

Putting the past where it belongs!

By Dr. Monica Vermani, C. Psych, Clinical Psychologist
& Founder, Start Living Corporate Wellness

When it comes to the past, we've all been there... caught in the negative loops of replaying past hurts, regrets, and disappointments. But the past is just the past, and that's exactly where it belongs. It's important to move forward, and be present in our life. Let's explore how we can begin to put the past exactly where it belongs, in the past!

That was then. This is now. Life takes place in the present, in the moment, and in the here and now. The past is just our memories of experiences and the future is simply our imagination. Every day, we're creating our life stories. So why do we spend so much time in our heads, either reliving and reviewing the past, or worrying about the future? Let's explore why we ruminate and replay the past, the pitfalls of doing so, and how to put the past where it belongs... behind us.

The upside of memory lane

We often take a trip down memory lane, reliving and recalling positive memories, lessons we have learned, where we have come from, and those who have helped us along the way. Good memories give us strength at times and remind us to be grateful for all those people who have shown up in our lives to help and support us. Positive memories come and go without causing hurt or harm, and often leave us feeling calm and restored. But not all memories breeze in and out of our minds with the same ease.

The downside of rumination

People suffering from PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) often suffer sudden, intrusive, and deeply upsetting memories, flashbacks and nightmares of past events. People who are struggling with depression and anxiety spend a lot of time in the past, regretting or remembering and reliving negative memories, often excluding the good and focusing only on the bad. Depression and anxiety are categorized as thought disorders and have in common a tendency to focus on fears and self doubts related to negative past events, to

the exclusion of positive and self-affirming memories.

For example, Theo, a stellar academic struggling with anxiety, ruminates for hours on the only exam he failed in his entire life. He utilizes this isolated failure as proof of his unworthiness, to justify his feelings of inadequacy, and fear of being exposed as incompetent. Like Theo, when we are in low self-esteem, we often seek proof of our negative self-worth exactly where we know we'll find it — in painful incidents and situations from the past. And when we go there, we find ourselves struggling with past values beliefs, and other constraints that keep us stuck.

Here and now

Here's what you need to realize about the past: it's over and done. And our memories — no matter how painful or harmful — can not affect and hurt you unless you allow them into the present moment. Here and now, you can begin to put your memories where they belong, in the past, where they can no longer cause you to hurt and harm.

What's done is done

What's done is done, and we can learn to draw a line between the past and the present, by living authentically, in full awareness. Living in awareness means living in the moment, and being aware of your thoughts and feelings, free of the beliefs, stories, and experiences that do not support or sustain you. Accept and see the value of who you once were. Respect the person you used to

be, and acknowledge how far you have come and how much you have grown.

We can set ourselves free from the labels, thoughts, values, restrictions, and conditions that can drain our positive energies and leave us in low courage and self-esteem. We need to learn to see the beauty in who we are today. We can begin to appreciate our evolution to date, focus on the possibilities in the here and now, and look forward to a meaningful and fulfilling future.

Allow yourself to be

So much suffering is caused by interpretations of our experiences when the ego and mind place rigid conditions on ourselves. But we can put old concepts of who we needed to be to be loved and valued behind us, in the past. Realize that you are loved and valued just the way you are, worthy of love just the way you are... just as you were worthy of love the moment you were born.

We are more

Our fears, self-doubts, ruminating thoughts, and negative self-talk... it's all tied to the ego we create. Our ego separates us, rejects, denies, projects, blames, and represses. We need to realize that we are more than our failures, self-doubt, and fears. We can decide to bring in love and compassion, not only for

others but for ourselves as well. We can decide to live in our truth, with joy and happiness. We can choose to bring joy, bravery, and courage into our lives.

Planting the seeds of the future

Realize that what happened in the past — no matter how painful or traumatic — no longer has power over you in the here and now. Forgive yourself for letting your past overshadow your present. Let go of the self-criticism you have reinforced day after day, face situations you have personalized and work through them, and most importantly start to treat yourself with love and compassion. The future begins today, by putting your memories where they belong... in the past.

Practicing the Pause

When we find ourselves stuck, reliving hurts and or ruminating over painful events or past failures, we can bring ourselves back into the present with STOP, a simple way to practice the pause and return to the present.

S: stop what you are doing

T: take a deep breath and connect to your senses and ground yourself

O: observe yourself in the present, in the moment

P: proceed with your day, to the next moment



NEW

Heal your past, deal with your present
and take control of your future.

A DEEPER WELLNESS

18 LIFE LESSONS • ONLINE
With Dr. Monica Vermani, C. Psych.

START TODAY

About the author

Dr. Monica Vermani is a Clinical Psychologist specializing in treating trauma, stress and mood & anxiety disorders, and the founder of Start Living Corporate Wellness. She is a well-known speaker and author on mental health and wellness. Her upcoming book, A Deeper Wellness, is scheduled for publication in 2021.

<https://www.drmonicavermani.com/>

Dr. Vermani has recently launched an exciting online self-help program, A Deeper Wellness, delivering powerful mental-health guidance, life skills, and knowledge that employees can access anywhere, anytime. <https://www.adeeperwellness.com/>

