

*"It seems quite clear that one cannot solve the problem with the same kind of thinking that has created the problem."*

~Berg and de Shazer

## Lesson #10: Shifting Rumination through Hope



### Topic: **Using your hope tools to change the channel.**

#### Lesson Objective

Students will learn about rumination and the effective steps we can take to distract ourselves from this cycle that can keep us from our hope.

#### Teacher Notes

##### Materials

Markers

Pens

Hand out of the television outline and story page

Lesson Ten Quiz: Shifting Rumination through Hope

#### Step by Step teaching guide

##### Pre-questions

Last week, we looked at failure and now we know the reasons we fail have little to do with who we are or how smart we are, but how we go about reaching our goal. Sometimes we hold on to the feeling of failure or disappointment. We go over and over them in our head and it interferes with our hope tools. By letting the problem replay over and over in your mind you are engaging in a process which is called "rumination."

Imagine the following scenario: You're at school, the day seems to be going smoothly, and you're looking forward to a relaxing evening at home. Then, with 15 minutes left, your teacher approaches you and informs you that you have done badly on a test. You apologize and try to explain what happened, but all your teacher tells you is that you need to get your act together.

Everyone must deal with situations like this from time to time and it would put most people in a bad mood. You have two options in how to deal with the situation:

Try to guess what the hope response is.

1. Go home and spend 15 minutes problem solving about what you need to change in how you study and what you will tell the teacher the next day, and then put it aside and enjoy the evening.
2. Let the problem eat away at you all evening and think about how unfair the world can be.

Rumination, or dwelling repeatedly on negative thoughts about the past, can make things worse.

Basically, rumination means that you continuously think about the various aspects of situations that are upsetting. Think about what you do. When something upsets you, do you tend to mull on it and keep going over the problem again and again? If so, then you are probably a ruminator.

Sometimes people will ruminate or have unhealthy thinking about the problem; they never even develop a solution to the problem. This is where rumination becomes a big problem.

If the situation has you in a bad mood, rumination will keep that bad mood alive, and you will feel upset for as long as you ruminate. If you ruminate on the problem for days, chances are you'll remain upset for days. Rumination is also connected to many different forms of self-sabotage. For example, if you ruminate on something upsetting a friend did, it's going to take longer to forgive that friend and get back to enjoying time spent with him or her. If you hold a grudge and constantly ruminate on what that friend did you may lose their friendship completely.

There are many activities that can be used to distract from rumination, and the best one to use is one that works for you.

For example, some good activities include reading a book, playing a game, exercising, talking to a friend or watching a movie. Of course, you are only limited by your creativity and access to different activities. Importantly, you must enjoy what you are doing for it to work. If you hate watching a movie you will get bored and start thinking about the problem again - so watching a movie that you don't like may not be the best choice. Rumination is a bad habit, so you will need to work on distracting activities on a regular basis if you want to break that habit.

## Lesson Steps

To help us understand how negative thinking can affect us and hold us back and lead us to believe we have lost our HOPE,

- 1) Let's see if we can use your hope tools to design a new program. Have you ever heard the phrase, "get your mind off the problem?" We're going to change the channel and create a new program.

Ask the child to draw on/around the picture of the television. Or, children can be encouraged to draw their own screen. (See example at bottom of page.) If we could change a channel in your life, so that things were better for you, what channel would you switch to?

- 2) Draw or create the name of your new program and come up with a story that will tell us what it is about. Include the following:

- What might other people see happening in your new program?
- If there was one small thing that would be different about you, what would that be?

Suggestion: This would be more effective if they were shown two screens or had to draw two screens. On the first, the teacher should ask each student to draw an upsetting thing they ruminated about recently. It can be something that happened at school or an argument with a friend; anything they spent a long time going over and over in their head.

1. The teacher should explain that when we ruminate, the only program on our screen is the one that upset us. The teacher can ask the class if they would ever go home and watch only the same upsetting program repeatedly? The idea is to elicit that they would never do that because that would not be fun. The teacher can point out that this is what they are doing when they are ruminating about something upsetting that happened.

