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What's the difference between overthinking and problem-solving?

Preparation and planning are solid strategies for dealing with problems. You might identify a creative way to deal with a challenge, or you may develop a plan to prevent you from repeating a mistake. Whether you're dealing with relationship issues, work-related problems, or financial dilemmas, devoting your mental energy to the obstacle can help you develop effective solutions.

If, however, you spend hours analyzing your problems, you might be creating more distress for yourself. When you're in a bad mood and you focus on the things that cause you to feel awful, you'll feel worse. When you're anxious, imagining bad things happening to you will keep you stuck in a state of perpetual anxiety.



The difference between overthinking and problem-solving isn't about the time you invest—it's about the way you think. When you find yourself thinking about a problem or a distressing event, ask yourself these questions:

Is there a solution to this problem? Some problems can't be solved. You can't make a loved one's illness disappear, and you can't undo a traumatic event that already happened. Dwelling on things in an unproductive way could be detrimental for your psychological well-being.

Am I focusing on the problem or searching for a solution? If you're faced with a financial issue, looking for strategies to earn more money or pay off your debt is helpful. However, imagining yourself becoming homeless or thinking about how unfair your financial situation is will keep you stuck.

What am I accomplishing by thinking about this? If you're proactively trying to gain a new perspective, you might find thinking about an issue is helpful. If, however, you're repetitively thinking about how you wish things were different or imagining all the things that could go wrong (without identifying actions that will help you be successful), you're overthinking.

Asking yourself these questions can help you begin to identify when you're overthinking things. When you decide your thoughts aren't productive, you might switch to a problem-solving approach. Or you might decide there's nothing you can do and thinking any more about the issue isn't going to be helpful.

Source: <https://www.health.com/anxiety/stop-overthinking>

To reach a Behavioral Health or Work/Life Expert, contact eni at:
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