

## LESSON 2: Introspection

# Don't Sweat the Small Stuff

It's 5 p.m., the deadline for an important work project is at 6, and all you can think about is the fight you had with your mother this morning. You're **dwelling**, says Susan Nolen-Hoeksema, Ph.D., a professor of psychology at Yale.

"It's natural to look **inward**, but while most people pull out when they've done it enough, an overthinker will stay in **the loop**.

"**Ruminating** regularly often leads to depression. So if you're **prone** to obsessing, try these tactics to **head off** the next **full-tilt** mental spin cycle...



# The Tactics

## 1. Distract yourself

Put on music and dance, move the furniture around, whatever engrosses you --for at least 10 minutes. Or choose something to focus on.

## 2. Set a time to dwell

Tell yourself you can obsess all you want from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m., but until then, you're banned. By 8 p.m., you'll probably be able to think things through more clearly.

## 3. Take a 3-minute dose of mindfulness

For one minute, eyes closed, acknowledge all the thoughts going through your mind. For the next minute, just focus on your breathing. Spend the last minute expanding your awareness from your breath to your entire body.

Apparently, paying attention in this way gives you the room to see the questions you're asking yourself with less urgency and to reconsider them from a different perspective.

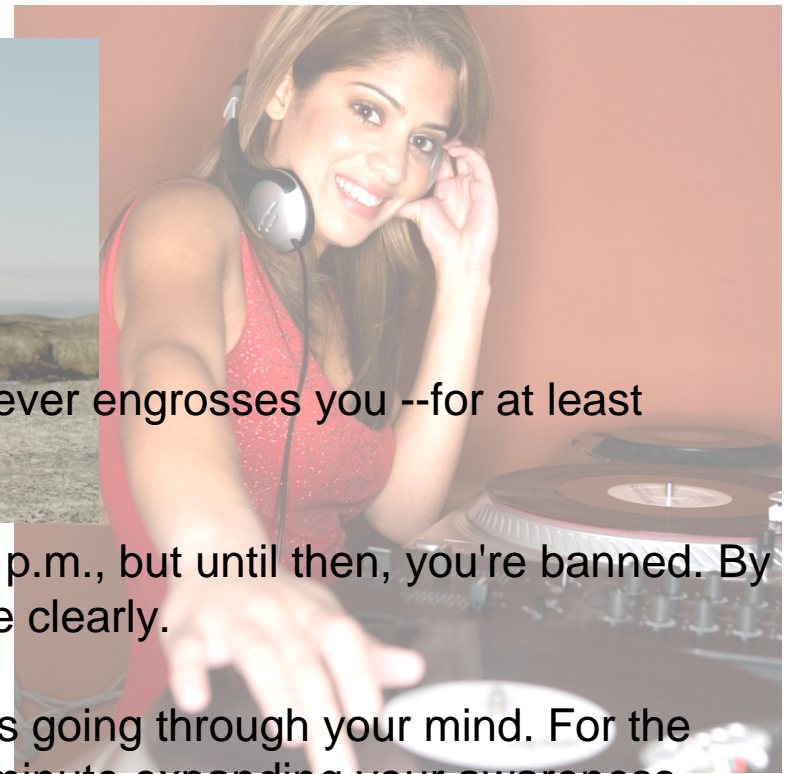
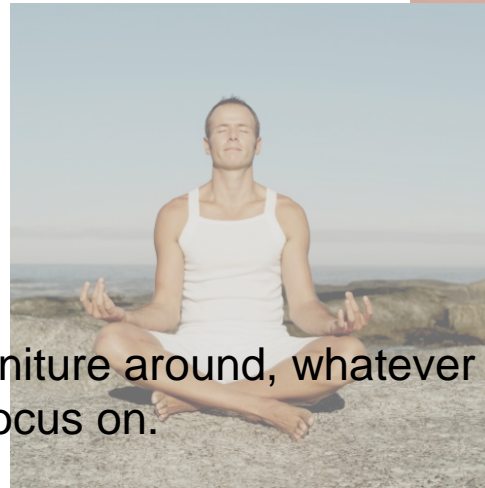
## 4. Ask yourself

"What's the worst that could happen?" and "How would I cope?" Visualizing yourself handling the most extreme outcome should **alleviate** some anxiety. Then consider the likelihood that the worst will actually occur. Next, imagine the best possible outcome; by this point, you'll be in a more positive frame of mind and better able to assess the situation more realistically.

## 5. Call a buddy

## 6. Say "Oh, well."

Accept that you're human and make mistakes -- and then move on. Be compassionate. It's harder than it sounds, so keep practicing.



## Discussion Questions (Do not show this page to students)

1. What do you think about most these days?
2. Do you think you are an over thinker? Especially in what area do you over think?
3. Do you currently have something bothering your mind?
4. What kind of activity engrosses your mind? Does this distract you from thinking about your problems?
5. What are the 6 tips to overcoming obsessive thinking?
6. Which of these 6 tips do you use? Or would like to try.
7. Why do you think its important that we don't dwell on something for too long?

- Ask student more questions related to this topic.
- Use the reading or other materials of your own for a more abundant discussion.