



Dismantling Injunctions with Acceptance and Integration Training®

Melanie McGhee, L.C.S.W.

WHAT IS ACCEPTANCE AND INTEGRATION TRAINING?

Acceptance and Integration Training (AAIT™) is an emerging and promising transpersonal approach to counseling, coaching, and spiritual direction. It is intended to free practitioners and clients from the energetic tensions that keep us bound to pain and limitations. Whereas traditional talk therapy relies on insight, cognitive effort, or mindfulness skills to produce change and relief, AAIT™ employs a spectrum of protocols to integrate polarized psychological energies. Such integrations tend to resolve problems, giving relief from suffering, while contributing to spiritual well-being and wholeness.

Spiritual well-being can be typified by increases in compassion and awareness, and decreases in reactivity. Many would recognize the ability to make more skillful choices as an indication of spiritual wellness. With AAIT™, clients naturally experience decreased reactivity to previously triggering situations, along with expansions in present-focused awareness and compassion. With continued practice and additional training, clients and practitioners experience the intention that is at the heart of AAIT™: waking up from the bad dream of who we think we are—the false-conditioned self.

This non-historic iterative approach evolves into a path for self-care, by both therapists and clients seeking a means to resolve problems, cultivate more satisfying relationships, and live a life of meaning. As clients embrace their embodiment practice at home the rewards of moving into greater liberation from the compulsiveness of the false-conditioned self, become evident.

AAIT™ aims to advance the field by empowering healing arts practitioners and our clients to readily reclaim and restore our inner state amidst life's challenges while dismantling the illusion of separation.

Melanie McGhee, L.C.S.W. is the founder of Acceptance and Integration Training®. In addition to facilitating training and a clinical fellowship in AAIT™, she has maintained a psychotherapy practice since 1984. Ms. McGhee has studied with master therapists among them are Bob and Mary Goulding (founders of Redecision Therapy) Dick Olney (founder of Self Acceptance Training) and Zivorad Slavinski (founder of

Spiritual Technology). AAIT™ is based on her years of study and practice with these teachers along with her decades long interest in meditation and nondual philosophy.

Melanie is the author of an award-winning book, *An Illumined Life*, and has served as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Utah, University of Tennessee, and Maryville College. When not chasing after their puppy, Willa, she and her husband, David Patterson, Ph.D. are collaborating on research and a book about AAIT™.



AAIT™ THEORY, PRINCIPLES AND PHASES

The theory, principles, and phases of AAIT™ form a crucible for transformation. The more completely we understand the application of these principles, the stronger the crucible and the more impactful the work. The principles, serve as guides when we have wandered into the weeds of helping another or when trying to untangle ourselves from some limitation. They can serve as trail markers, helping us stay on course. While the phases insure our collaboration with our clients remains strong.

AAIT™ Theory:

At its simplest, ACCEPTANCE + INTEGRATION = FREEDOM is the theory of AAIT™.

Psychological and interpersonal distress can be attenuated and remediated through a process of recognition, acceptance, and integration of associated energetic polarities driving the distress.

Such integration results in greater acceptance of self, others, and situations. The integration process produces an increased sense of freedom and an ability to make skillful choices, in response to previously problematic triggering situations.

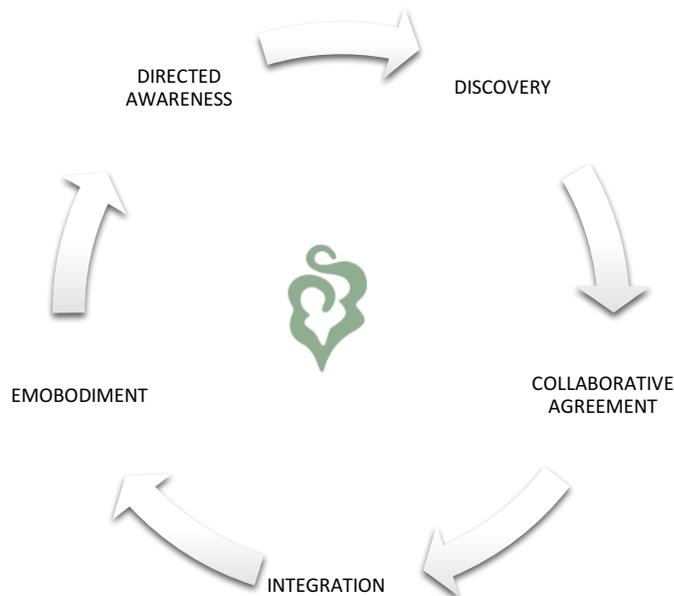
Integration methods are learned and perpetuated by ongoing practice of the procedures.

