

Breaking the Overthinking Loop

Practical tools for a mind that will not switch off.

NOTICE THE LOOP. INTERRUPT THE REPLAY. RETURN TO WHAT MATTERS.

A guided companion for second-guessing, replaying decisions, and getting caught in mental what-ifs. Use it during live sessions and return to it whenever you need a structured pause.

INSIDE THIS WORKBOOK

01	Spot your loop	Map the moment, thought, feeling and response.
02	Separate facts from stories	Test assumptions without arguing with yourself.
03	Choose a useful next step	Move from rumination to action, acceptance or rest.
04	Build your reset routine	Create a repeatable plan for the next time the loop starts.

YOUR STARTING POINT

Name (optional)	Date	What brought me here?

This workbook is educational reflection material, not clinical treatment or crisis support. You can skip any prompt that feels unhelpful. Small, repeatable practice matters more than completing every page.

What is the loop?

Overthinking often feels like problem-solving: the mind reviews, predicts, checks and rehearses in search of certainty. But when the same question repeats without producing new information or a workable decision, the thinking may be keeping you stuck.

A useful question: Is this thinking helping me decide, or is it asking me to feel completely certain?

A quick self-check

Think about the past 7 days. Mark the options that fit. This is a reflection snapshot, not a diagnostic test.

- I replay conversations or decisions after they are over.
- I imagine several possible negative outcomes.
- I seek reassurance, check, reread or mentally review to feel certain.
- I struggle to stop thinking even when no new information is available.
- My thinking delays sleep, work, connection or a decision.
- I can sometimes step back and redirect my attention.

What tends to start my loop?	What does it cost me?	What do I hope thinking will solve?

One thing I want to understand about my overthinking:

Catch your personal loop

Choose one recent, manageable example. Describe what happened as specifically as possible. You are mapping a process, not judging your character.

Trigger / situation	Automatic thought or question	Feeling / body signal

What I did next	Short-term relief I got	Longer-term cost or consequence

Complete the loop in your own words

When _____ happens, my mind tells me _____. I feel _____, so I _____. It helps briefly by _____, but later _____.

What is one point in this loop where I could insert a pause?

Tip: Look for repeated behaviours such as checking, asking for reassurance, mentally rehearsing, avoiding, or reopening a decision.

Facts, interpretations & unknowns

The mind can treat a possibility as if it were a fact. This page is not about forcing positive thinking. It is about separating what you know from what you are predicting.

The thought I keep replaying	What I know for sure (facts)	What I am assuming / predicting

What evidence supports it?	What evidence complicates it?	What remains unknown?

A balanced, more accurate statement I can use:

Balanced does not mean blindly positive. It means proportionate to the evidence.

Can I solve this right now?

Overthinking often continues because the mind treats every uncertainty as an urgent task. Use this filter to decide whether to act, schedule, accept uncertainty, or redirect attention.

Ask yourself	Write a brief response

Choose a route

ACT	There is a useful step I can take.	Name it and do the smallest version.
SCHEDULE	It matters, but not right now.	Set a specific time to revisit it.
ALLOW	There is no answer available today.	Practise leaving the question open.
REDIRECT	The review is repeating without progress.	Shift to a chosen task or sensory anchor.

My chosen route for the situation I mapped:

Interrupt the replay

You do not have to make the thought disappear. The aim is to notice it, reduce the struggle with it, and choose where your attention goes next.

Try this 90-second reset

1 LABEL	This is a replay / prediction / certainty-seeking loop.
2 LOCATE	Notice your feet, jaw, shoulders or breath. Name one body sensation.
3 UNHOOK	Try: I am noticing the thought that _____. A thought is not a command.
4 CHOOSE	Ask: What would be useful for the next 10 minutes?
5 RETURN	Do one small action. Let the thought be present without reopening the whole case.

Build your own interruption menu

Choose realistic actions that fit your context. Keep them simple enough to use when you are already mentally tired.

A body-based reset	A focus-based reset	A connection / environment reset

The phrase I want to practise when I catch the loop:

If a grounding or breathing exercise makes you feel worse, stop and choose a different approach, such as naming objects in the room, moving gently, or contacting a trusted person.

Make a decision without endless review

Some decisions deserve careful thought. The goal is not impulsiveness; it is to set a reasonable decision process and stop demanding impossible certainty.

Decision I am revisiting	What matters most in this decision?	What information is enough?

My options	Likely trade-off	What I choose / next step

Set a review boundary

I will decide / revisit by...	After that, I will...	If doubt returns, I will remind myself...

A decision can be reasonable without feeling 100% certain.

When checking keeps the loop alive

Reassurance and checking can bring genuine short-term relief. If the relief fades quickly and you need to check again, the cycle itself may be worth examining. This page is an observation tool, not a rule to avoid support.

What do I check / ask / reread?	What feeling am I trying to reduce?	How long does relief last?

What would a helpful, proportionate check look like?	What could I try before checking again?

A compassionate boundary I can experiment with (not a punishment):

Support is appropriate when you need it. The experiment is to notice whether repeated checking is solving the problem or only briefly quieting uncertainty.

Your 7-day loop-breaker

Pick one small practice for the week. Consistency matters more than intensity. This is an experiment, not a pass/fail test.

Day	What triggered the loop?	Tool I tried	What I noticed

End-of-week reflection

A pattern I spotted...	A tool that was useful...	Something I want to adjust...

My next small experiment:

My overthinking reset plan

Make this page easy to find. You can return to it when your mind starts demanding another review.

My early warning signs	My common loop / trigger	The cost of staying in it

When I notice it, I will...	A person / place / activity that helps me reconnect	One next step within my control

NOTICE → NAME → CHECK → CHOOSE → RETURN

A reminder I want to carry with me:

A note on support

If persistent overthinking is significantly affecting sleep, work, relationships or daily functioning, consider speaking with a qualified mental health professional. This workbook is not a substitute for individual care. If you are in immediate danger or crisis, contact local emergency services or a crisis support service.

TalkSense02 | Breaking the Overthinking Loop | Educational reflection material, not clinical treatment.