

January 2021 Issue: Week One

Round and Round

Complete this month's lead-o-meter.

This month, we will be looking at the habit, or learned thinking pattern known as **rumination**.

What exactly is rumination?

Has your head ever been filled with one single thought, or a string of thoughts, that just keeps repeating and repeating and repeating itself? The process of continuously thinking about the same thoughts is called rumination.

What types of things do people ruminate about? Rumination can include:

- Thinking about ways to solve a problem or to mitigate uncertainty
- Repeatedly thinking about events in your past
- Constantly having the same 'argument' in your head with a particular individual
- Dwelling on difficulties and things that distress you
- Being preoccupied with something and not being able to get it out of your mind
- Developing a learned strategy for dealing with your problem(s)

Monthly Breakdown

Week 1

The 'Where': Lead-o-meter

Week 2

The 'What': Self-Assessment Exercise

Week 3

The 'Why': Research, Science and Information

Week 4

The 'How': Building up your skill

Does everyone ruminate or is it just me?

To some degree, everyone ruminates over their difficulties or uncertainties. Thinking about our problems can be helpful — especially if we take action and find a resolution. For most of us, rumination is often time-limited and stops when the problem is resolved.



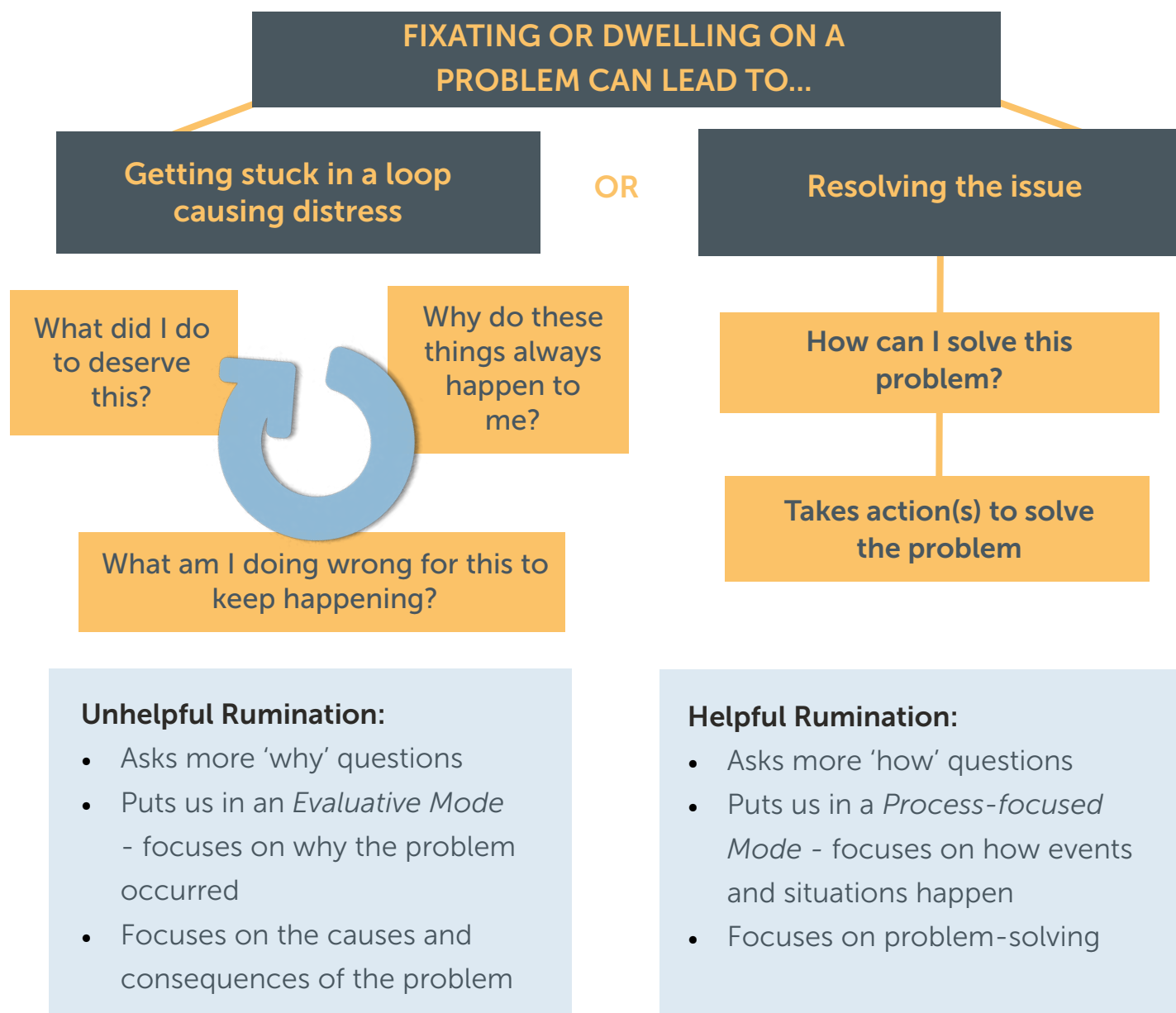
We can ruminate over positive or stressful things. For instance, we could ruminate over what special dinner we want to make for our significant other. This could be an enjoyable experience full of love and anticipation.

On other hand, we could also ruminate over how our sibling constantly manipulates our parents. This could be a frustrating and exhausting experience. Essentially, dwelling on an issue can take two different paths, leading to two different outcomes (see diagram below).

Although rumination is normal, **excessive rumination can become problematic**. 'Overuse' can subconsciously train our brains to use this technique for everything

and we might rarely stop using it. As we solve smaller problems and even bigger problems through rumination, we are 'rewarded' with a sense of satisfaction and a shot of dopamine in our brain.

Our brain enjoys this feeling and thinks, 'I will put forth more thoughts of challenges to solve because that is what I like to do!' Then, the cycle continues. Our brains will continually fire and build neurons in the area of our brain where we compulsively think.



As school leaders, we are very good at thinking. Thinking and rethinking can help remove some uncertainty. However, the brain will eventually give you another uncertainty to ruminate on because the brain knows you like thinking. The brain will keep levelling up the uncertainty which makes it harder for you to solve, until it gives you something you can't solve. That could cause you to get stuck in a pattern of thinking, with continuous arguments floating in your head, with no solution or conclusion.



[Check out this video](#) that explains this concept in more detail!

Looking Ahead...

This month in ReCharge we will explore the concept of rumination deeper. We will reflect on how we individually ruminate and identify the thoughts that keep us returning to our core beliefs or concerns. We will gain a further understanding of how 'uncontrolled' and excessive rumination can lead to poor mental health.

Finally, we will explore tips and ideas on how to stop our rumination and adopt different ways of thinking!

LEAD-O-METER: Are you a 'ruminator'?

Please take 30 seconds to complete our monthly, self-awareness questionnaire. Follow the link below or scan the QR code by opening your phone camera and pointing at the code.

**Complete the January
Lead-o-meter!**

We'll share the anonymous results at the end of the month.



How did you like this issue of ReCharge?

We welcome and appreciate your feedback and suggestions! [Fill out our feedback form](#) or contact [Rochelle Morandini](#).



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