical” describes the notion that two opposing ideas can be true at the same time
- Dialectics are the foundation for Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT). Dialectical thinking promotes a balance between acceptance and change, both of which are necessary for establishing a fulfilling life.
 - acceptance as first step to change

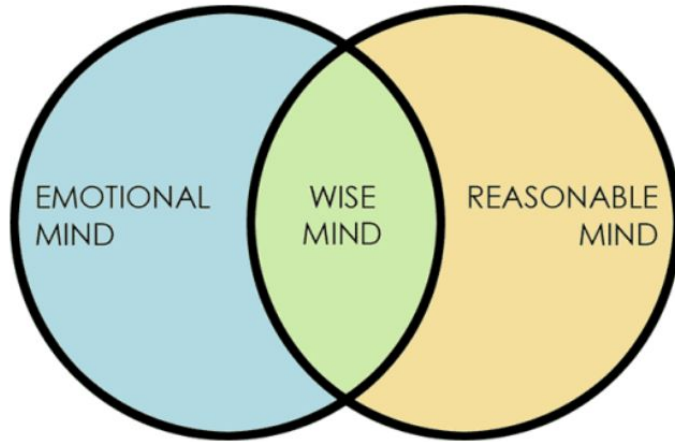
Why is Dialectical Thinking Beneficial?

- We often fall into the habit of thinking in very “black and white” terms. **Dialectical thinking encourages us to consider that more than one perspective can exist at once, and opposing perspectives can combine to create a “new truth.”**
- This “new truth,” which validates both our and someone else’s experience, can help parents and their kids **“bridge the gap” in their perspectives.** It can also help us expand our mindsets individually, validating our experiences while at the same time asking more of ourselves.

Balancing Acceptance & Change

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rU7Knx3VByA>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTG7YEWkJFI&t=14s>

Wise Mind



- Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) uses the concept of a reasonable, emotional, and wise mind to describe a person's thoughts and behaviors.
- The reasonable mind is driven by logic, the emotional mind is driven by feelings, and wise mind is a middle-ground between the two.

Without Dialectical Thinking...

- We forget or **dismiss** positive steps that have been made
- We **react** out of fear without taking into account whole picture
- We don't allow ourselves **to live in the gray**, which is often close to the truth of any situation
- We will have trouble being open to **new ways** of doing things, new **perspectives**, and ultimately, strengthening our connections as we will have difficulty hearing someone else's experience

From “BUT” to “AND”

- You’re making a lot of progress **BUT** you’re still failing at X, Y and Z
- I want my child to get better **BUT** this process is too frustrating
- You would succeed **IF** you just tried harder
- I know you want to use the car **BUT** you do not have those privileges
- You say school is important to you **BUT** you don’t turn in your assignments

From “BUT” to “AND”

You're making a lot of progress **BUT** you're still failing at X,
Y and Z

**You're making a lot of progress AND you still have
some work ahead of you**

I want my child to get better **BUT** this process is taking
too long

**I want my child to get better AND I am struggling with
how slow the process is**

You would succeed **IF** you just tried harder

You are doing your best AND you need to do better

I know you want to use the car **BUT** you do not have those
privileges

**I know you want to use the car AND you first need to
demonstrate readiness by X, Y, Z**

You say school is important to them **BUT** you don't turn in
your assignments

**You say school is important to you AND your actions
indicate there's more going on**

*>> After using a dialectical phrase it can be helpful to
ASK an open ended question, lead with curiosity,
and/or see if you're loved one has a different
perspective or more insight to offer <<*

Reflection

1. What conflicts or situations have come up with your adult children recently in which a dialectical perspective could have been useful?
2. How do you define progress in this process at The Dorm — is there space for opposing truths within that definition?
3. Create two dialectics around challenges in thinking that are relevant to you right now.

References

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