



My Overthinking Journal

For the thoughts that go round and round. Learn to step out of the loop.

Thinking things through is useful. Overthinking is when the same thoughts keep looping without getting you anywhere. You replay a conversation for the tenth time, or run every “what if” before a decision, and lie awake at night with your mind on fast-forward.

Overthinking usually shows up in two forms:

Ruminating Stuck on the past <i>“Why did I say that? What’s wrong with me?”</i>	Worrying Stuck on the future <i>“What if it goes wrong? What if they’re upset?”</i>
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Both feel like problem-solving, but they rarely solve anything. The aim of this journal isn’t to stop thinking. It’s to notice when thinking has stopped being helpful, and to gently shift gears.

How to use this journal

- **Start with “Know Your Loop”:** understanding your patterns is the first step to interrupting them.
- **Use the tools when you’re stuck:** the Worry Tree, Brain Dump and Decision Helper are there whenever you need them.
- **Set a Worry Time:** a short daily slot to think things through, so worries don’t take over the whole day.
- **Do the 14-day check-ins:** a few minutes each evening to track your loops and what helped.
- **Be patient with yourself:** your mind is trying to protect you. You’re just teaching it a better way.



Know Your Loop

Get curious about how overthinking shows up for you.

What I overthink about most <i>Work, relationships, health, past mistakes, decisions...</i> 	When it happens most <i>Time of day, place, after certain events</i>
Early signs I'm starting to spiral <i>In my body, my mood, what I do (e.g. scrolling, re-reading texts)</i> 	What I tell myself overthinking does for me <i>e.g. "It keeps me prepared", "It stops me making mistakes"</i>
What overthinking actually costs me <i>Sleep, energy, time, relationships, enjoying the moment</i> 	
What my life could look like with a quieter mind 	



Is This Thinking Helping?

A quick check for when you notice your mind racing.

Helpful thinking	Overthinking
Focuses on a problem I can act on	Circles around things I can't control
Moves toward a decision or next step	Goes over the same ground again and again
Asks "How can I handle this?"	Asks "Why me? What if? What does it mean?"
Has an end point	Feels endless, with no resolution
Leaves me feeling clearer	Leaves me feeling more anxious or low

The 3-question check

1. Have I thought about this before, without getting anywhere new?
2. Is there something I can actually do about it right now?
3. Am I feeling better or worse the longer I think about it?

If it's yes, no, worse, it's probably time to step out of the loop and try a tool from this journal.

A thought I often loop on, and how this check applies to it



The Worry Tree

Follow the steps to decide whether to act on a worry or let it go.

1. What am I worried about?

Write it as clearly and specifically as you can



2. Is this a real problem now, or a "what if" about the future?



3. Can I do anything about it?

Circle one: YES / NO



If YES: make a plan

What will I do? When? How? Then do it, and let the worry go.

If NO: let it go

Accept it's out of my hands. What can I turn my attention to instead?

How I feel now

Rate your worry 0-100 before and after: Before _____ After _____



Brain Dump & Sort

Get everything out of your head and onto paper, then sort it.

Everything on my mind right now

Don't filter. Big, small, silly, serious: write it all down.

Now sort each item into one of these:

I can control

Do something about it

I can influence

Do my part, then let go

I can't control

Practise letting it be



Worry Time

Give worries a set appointment, so they don't take over your whole day.

How it works

Pick a 15–20 minute slot each day, at the same time and place (not right before bed).

When a worry pops up during the day, jot it down below and tell yourself: “Not now, I’ll think about this at my worry time.” Then gently bring your attention back.

At worry time, go through your list. You’ll often find many worries have already faded. Use the Worry Tree for any that remain.

My worry time: _____ Where: _____

Date	Worry that popped up	Postponed? (Y/N)	Still important at worry time? (0–10)



From “Why” to “How”

“Why” questions keep us stuck. “How” questions move us forward.

Instead of asking...	Try asking...
Why does this always happen to me?	How can I handle this differently next time?
Why did I say that?	How can I repair it, or what can I learn from it?
Why can't I just be normal?	How would I support a friend feeling like this?
What if it all goes wrong?	How can I prepare for what I can control?

My “why” question



Rewritten as a “how” question



My answer: one small, concrete step



Decision Helper

For when you're stuck weighing options and can't decide.

The decision I'm stuck on

Option A: _____

Pros and cons

Option B: _____

Pros and cons

Worst case, best case, most likely

What would I tell a friend to do?

My "good enough" choice, and when I'll decide by

There's rarely a perfect option. A good-enough decision beats endless deciding.



Night-Time Thought Parking

Park your thoughts on paper so your mind can rest.

Use this page 30–60 minutes before bed. Writing things down tells your brain it doesn't need to keep holding on to them overnight.

Thoughts still buzzing in my head

Things I need to do tomorrow

Writing them down means you don't have to remember them tonight

What went okay today

What I can let go of for tonight

If you wake up with racing thoughts, jot them here and remind yourself: "I'll deal with this tomorrow."



My Step-Out-of-the-Loop Toolkit

Things that gently pull your attention back to the present.

5-4-3-2-1 grounding

Name 5 things you can see, 4 you can touch, 3 you can hear, 2 you can smell, and 1 you can taste. It brings your mind back into the room, out of your head.

Slow breathing

Breathe in for 4 counts, hold for 2, and breathe out slowly for 6. Repeat for a few minutes. A longer out-breath helps the body settle.

