
A.C.A.R.

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The one tool my clients use most often is a very simple process I call A.C.A.R. This is a process formula that very well may become your favorite decision-making guide.

A.C.A.R. stands for:

Aware

- Aware
- Choice
- Action
- Responsibility

Following these four steps will allow you to create your own system of assessing practically any situation, making it easier to come up with meaningful solutions in just about every area of your life.

Step 1. Aware – The first thing to do is simply notice. Do nothing else except pay attention to what is happening around you. Think about how you’ve approached things in the past; paying particular attention to the behavior you associate with that action. This is your opportunity to reflect. Also, try to notice similarities in your behavior as it relates to other activities. Think about other times in your life where you may have a similar response. For instance, if you have difficulty turning down assignments at work, do you have the same difficulty saying no to others in your personal life, i.e. friends, family, etc.? If so, this is the time to collect “data points” that may clue you in to a pattern. In other words, creating **awareness**.

Step 2. Choice – Once you begin paying closer attention to your behavior or the situation at hand, it should become a little easier to determine what you'd like to do about it. At this point you can create a list of options, similar to a menu. This is also where it can get a bit tricky. If you're not careful, your options can become a point of indecision. Imagine going to a restaurant and looking over the menu, unable or unwilling to choose your order. This is a form of 'paralysis by analysis'. The most important thing to remember is; make the choice!

Step 3. Action – Once you determine the most appropriate choice – take action. This can be perhaps the most rewarding step of all. Taking action from a place of empowerment and purpose allows you to take pride in your achievement, and actually approach your activity with intention [Action + Intent = Results]. More importantly, action creates a certain amount of velocity in your life that may not have been present before.

Step 4. Responsibility – Merriam-Webster defines responsibility (noun) as 'the quality or state of being responsible'. Being responsible also means taking ownership.

Let's recap:

Aware – do nothing other than notice how you act/respond in certain situations

Choice – after you have created an awareness, determine your options

Action – select and put into place what you believe is your best option

Responsibility – since it's your choice...own it!

Again, this is a simple yet extremely effective and powerful tool. It's easy to remember and even easier to implement.