

Stop Runaway Thinking from Stealing Your Joy!

Ever notice how distracted you become when you're caught up in your thinking? The more absorbed you get in the details, the more distracted you become.

You may find yourself rehearsing future conversations or replaying past ones. You may even experience insomnia, thinking about all the things you need to do, didn't do, or can't do.

Runaway thinking is a joy thief. It depletes your energy and momentum and halts your action on the things that you really want to accomplish. Then you get frustrated thinking about all the time you lost while thinking. Something to think about, huh?

Don't let runaway thinking rob you! Here are some steps that can help you [learn](#) how to stop runaway thinking from building momentum and distracting you from what's important.

- **Catch yourself.** Learn to identify what's happening before your thoughts build momentum.
- **Pull the reins on runaway thoughts by refocusing on the present.** Runaway thoughts have this nasty little habit of taking us back to the past or into the future - neither of which we can control. When you sense yourself getting caught up with runaway thoughts about the past or future - pull the reins!
- **Address recurring thoughts by jotting down when and under what situations they occur.** (You'll begin to recognize patterns that emerge for example when you're around certain people or under stress.)

- **Avoid obsessing about things over which you have limited or no control.** Instead refocus your thoughts on what you can control, or halt the thoughts altogether once you realize that it's not within your span of control.
- **Unplug the energy source to hurtful or unproductive thoughts.** The more energy you give to negative, hurtful, or unproductive thoughts, the more intense the emotion tied to those thoughts becomes - and the more distracted you may become.

Direct your energy toward helpful, positive, or productive thoughts. By scheduling a five-minute 'energy break' at least twice a day (or more often as you just get started).

During this 'energy break', ground yourself by focusing on (1) things/people for which/whom you're grateful and (2) any of your recent accomplishments - celebrate yourself! It could be that you held your tongue when you really wanted to say one thing- but you said something helpful instead.

No matter how small or seemingly insignificant the thought, consciously focus your energy toward gratefulness and celebrating positive things you do.

Remember: the energy that you give to something often illuminates and magnifies it - causing it to become a greater force in your thinking. Empower the positivism within you!