AAIT™ Principles:

1. The true self is not encumbered by the limitations of a narrative. The true self is a being.
2. Taking responsibility for and tending to our inner state is the source of freedom.
3. Self-acceptance is a means and a measure of well-being.
4. Resolving reactivity can reveal higher states of consciousness.
5. The integration of two opposing states can alleviate psychological suffering.
6. The non-dual states of empty consciousness are an indication and mechanism of change.

Phases

Providing clients with a predictable rhythm for our time together supports them in feeling more at ease. They know what to expect. Moreover, the nature of these phases effortlessly instills the ability to engage in self-reflection, creating greater intra-psyche freedom and flexibility. Within the crucible of these phases is where training meets treatment.



Even as the creative application of this approach grows, healing-arts practitioners currently use AAIT™ to address the following goals, situations, and problems:

Psychological and Personal Wellness

- Mood disorders such as bipolar disorder, depression, and anxiety
- Trauma
- Fears and phobias
- Addictions
- Emotional eating
- Self-esteem and confidence
- Doula services, including birth trauma
- Creativity
- Lack of confidence and self-esteem
- Anger management
- Shyness
- Goal achievement
- Decision-making

- Health and body-care issues
- The list continues to grow.

Relationship Wellness

- Healing complicated emotional relationships
- Healing emotional tension which inhibits intimacy
- Eliminating charged reactivity
- Increasing empathy and compassion
- Increasing acceptance of self and others
- Conflict resolution
- Assertiveness
- Improving listening skills
- The list continues to grow.

Spiritual Wellness

- AAIT™, as a paradigm for spiritual well-being and growth, is congruent with the teachings of many spiritual traditions from the Bible to Buddhism.
- Removes layers of delusion that veil the real self, eliminating emotional, psychological, and spiritual charges that conceal our essential nature.
- Easily adopt qualities that are expressions of spiritual values such as patience, understanding, compassion.
- Spiritual directors and coaches use AAIT™ to help clients release the obstacles to achieving goals and living professed values.
- While applying this work, you begin to release deeply embedded impressions. These impressions contribute to our compulsive reactivity. These impressions form veils that cloud the experience of ONENESS, wholeness. They distort our view of ourselves, others, and life.
- Most practitioners experience increases in compassion and present-focused attention, with decreases in attachment and reactivity, resulting in a steadier state of being and increased self-awareness.



DISMANTLING INJUNCTIONS

INJUNCTIONS rule. As we know, they are insidious and often unconscious. They are an inner command, a strong DON'T.

From the Transactional Analysis (TA) and Redecision Therapy perspective, there are twelve injunctions. Though, allowing for creative application of this understanding, our clients may have other ways to express their inner DON'Ts. Injunctions are essentially prohibitions and run like silent rivers in our consciousness influencing the way we move through life.

1. Don't be. Don't exist.
2. Don't be who you are.
3. Don't be a child.
4. Don't grow up.
5. Don't think.
6. Don't feel.
7. Don't do anything.
8. Don't be well or sane.
9. Don't be important.
10. Don't make it in your life.
11. Don't be close.
12. Don't belong.

From an AAIT™ standpoint, there is ample room for integration and freedom here. Regarding dismantling injunctions around existing and being, make sure that you are confident in your understanding and practice of the process. Also, ensure that you have a solid collaborative relationship with your client and they have NO suicidal ideation.

Help your client recognize injunctions and other self-limiting cognitive activity.

When entangled in an injunction or other self-limiting cognitive activity, the content of the injunction FEELS real and true. Exploring the energetic dynamic of the cognitive activity can give the client a means of recognizing distorting content.

1. Tell your client, “*Feel ‘injunction or other content’.* Does it feel heavy or sticky like matter or light like air? Yes, this is leading the client. Still, most have never considered their thoughts in this way and feel a kind of relief with the description.
2. Point to something in the room tell your client, “*Think the thought, ‘there is a tissue box on the table.’* Does the thought feel heavy like matter or light like air?”