2. Remind students they can change the channel because there are many other programs they can watch (i.e., think about) that would make them feel better and more hopeful. Ask students to draw in the second screen, an example of a thought (or show) they could change the channel to when they find themselves stuck on the rumination channel. What could they think about instead that would make them feel more hopeful? Please provide examples to students of possible distraction options or problem-solving options.

#### Teacher tips

Give children time to work on their project and leave time for feedback. Invite them to share what they have learned during this exercise. Reinforce the message about the upstairs and downstairs brain. Ask what tools they are using most in changing their channel and creating their new program.

Remind them that they have the tools now to catch those unhelpful thoughts that cause us to ruminate and get stuck. By using their hope tools, they now can **catch them, pause them, challenge them** and then **change them**. Remember, practice make it easier and the more you practice the better you will get at achieving your goals.

## References

Berg and de Shazer, 1993, p.9. Solution-Focused Practice Tool Kit.

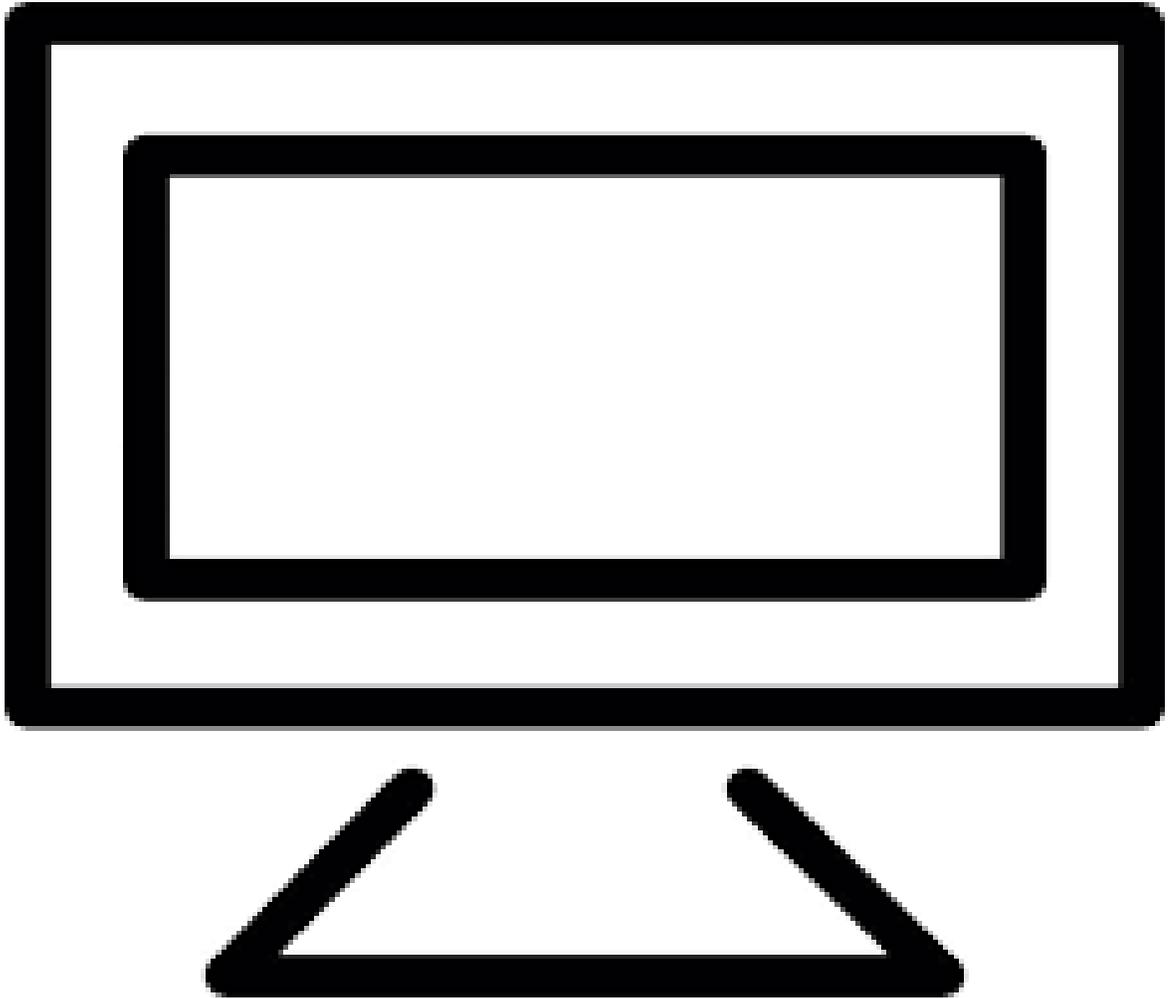
Tartakovsky, M. (2011). Why Ruminating is Unhealthy and How to Stop. Psych Central. Retrieved on August 23, 2017, from <https://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2011/01/20/why-ruminating-is-unhealthy-and-how-to-stop>