Get busy with your hands

Cook, clean, walk, water the plants, draw. Activities that need a little focus leave less room for looping thoughts.

What works for me

Who I can talk to when I'm stuck



Daily Check-In

A few minutes each evening to notice your loops and what helped.

Day 1 Date: _____ Overthinking today: low ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ high

The loop I got stuck in <i>What was it about? Past, future, or both?</i> _____ _____ _____	What set it off _____ _____ _____
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What I did to step out of it _____ _____	Did it help? What will I try next time? _____ _____
---	--

One moment today when my mind was calm _____
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Day 2 Date: _____ Overthinking today: low ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ high

The loop I got stuck in <i>What was it about? Past, future, or both?</i> _____ _____ _____	What set it off _____ _____ _____
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What I did to step out of it _____ _____	Did it help? What will I try next time? _____ _____
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One moment today when my mind was calm _____
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Daily Check-In

A few minutes each evening to notice your loops and what helped.

Day 3 Date: _____ Overthinking today: low ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ high

The loop I got stuck in <i>What was it about? Past, future, or both?</i> _____ _____ _____	What set it off _____ _____ _____
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What I did to step out of it _____ _____	Did it help? What will I try next time? _____ _____
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One moment today when my mind was calm _____
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Day 4 Date: _____ Overthinking today: low ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ high

The loop I got stuck in <i>What was it about? Past, future, or both?</i> _____ _____ _____	What set it off _____ _____ _____
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What I did to step out of it _____ _____	Did it help? What will I try next time? _____ _____
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One moment today when my mind was calm _____
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Daily Check-In

A few minutes each evening to notice your loops and what helped.

Day 5 Date: _____ Overthinking today: low ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ high

The loop I got stuck in <i>What was it about? Past, future, or both?</i> _____ _____ _____	What set it off _____ _____ _____
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What I did to step out of it _____ _____	Did it help? What will I try next time? _____ _____
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One moment today when my mind was calm _____
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Day 6 Date: _____ Overthinking today: low ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ high

The loop I got stuck in <i>What was it about? Past, future, or both?</i> _____ _____ _____	What set it off _____ _____ _____
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What I did to step out of it _____ _____	Did it help? What will I try next time? _____ _____
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One moment today when my mind was calm _____
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Daily Check-In

A few minutes each evening to notice your loops and what helped.

Day 7 Date: _____ Overthinking today: low ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ high

The loop I got stuck in <i>What was it about? Past, future, or both?</i> _____ _____ _____	What set it off _____ _____ _____
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What I did to step out of it _____ _____	Did it help? What will I try next time? _____ _____
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One moment today when my mind was calm _____
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Day 8 Date: _____ Overthinking today: low ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ high

The loop I got stuck in <i>What was it about? Past, future, or both?</i> _____ _____ _____	What set it off _____ _____ _____
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What I did to step out of it _____ _____	Did it help? What will I try next time? _____ _____
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One moment today when my mind was calm _____
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Daily Check-In

A few minutes each evening to notice your loops and what helped.

Day 9 Date: _____ Overthinking today: low ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ high

The loop I got stuck in <i>What was it about? Past, future, or both?</i> _____ _____ _____	What set it off _____ _____ _____
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What I did to step out of it _____ _____	Did it help? What will I try next time? _____ _____
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One moment today when my mind was calm _____
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Day 10 Date: _____ Overthinking today: low ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ high

The loop I got stuck in <i>What was it about? Past, future, or both?</i> _____ _____ _____	What set it off _____ _____ _____
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What I did to step out of it _____ _____	Did it help? What will I try next time? _____ _____
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One moment today when my mind was calm _____
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Daily Check-In

A few minutes each evening to notice your loops and what helped.

Day 11 Date: _____ Overthinking today: low ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ high

The loop I got stuck in <i>What was it about? Past, future, or both?</i> _____ _____ _____	What set it off _____ _____ _____
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What I did to step out of it _____ _____	Did it help? What will I try next time? _____ _____
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One moment today when my mind was calm _____
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Day 12 Date: _____ Overthinking today: low ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ high

The loop I got stuck in <i>What was it about? Past, future, or both?</i> _____ _____ _____	What set it off _____ _____ _____
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What I did to step out of it _____ _____	Did it help? What will I try next time? _____ _____
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One moment today when my mind was calm _____
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Daily Check-In

A few minutes each evening to notice your loops and what helped.

Day 13 Date: _____ Overthinking today: low ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ high

The loop I got stuck in <i>What was it about? Past, future, or both?</i> _____ _____ _____	What set it off _____ _____ _____
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What I did to step out of it _____ _____	Did it help? What will I try next time? _____ _____
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One moment today when my mind was calm _____
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Day 14 Date: _____ Overthinking today: low ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ high

The loop I got stuck in <i>What was it about? Past, future, or both?</i> _____ _____ _____	What set it off _____ _____ _____
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What I did to step out of it _____ _____	Did it help? What will I try next time? _____ _____
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One moment today when my mind was calm _____
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Looking Back

After 14 days, notice what's shifted, however small.

How much overthinking took over at the start low ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ high

How much it takes over now low ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ high

Patterns I've noticed in my overthinking

Tools that worked best for me

What I'd still like to work on

A kind note to myself for the next time my mind starts racing

To discuss in my next session

This journal supports therapy; it doesn't replace it. If your thoughts feel overwhelming, or you're in distress or feel unsafe, please reach out to your therapist or call Tele-MANAS on 14416 (free, 24x7).