Twitter Thread by Chris Cordry, LMFT

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What if I told you there was one master skill that determined both your emotional wellbeing and your effectiveness in every aspect of life?

Well, there is, and it's called psychological flexibility.

Here's what it is and how to build it:



Some things in life are outside of your control: the country you're born in, your parents, natural disasters.

But why do some people adapt better to life's changing circumstances than others?

How can you respond in ways that help you succeed, rather than making things worse?

Psychological flexibility is the key.

It's the ability to show up in the moment with full awareness and take action in alignment with your values.

But that ability is actually made up of several smaller skills.

Here's a simple way to break it down:

1. Get present.

This is where mindfulness comes in.

By being in the moment, rather than caught up in thoughts of the past or future, you maximize your ability to respond to what's happening, now.

2. Open up.

Once you're in the moment, you have to accept what's present--even if you don't like it.

That includes your own thoughts and feelings, which might be uncomfortable at times.

But it also means realizing those thoughts and feelings aren't *you*.

3. Do what matters.

Once you've accepted things as they are, *then* you can change them.

This is about taking action in a way that's aligned with your values--the things that truly matter to you, in your heart.

Taking action aligned with your values makes your life meaningful.

Combine these 3 together, and you get psychological flexibility:

The ability to be present, open yourself to whatever life throws at you, and do what you need to do in order to create a rich, full, and meaningful life.

Here's an example:

You get fired from your job.

Without psychological flexibility, you could easily get lost in worries about the future.

You might try to suppress your feelings of anger and disappointment by drinking too much or spending all day in bed.

You might avoid telling your spouse.

But with a flexible approach, you stay in the moment. You accept what happened as well as your hurt feelings.

And you do what needs to be done.

You brush up your CV, learn new skills, and look for a new job, maybe one that's more aligned with your real values and interests.

See how that's a better way of responding?

There's a growing body of research on psychological flexibility, showing how it can benefit you in many different ways, from improving mental health, to coping with chronic pain, to boosting job performance.

There are also evidence-based methods designed to increase your flexibility, including a whole school of psychotherapy called ACT, or Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (or Training, outside the therapy context).

ACT has been used successfully everywhere from therapists' offices in California, to corporate board rooms, to rural communities in Africa struggling to respond to Ebola outbreaks.

So, how do you get started with improving your psychological flexibility?

There are so many places you could start.

You could level up your mindfulness by starting a meditation practice.

You could journal to clarify your core values...

Or you could accept where you are, right now in this moment, and take one small action to move yourself forward, towards the life that you truly want.

Let me know in the comments--what action did you choose, and how did you feel after taking it?

If you learned something from this thread:

1. Follow me @chriscordry for more tweets about mindfulness, practical psychology, and personal growth, and

2. RT the tweet below to share this thread with your audience

Thanks! https://t.co/XH4ma3ogUZ

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> Here's what it is and how to build it: pic.twitter.com/Kfl0zDetsj
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> — Chris Cordry, LMFT (@chriscordry) January 14, 2023