



## **Out of Control Thought: Two Kinds of Mental Static**

- 1. A significant way that we create stress and anxiety is through uncontrolled thought.**
  - A. Example – ‘what if’ thoughts. These thoughts create stress by inventing negative possibilities. “What if my boss doesn’t like my work” What if my wife doesn’t pick up the kids in time, and what if they are left alone on the street for an hour, and what if my sister knows about it .....**
    - a. “What if” thoughts are the source of worry and take place in the future.**
  - B. Example – ‘if only’ thoughts ‘If only’ thoughts create stress through regret, guilt, and shame. “If only I had got the car fixed sooner, it wouldn’t have broken down and made me late in picking up the kids. If only I paid my cell phone bill, I could have phoned someone to pick up the kids.”**
    - a. “If only” thoughts take place in the past and are called regret**
- 2. Things about ‘What if’ and “If only” thoughts**
  - a. They repeat over and over the same thoughts and words**
  - b. They drain energy and make us feel bad as well as stressed.**
  - c. They cloud our judgment and perception as far as seeing what is really going on around us.**
  - d. ‘If only’ thoughts never lead to anything. Nothing is ever changed**

- e. **‘What if’ thoughts rarely lead to anything new. This type of thought is mostly invention that doesn’t have anything to do with the real world**
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- 3. **We are not helpless. We can stop these kinds of thoughts**
    - a. **Recognize that the thoughts have no value. They are mental static**
    - b. **Recognize that the thoughts cause physical problems through tension**
    - c. **Strengthen your ability to control your thoughts with concentration exercises.**
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- 4. **Concentration Exercise – Focus on the Breathing**
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- 5. **What’s really going on with future thought and past thought**