

# 11 Steps to Stop Ruminating

1. Be aware of the fact that you are ruminating and realize that it isn't helpful.
2. Think about your situation or problem one more time and plan what to do next.
3. Find something funny about your situation: humor can help you see it from a different angle and move on. View what has happened as a learning experience: this can help you approach the situation constructively, and with an eye toward the future. And finally, try to remove yourself from the situation, viewing it as you might watch a scene in a movie.
4. Think about what you would say to a friend facing the same situation. This can help you treat yourself more compassionately. As you would with a friend, forgive yourself if you have done something wrong.
5. Focus only on things that you have control over. There will be always some degree of uncertainty. Our whole life is influenced by so many factors that uncertainty is simply a big part of life. Become comfortable with it and accept it.
6. Accept your situation. Pain and suffering gets worse depending on how you think about it. We often feel sad because we feel sad. Are angry because we feel angry and so on. Accept your current state as it is. Stop wanting things to be different.
7. Think "Stop!" or even say it out loud to break the loop. You can also practice visualization, such as imagining that you are taking your current thoughts and putting them in a trash bin.
8. Center yourself in the here and now and try to let go of unattainable or unhealthy goals. You are in the here and now and there is nothing you can do but come up with a good plan and stick with it. Stop thinking about how long any discomfort might last. You cannot fight your current situation so simply be with it and accept it.
9. Distract yourself. Use mindfulness meditation to focus your attention on your breath instead of being attached to your thoughts.
10. Don't forget, you are not your thoughts! Your thoughts are just part of you and they will fade away if you do not hold on to them. Examine your thoughts curiously and without judgment. Stop judging situations or experiences. It will not change them or make them any different and just waste your energy.
11. If all this doesn't help schedule some time for worrying or rumination. Just plan to ruminate for 30 minutes after lunch and stop ruminating right now. You already have made some time for it and you don't have to be caught up with those thoughts now

## What Is Rumination?

Rumination is:

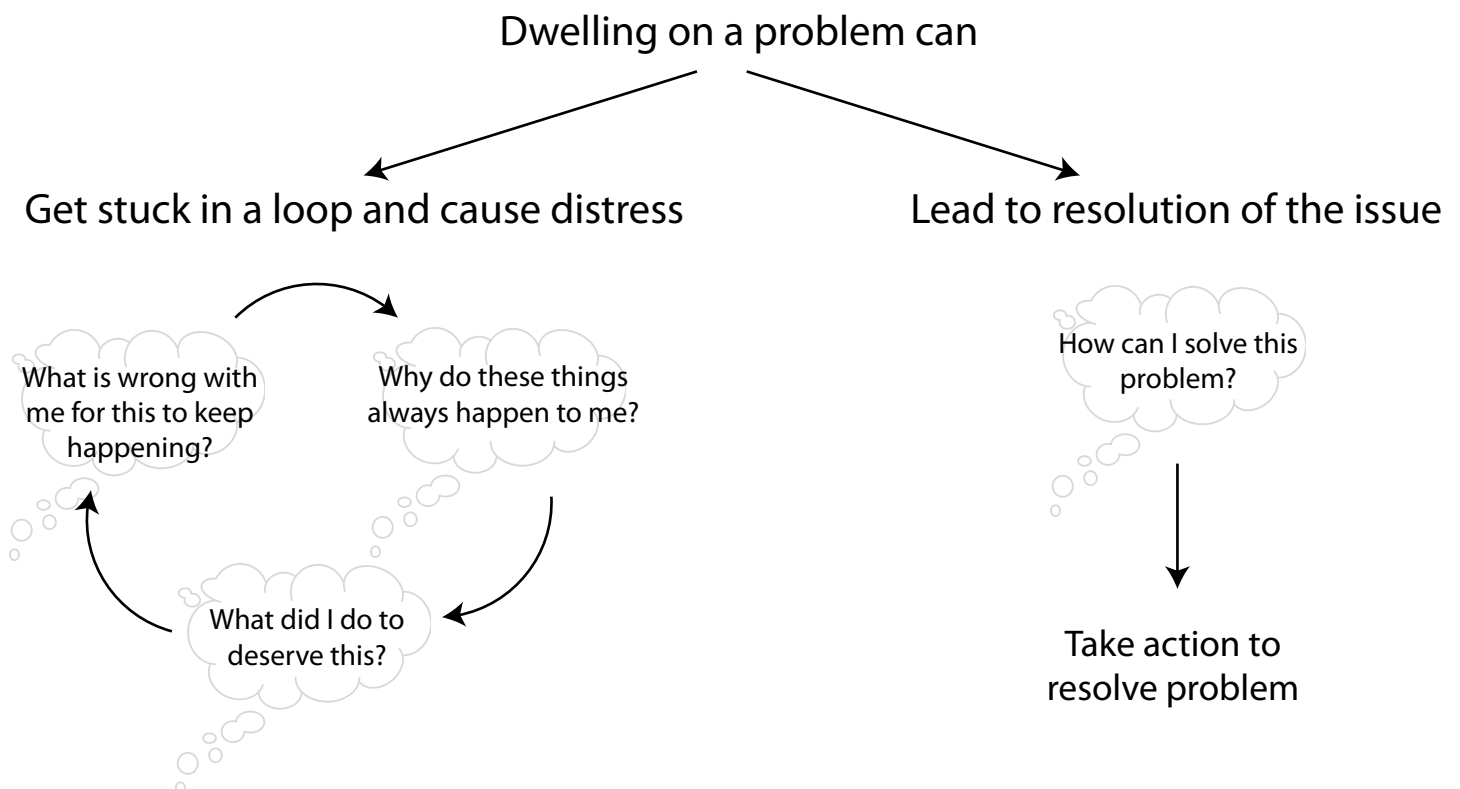
- dwelling on difficulties and things which distress us
- repeatedly thinking about events from our past
- becoming preoccupied with something and not being able to get it out of your mind
- a learnt strategy for trying to deal with our problems

Is rumination normal?

- Yes, to some extent everyone ruminates or dwells on their problems
- Thinking about our problems can be helpful: especially if we reach a solution and put it into action
- Most of the time, and for most people, rumination is time-limited: it stops when the problem is solved
- Although rumination is normal, excessive use of it can become problematic

What are the problems with rumination?

- Unhelpful rumination tends to focus on causes and consequences instead of solutions  
*"What did I do to deserve this"* and *"Will my life ever get better?"* instead of *"How can I make my life better?"*
- Rumination tends to focus on what has gone wrong and can lead to negative thinking
- When used excessively, rumination can lead to depression
- When used excessively, rumination can maintain an episode of depression
- Unhelpful rumination can lead to inactivity and avoidance of problem-solving



### Unhelpful rumination

Unhelpful rumination asks more *"why ... ?"* questions (this is sometimes called the 'evaluative mode' because these questions evaluate the meaning of events or situations)

*"Why ... ?"* questions tend to focus on the problem, its causes, and its consequences

*"Why am I in this situation?"*

*"What if it never gets better?"*

*"What did I do to deserve this"*

### Helpful rumination

Helpful rumination asks more *"how ... ?"* questions (this is sometimes called the 'process-focused-mode' because these questions focus on the process of how events and situations happen)

*"How ... ?"* questions tend to focus on solving problems

*"How can I get out of this situation?"*

*"What can I do to make this better?"*