



## Accepting Reality

As wildland firefighters, we learn that we need to focus on what we can control. We use this guidance to make tactical decisions on the fireline and focus where we can make the greatest impact. These efforts help us accept that we cannot control everything when fighting a wildfire. There will be loss and successes, but our focus will need to be on protecting life first. Focusing on what we can control helps us to accept the reality of our situation.

From Mental Health America, these facts about accepting reality address the importance of being able to move forward:



## Fast Facts

- Practicing radical acceptance has been shown to reduce feelings of shame, guilt, and anxiety. [Source: https://mhanational.org/accepting-reality#1](https://mhanational.org/accepting-reality#1)
- Acceptance coping skills are linked to lower rates of mental illness and suicide. [Source: https://mhanational.org/accepting-reality#2](https://mhanational.org/accepting-reality#2)
- Radical acceptance can reduce distress in dealing with negative thoughts or events. [Source: https://mhanational.org/accepting-reality#3](https://mhanational.org/accepting-reality#3)

## Tips for Success



You can't stop the waves,  
but you can learn to surf. – Jon Kabat-Zinn

Learn to gain awareness in yourself and recognize the signs that you are fighting against reality. Feelings of anger, resentment or bitterness may manifest because you are believing that life isn't fair. Embrace your feelings, learn to ride the waves, and relax your body and mind. Remind yourself that you cannot change the past. Live in the moment and focus on what you can control.

Like anything, it takes practice to learn these skills and commitment. Just as we have trained our entire careers to gain qualifications and keep them current by engaging in those roles, we need to engage in our own mental health and wellness and commit to learning the skills we need for a healthy mind and body.

To learn more about understanding the signs and making the changes you need to embrace your current reality, visit Mental Health America, <https://mhanational.org/accepting-reality>.

Always seek professional counseling if you find yourself unable to process an experience, if you are having a mental health crisis, or just for the sake of good mental health maintenance.

