

JENNI GREEN

Stop the

Mental Spirals

What to do when your mind won't quit

jennigreen.com



The spirals

Overthinking spirals are a smart, successful person's worst nightmare.

Everything's going great. Then a thought pops up.

- I'm wrong.
- I didn't do enough.

It's even worse if you're spiraling about your relationships.

- What if this one doesn't work out either?
- I'll never find the right person.
- I'm not enough.

You solve problems with your mind so you dig into analyzing the thought. If you can get to the bottom, it'll go away.

But the more you think about it, the worse it gets. And the worse you feel.

You're distracted, irritable, and anxious. You're exhausted, but you wake up at 3 AM watching a mental disaster movie.

You're not present with anyone. Because you're in your head.

Your mind is a swirling, churning sea of thoughts that wreck your nerves.

I've got you.

About me

I lived in overthinking for more than 50 years.

This led to spending 28 years in 2 marriages that ended in divorce.

Then I learned how to stop the spirals.

Now I'm more than 15 years into the kind of relationship I never dreamed I could have.

Healthy, deeply loving, and permanent.

I have a master's degree in nursing. I've also published a book called *Stepcoupling* about creating a strong relationship when kids are part of the picture.

Now I help smart, successful people stop overthinking so they can create the relationship they want.

“I can't believe that all the years in therapy and whatnot haven't helped me as much as your work!”

Stacy S., PhD



Why this works

You can't stop overthinking by analyzing it.

Even though it feels like the way out is to understand why you're doing it and what it means. That's like thinking you can put out a fire with gasoline.

Instead, you'll learn how to mentally step away from the mess in your head into a quieter, calmer place.

No more arguing with your mind. Self-medicating. Or just waiting it out.

You'll create a safe harbor you can go to as soon as you realize you're in a spiral.

In the middle of whatever you're doing without anyone knowing.

So you can come back to the present.

Which means you can connect with yourself. And with the people who are most important to you.

Overthinking undermines your relationships. It's a key reason my clients start working with me.

**Stopping mental spirals is the foundation for
creating the relationship you want.**

How this works

Overthinking happens in your brain's default mode, which runs when you're not focused on a specific task.

Your default mode specializes in thinking about yourself, your past, and your future.

It's great at imagining what other people think and feel about you and creating emotionally charged scenarios.

Left alone, it just keeps spiraling.

But intentionally using language activates other parts of your brain. So your default mode powers down.

Using memorized words is essential.

When you're in a spiral, you don't have the mental bandwidth to think of words to stop it.

You need to just reach for the words that help you.

The right words for you are inspiring, calming, and uplifting. They calm your mind and your nervous system at the same time.

You can choose to reach for peace of mind, instead of mental pandemonium.

Get started

Read through the selections on the next 5 pages.

Slowly.

So each word has enough time to land in your brain and your body.

Don't compare them to each other or analyze the messages.

Just notice which selections makes you pause.

Lets you breathe a little more deeply.

Feels like a friend.

Options

So much of what gets in the way of things being good is thinking that I know.

That I need to have the answers.

The more I can just be in the moment,
use my ears,
pay attention to what's happening
and listen to the inner voice that directs me,
the better.

Everything happens kind of the way it's supposed to happen and I just watch it unfold.

I can't control it.

Rick Rubin

Options

My discomfort arises from all of my efforts
to put ground under my feet,
to realize my dream of constantly being okay.

When I resist change, I suffer.

But when I can let go,
when I can embrace uncertainty
and relax into the possibilities it holds,
I feel free from struggling against
the fundamental ambiguity of being human.

Pema Chodron

Options

I do not have to be good.

I do not have to walk on my knees

For a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.

I only have to let the soft animal of my body
love what it loves.

Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.

Meanwhile the world goes on.

Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.

Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.

The world offers itself to my imagination,
calls to me like the wild geese, harsh and exciting --
over and over announcing my place
in the family of things.

Mary Oliver

Options

The beginning of freedom is the realization that I am not 'the thinker.'

The moment I start watching the thinker, a higher level of consciousness becomes activated.

I then begin to realize that there is a vast realm of intelligence beyond thought, that thought is only a tiny aspect of that intelligence.

I also realize that all the things that truly matter — beauty, love, creativity, joy, inner peace — arise from beyond the mind.

I begin to awaken.

Eckhart Tolle

Options

Fear is the mind-killer.
Fear is the little-death that brings darkness.
I will face my fear.
I will permit it to pass over me and through me.
And when it has gone past,
I will turn the inner eye to see its path.
Where the fear has gone there will be nothing.
Only I will remain.

Frank Herbert

Options

You can also choose something you already know. A poem, passage of text, or prayer.

Song lyrics. The full names of everyone you love. Limericks.

The words you use can be serious or silly.

You can even write them yourself.

Just be sure your words are completely unrelated to the content of your overthinking.

For example, if you spiral about:

- being lonely, avoid words about finding love.
- your physical appearance, avoid words about feeling attractive
- your age, avoid words about love at any season of life

The pitfall of using related words is that they actually strengthen your overthinking spirals.

Because each time you recite them, you subconsciously reinforce your awareness of the gap between where you are and where you want to be.

Find or write unrelated words that bring you peace, make you smile, or take a deep breath.

How to use them

Memorize the words that made you pause.

Then, when you notice your mind spiraling, recite them.
Out loud or silently. Focusing on each word. Each syllable.

Repeat them until you feel your mind relax its grip.

It can take 8-10 minutes at first, so keep going. It will work.

If you can, recite them while walking.
One syllable for each step.

Repeat as many times and as often as you need.

**The more you do this...
the faster it works.**

The less you overthink.

The more present you are.

A few tips

You can change a word or two in the options on pages 7-11 so they're just right.

For example, one of my clients changed the word “fear” on page 11 to “confusion” to better fit her experience of mental spirals.

As you continue this practice, it's common to realize that you overthink more than just during full-on mental spirals.

Whenever you find yourself in a repeating thought pattern that comes with tension or anxiety, use the words you memorized.

You can use them to help quiet your mind before sleep or if you wake in the middle of the night.

If you have trouble finding words that feel right for you, drop me an email at jenni@jennigreen.com and I'll help.

All my best,

Jenni