

## DBT-Based Wise Mind/Walking the Middle Path Worksheet

**Wise Mind** is a core concept in Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) that represents a balanced state of mind where rational thinking and emotional responses are integrated. It is the middle ground between the **Reasonable Mind** (which is logical and analytical) and the **Emotional Mind** (which is driven by feelings and impulses). **Wise Mind** allows individuals to make decisions that honor both their thoughts and emotions, leading to more effective and balanced outcomes.

Reasonable Mind	Wise Mind	Emotional Mind
This state is characterized by logical thinking, planning, and problem-solving. It is the part of the mind that focuses on facts and rationality, often disregarding emotions.	This state integrates both Reasonable Mind and Emotional Mind. It involves using intuition and inner wisdom to make decisions that consider both logic and emotions. Wise Mind is about finding a balance and making choices that are in harmony with one's values and goals	This state is driven by feelings, impulses, and emotional reactions. It can lead to decisions based solely on emotions, sometimes without considering the logical aspects of a situation.

Example: Imagine you are faced with a difficult decision at work. Your Reasonable Mind might focus on the pros and cons, the logical aspects of the decision, and the potential outcomes. Your Emotional Mind might be influenced by how you feel about the situation, your stress levels, and your personal connections. Wise Mind would take both perspectives into account, allowing you to make a decision that is both rational and emotionally satisfying.

Practicing Wise Mind can help individuals navigate complex situations, reduce emotional distress, and improve overall well-being.

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### Step 1: Identify Extremes in Thinking or Behavior

Recognizing rigid or extreme thinking patterns is the first step toward finding balance.

- **Describe a situation where you feel stuck between two extreme viewpoints or behaviors:** \_\_\_\_\_
- **What are the two opposing perspectives or responses you are experiencing?**

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- Perspective 1: \_\_\_\_\_
- Perspective 2: \_\_\_\_\_
- **How is this black-and-white thinking impacting your emotions and actions?**

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*Black-and-white thinking, also known as all-or-nothing thinking, is a cognitive distortion where individuals view situations in absolute terms, either all good or all bad, success or failure, with no middle ground. This type of thinking can heighten emotional distress and lead to impulsive or extreme behaviors.*

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### Exercise: Recognizing Extremes

Write down an example of an extreme thought and then reframe it into a more balanced perspective:

- **Extreme Thought:** \_\_\_\_\_
  - **Balanced Thought:** \_\_\_\_\_
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### Step 2: Validate Multiple Perspectives

Validation is a key DBT skill that allows you to acknowledge the validity of different perspectives without necessarily agreeing with them.

- **What emotions are associated with each perspective?**
  - Perspective 1: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Perspective 2: \_\_\_\_\_
- **List at least one valid point for each side:**
  - Perspective 1 Validity: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Perspective 2 Validity: \_\_\_\_\_

### Exercise: Practicing Validation

Think of a recent conflict. Write down how you can validate the other person's perspective without dismissing your own:

- **Their Perspective:** \_\_\_\_\_
- **My Perspective:** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Validation Statement:** Example: "I understand that you feel frustrated because you believe I didn't listen to you. It makes sense that you would feel that way, given the

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situation. At the same time, I also feel unheard because I was trying to explain my side."

- **My Own Validation Statement:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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### Step 3: Find the Middle Path

Balancing perspectives and behaviors allow for a more nuanced and effective response.

- **What is a compromise or middle-ground approach between these two perspectives?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- **How does this middle-ground approach honor both perspectives while reducing conflict?**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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### Exercise: Exploring Alternatives

Write down at least three possible ways to approach a problem from a middle-path perspective:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

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### Step 4: Use Dialectical Thinking

Dialectical thinking means recognizing that two opposing ideas can be true at the same time.

- **Reframe the situation using "both-and" language instead of "either-or":**
  - Instead of: "I must be right, or I must be wrong."
  - Try: "I can have a valid point, and the other person can too."
  - My own reframe: \_\_\_\_\_

### Exercise: Dialectical Thinking Practice

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Complete the following statements to practice dialectical thinking:

- I feel \_\_\_\_\_, and I understand why others might feel \_\_\_\_\_.
  - I want \_\_\_\_\_, and I recognize that another option is \_\_\_\_\_.
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### Step 5: Practice Behavioral Balance

Walking the middle path is not just about thinking differently but also about acting in a balanced way.

- What action can I take to demonstrate a balanced approach? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - How can I reinforce this approach in my daily life? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
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### Exercise: Middle Path Action Plan

Write down a concrete action step you can take today to practice balance in your thoughts, emotions, or behaviors:

- Today, I will practice balance by: \_\_\_\_\_
  - A challenge I might face: \_\_\_\_\_
  - How I will overcome this challenge: \_\_\_\_\_
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*Adapted from Linehan, M. M. (2014). DBT Skills Training Manual (2nd ed.). Guilford Press.*

#### References:

- Berking, M., & Wupperman, P. (2012). Emotion regulation and mental health. *Current Opinion in Psychiatry*, 25(2), 128-134.
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- McCauley, T., Levinson, C. A., & Linehan, M. M. (2018). The role of dialectics in emotion regulation. *Journal of Contextual Behavioral Science*, 7(1), 1-10.