Chapter on rumination in Guy Winch, Ph.D. Emotional First Aid: Healing Rejection, Guilt, Failure and Other Everyday Hurts (Plume, 2014)

## Administer Lesson Ten Quiz: Shifting Rumination Through Hope

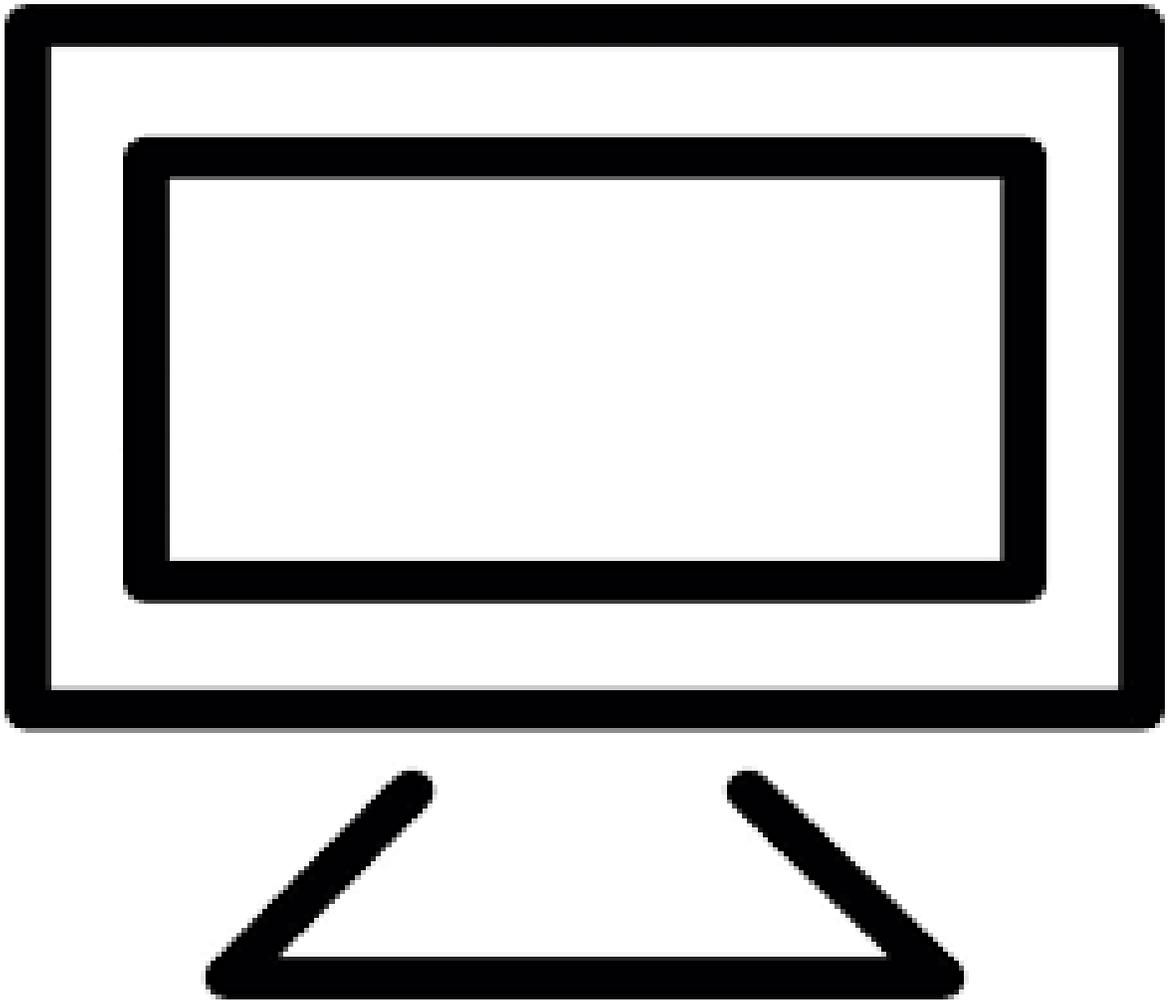
1. By letting a problem replay over and over in your mind, you are engaging in a process called:
  - a. Rumination
  - b. Repetition
  - c. Contemplation
  - d. Decision-making
  