Thoughts that are not distorted tend to be more present based and feel lighter.

Try it out. FEEL a normal thought, something like, “*It’s hot /cold outside.*” Does it feel like air or earth, matter? Now FEEL a self-limiting thought. Does that feel like air or matter?

Dismantling injunctions following the phases of AAIT™:

DISCOVER the injunction that may be in play as you explore the presenting problem. Beyond the twelve held by TA, is there another phrasing of the inner DON’T that brings the injunction more alive?

COLLABORATE with your client determining the problem and session goal. Discuss the approach you will use to dismantle the polarized tension.

INTEGRATE the polarized tension of the injunction using End of Words (EoW). There are other more layered processes that get at a deeper release. However, injunctions tend to be psycho-emotional tendencies. Empowering our clients with EoW gives them an in-the-moment key to dismantle the injunction that has them bound.

DIRECT AWARENESS to the neutralized or pleroma state of integration to help stabilize that state.

Give your client EMBODIMENT suggestions for their home practice. For many of them it will be to address injunctions and other self-limiting cognitive activity identified in the session.

PRACTICE. Walk yourself through the same process or grab a friend and practice.

Next Steps:

- Practice, practice, practice. Daily.
- Apply to join an AAIT™ Fellowship Training Group or begin one in your community.
- Join our free Facebook group – www.aaitcommunity.com. Feel free to share any wins, insights and challenges as you practice.
- Take your training deeper and reserve your spot for the virtual training, *Untethering from Self Limiting Cognitive Activity with AAIT®*.

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P.S. Email me to tell me about your practice and learn more about AAIT™.



IVANA END OF WORDS

Client Instructions

Developed by Ivana Tomanovic and Zivorad Slavinski

The non-dual states of empty consciousness are an indication and mechanism of change. Cultivating an awareness of these states contributes to increases in compassion and present-focused attention, and decreases in reactivity.

Ivana End of Words (EoW) has many creative applications, especially related to dismantle injunctions and other self-limiting cognitive activity. It can also be used to disrupt hidden, subconscious resistance to change.

Instructions

With EoW we are using the fundamental polarities of good and bad to facilitate integration. It is important to understand that all situations and experiences have both good and bad. Think of a bad situation or person, can you find something good about it or them? Think of a good situation or person, can you find something good about it or them?

EoW Step by Step

1. Identify the self-limiting thought or feeling. It might also be a cluster of thoughts and feelings. However, the more specific the better.
2. **FEEL** the thought or feeling (TF) _____. *What's bad about (TF) _____?* This is important. Taking the time to feel the content in play **BETWEEN** identifying the good and bad allows for the acceptance of what is discovered in the exploration, ultimately decreasing the charge. As you **FEEL**, notice thoughts, images, emotions and sensations.
3. **FEEL** the TF. *What's good about (TF) _____?*
4. **FEEL** the TF. *What ELSE is bad about (TF) _____?*
5. **FEEL** the TF. *What ELSE is good about (TF) _____?*
6. **REPEAT** steps 4 and 5 until you reach the end of your words, there is nothing good or bad. There will be a bit more inner spaciousness. It will start to feel like you are reaching for a thought, image or emotion. Pause there.
7. **FEEL** the TF. Now does it feel like more like air or earth?

- a. If it feels like air, fill yourself, particularly the space where the TF used to live with light, forgiveness, thankfulness. Nature abhors a vacuum.
- b. If it feels like earth, repeat from the beginning with holistic processing from other relevant points of view about the original self-limiting TF.



Trouble shooting:

- It is ESSENTIAL to FEEL the content as you swing between explorations of the good and bad. This begins loosening the energy of the content.
- Make sure to check if there is a complete emptying of content. This means, no thought, image, emotion or body sensation other than being present.
- Oscillating between opposite energetic content while FEELING the content takes this far beyond a familiar pro/con list.

Scribing your experience will help you guide yourself through end of words. The chart below is JUST a guideline. It's likely that you will have many more layers of content than the lines in the chart below. After much practice, you will be able to do this as a walking around practice and it will take less time.

What's GOOD about ---?	Content	What's BAD about ---?

