

# Stopping Obsessive Thoughts About the Past

## Guided Meditation Script

Date / Time:

So far today, have you brought kind awareness to your:

Thoughts?  Heart?  Body?  None

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
- the fact that many others are feeling similarly about this topic as you
- how you might feel with increased awareness around this topic
- when you can apply increased mindfulness to this topic in your day-to-day life



### Stopping Rumination

Rumination is a powerful form of deluded thinking.

You think about the past obsessively, despite the fact that you cannot change what happened.

You stew in your resentments, replay conversations, beat yourself up, and relive an event over and over.

It happens to all of us, and it can be quite painful.

Mindfulness practice helps you see those patterns clearly, respond to them with patient understanding, and begin to detach yourself from their power.

Ruminating often shows up as “background noise”—

a constant stream of obsessive negativity shadowing you throughout the day.

This practice will help you call that inner voice into the light, dissect it, and, hopefully, diffuse some of its hold over you.

Close the eyes and allow the body to relax.

Use the breath to help encourage ease in the body.

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### Stopping Rumination

With each exhale, soften the muscles of the body a bit more.

You may bring special attention to the abdomen, shoulders, and jaw.

Look at the thoughts going through the mind.

If you have been ruminating about something specific, acknowledge the event or situation about which you are thinking.

Turn this over in the mind, examining it from a place of curiosity and interest.

Begin cultivating equanimity, the state of balance and nonattachment in the midst of charged emotions.

Ask yourself if you are able to change this situation in the past.

Offer some phrases of equanimity and compassion:

*I cannot change the past.*

*May I be at ease with the mind.*

*May I care about this difficulty.*

After a few minutes of this, turn your attention toward the present.

Although you cannot control the past, you do have power over your actions right now.

Replace the rumination with the recognition that you can choose to act in ways that encourage happiness.

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### Stopping Rumination

Offer these phrases silently in your head:

*May I act with wisdom.*

*May I respond with compassion.*

*May I move forward.*

Continue the phrases for five minutes or so.

When the rumination recurs, return to the phrases and your intention to move forward.

Finishing your period of practice, carry these phrases with you.

Whenever the mind falls into the pattern of thinking about the past, offer a phrase of equanimity or wise action.

