

Pain and suffering:

Suffering = Pain – Willingness

- The pain can be either physical and/or emotional
- Our willingness is directly related to how well we have connected the action or situation to our core values

Examples:

A boy has to clean his room. He sees absolutely no meaning in this relatively light physical work, but his parents make him do it. Little pain minus no willingness = some suffering.

Done cleaning, the boy gets a call to join a pick-up game of rugby. He loves to push himself, to be physical, and to achieve a goal (victory) with his teammates and finds rugby to be very meaningful (it fits many of his core values) and thus is very willing to do it, despite it being 2 hours of hard physical work and a lot of physical pain. A lot of physical pain – very significant willingness = no suffering.

Grandpa Bob's back hurts enough that struggles to get out of his bed to take his medications (he always thought medications were for wimps anyway). Some pain – minimal willingness = suffering.

Later on, his beloved grandkids come over. He lifts them up and runs around the yard with them on his back, despite very significant back-pain. Big physical pain – huge willingness = minimal suffering.

7 years old Judy is scared (mental pain) to go up in the tower. She is afraid of heights and her mind is starting to picture how she may fall off the tower and does not care that much about the view from there. Moderate emotional pain – minimal willingness = suffering.

Her father offers her the last Lego piece she needs to finish her Lego castle. She loves building things! She grabs the piece and runs up the steps. She still has the natural anxiety from being afraid of heights, but her mind is not spinning about it. Moderate emotional pain – Moderate willingness = minimal suffering.

A brief explanation of core Values

- Our natural motivators – what instinctively gives us a sense of meaning
- We get depressed if our life does not match up with our core values
- Figuring out life is about aligning life with our core values and figuring out how to not let our core values interfere with each other
- Bad choices we repeat are usually prompted by our good core values – we then need to find different ways to live according to the same core values