

## Honouring the Both/And

Honouring the Both/And is a technique from Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT). This technique works to help us work through Black and White Thinking, which is when we see situations in very extreme ways. For example, when we use Black and White Thinking, we may say things like “My partner hates me” or “I never do well”. This type of thinking focuses only on one part of an experience and can often leave us feeling upset.

Life is full of complexities and learning to recognize how complexities can co-exist actually helps us manage our emotions better. When we recognize that things are not always one way or the other, we generally start to feel better.

Honouring the Both/And is a format for thinking in which we take two truths, that may seem opposite, and honouring that they can both exist at the same time.

Here are a few examples to get you thinking:

I am **both** disappointed my partner wasn't there for me **and** I know they love me  
This situation makes me **both** afraid **and** excited  
My partner is **both** angry at me **and** still showing up for me  
I **both** love this person deeply **and** recognize that I cannot have them in my life  
I feel **both** grief **and** joy in this moment  
My partner **both** has their own struggles that they are working through **and** I do not deserve to be treated this way.  
I am **both** angry at myself for not succeeding **and** recognize that does not make me a failure.

Below are a couple formats you can try using to practice Honouring the Both/And. Feel free to modify them as needed! This is just a starting place for you to begin recognizing the complexities of life.

I feel **both** (emotion) **and** (emotion) at the same time  
I feel **both** angry **and** loved at the same time  
I feel **both** (emotion) **and** recognize (reality of situation)  
I feel **both** angry **and** recognize my partner wasn't trying to hurt me  
I can be **both** (label) **and** (label)  
I can be **both** feminine **and** strong  
My partner/friend/family member is **both** (action) **and** (action)  
My friend is **both** trying to be there for me **and** is not doing what I need

Using one of the formats above (or creating your own!) see if you can come up with a few complexities of your own:

Now that you have created a couple Both/Ands, here are a few questions you may want to reflect on

- What comes up for me when I Honour the Both/And?
- How do I feel when I acknowledge a complexity?
- Because of honouring this complexity, I recognize...
- Honouring the Both/And would help me...
- If I feel any resistance to using this tool, it is because...
- Here's a situation I will try using the Both/And technique in: