

Letting Go

Creating New Thought Patterns

Step 1 **Be in the moment**

When your thoughts are spinning out of control, the key to stopping this is to be aware of the present moment.

- If you look at a calming image, the mind can relax and let go all on its own, but it only happens when you stop trying and expecting it to happen. This is a good primary method to relax and calm the mind.

Step 2 **Engage with the world around you**

Part of the downside of dwelling on negative memories or emotions is you're forced to be a little distant from what's going on outside your head. When you engage with the world, you leave less room in your mind for those nagging thoughts and feelings. Here are a few ways to start engaging on a basic level:

- Be a better listener during conversations. Take time to really absorb what the other person is telling you, instead of half-listening while you worry about other things. Ask questions, and share advice.
- Consider volunteering or otherwise getting involved in your community. You'll meet new people and be exposed to interesting and important topics.
- Look down at your body. Pay attention to where you're sitting. Be attuned to your immediate surroundings. Your reality is where you are right now. It's impossible to go back to yesterday, and it's impossible to predict what will happen tomorrow.
- Say something mentally or out loud. The physical act of making a sound will pull your thoughts to the present. Say "This is the present," or "I am here."
- Go outside. Changing your immediate environment can help your thoughts move back to the present as your senses are occupied with the new scene before you. Focus on small changes, like a bird chirping or a leaf whirling on the sidewalk.

Step 3 **Be less self-conscious**

Self-negativity is the instigator of negative thoughts and feelings for many people. When you're self-conscious, it's as though you have a second reel running through your head, distracting you. For example, when you're talking to someone, you're thinking about how you look, or what impression you're having, instead of fully participating in the conversation.