The Participate Skill

In DBT, **Participate** is one of the three "What" skills in the Core Mindfulness module. It involves throwing yourself 100% into an activity and letting go of self-consciousness and judgment. Participating helps fight feelings of alienation and emptiness. By being fully "in" your life, you find more enjoyment in daily activities and reduce the power of distress.

Key Characteristics

- **Total Immersion:** Entering wholly into the activity of the current moment, whether you are dancing, cleaning, or having a conversation.
- **Letting Go:** Actively letting go of self-criticism, worries about how you look, or ruminating on the past or future.
- **Intuitive Action:** Acting spontaneously from "Wise Mind"—doing exactly what is needed in the situation without being "willful" or sitting on your hands.
- **Opposite of Dissociation:** It is the antidote to being on "autopilot" or "sleepwalking" through life.

How to Practice

- **Mundane Tasks:** Fully engage in chores like washing dishes by focusing on the sensation of the water and the movement of your hands rather than thinking about when you'll be finished.
- **Socializing:** Have a conversation where you are completely immersed in what the other is saying, without planning your response or worrying about their opinion of you.
- **Emotions:** Fully experience an emotion (like grief or joy) as it happens, rather than trying to suppress it or judging yourself for feeling it.
- **Physical Activity:** Go for a run or dance to music, allowing your body to move freely without thinking about your form or appearance.

The "One at a Time" Rule

In DBT, you only use one "What" skill at a time. You are either **Observing** (noticing), **Describing** (labeling), or **Participating** (doing). You cannot fully participate while simultaneously observing or describing yourself from the outside.