

## PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTANCING

This skill will help you create a state of psychological distance between you and an unpleasant stimulus. Once psychologically distant from that stimulus, it will make less of an impact on you. It will not bother you as much. There are several ways to achieve distance.

One way is to make you into an *impartial observer*. First see yourself from different vantagepoints in the room. Pick different angles and imagine looking at yourself from that standpoint. Or, become a fly-on-the-wall and see yourself from that fly's location, seeing you move about and talking to others. A third way to be an observer is to notice yourself from behind an imaginary one-way mirror. In each case you are only observing yourself. You are not feeling your emotions or feeling what is occurring in your body. You are an impartial observer.

Once you become skilled at only observing yourself, see yourself act out an activity as if you were on stage or screen and you are in the audience. Make yourself a character in that play or movie. The words you speak become dialogue in the play or movie.

If physical discomfort breaks through and becomes foreground, make the distancing exercise even more complicated. See yourself seeing yourself from a different angle in the room. This is now a double removal from yourself, which complicates your mental state even more and interferes with other mental processes.

You can vary this technique by becoming a director for the movie. As a director you can move a camera around the movie set and shoot the movie from different angles, or take close-up shots or distant shots. This complicates the mental activity of watching the situation, and by doing so you pull yourself away from the pressing, negative, physical sensation you are experiencing.