2. Rumination helps us stay hopeful.
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
3. Your teacher tells you that she would like to talk to you tomorrow morning at school about a poor grade you received on your last test. You can't get this out of your mind on your way home and feel worried. What can you do to help yourself feel better after school?
  - a. Talk to your mom and dad, or another trusted adult about your concern.
  - b. Find an activity you enjoy helping yourself feel better, like talking to a friend or watching a movie.
  - c. Think about how angry you are at your teacher for making you worry the rest of the day.
  - d. a and b
  
4. Rumination and unhealthy thinking can prevent us from finding solutions and feeling better.
  - a. True
  - b. False

## YOUR FIRST PROGRAM



**Draw an upsetting thing you ruminated about recently on the screen above.**

## CHANGING THE CHANNEL

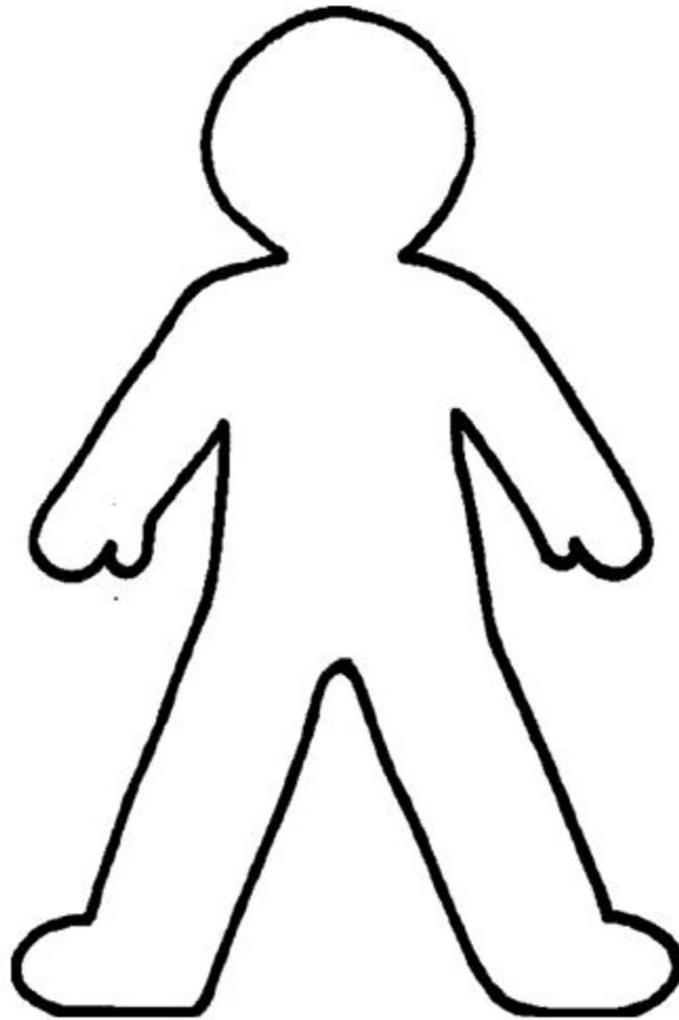


**Change the channel in your life to make it better for you.**

**Write your story that will tell us what the program is about and include the following:**

- 🌻 **What might other people see happening in your new program?**
- 🌻 **What Hope tools are you using?**

☀️ If there was one small thing different about you, what would it be?



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What is Different About You in Your New Program?