

Ball in a Pool

(Matthew Jepsen, 2012)

The metaphor Ball in a Pool can be used to convey the counterproductiveness of trying to control thoughts and feelings while also suggesting acceptance and willingness as alternatives.

What if what you're doing with these thoughts, memories, and feelings is like fighting with a ball in a pool? You don't like these things. You don't want them, and you want them out of your life. So you try to push the ball under the water and out of your consciousness. However, the ball keeps popping back up to the surface, so you have to keep pushing it down or holding it under the water. Struggling with the ball in this way keeps it close to you, and it's tiring and futile. If you were to let go of the ball, it would pop up and float on the surface near you, and you probably wouldn't like it. But if you let it float there for a while without grabbing it, it could eventually drift away to the other side of the pool. And even if it didn't, at least you'd be able to use your arms and enjoy your swim, rather than spending your time fighting.