

The Worry Cycle

Understanding how worry keeps itself going – and where you can step out

Worry often begins with uncertainty. The mind tries to reduce that uncertainty by thinking through every possible problem. This can feel useful in the moment, but repeated worry can keep attention locked onto threat.



A useful pause

- 1 NOTICE**
Is there a problem I can act on now, or am I trying to solve uncertainty?
- 2 CHOOSE**
If there is an action, take one small step. If not, practise allowing uncertainty to be there.
- 3 RETURN**
Gently bring your attention back to what you are doing now.

When Worry Feels Convincing

"I need to think this through one more time."

"If I worry enough, I can prevent it."

"I need to know what will happen."

"I should not feel uncertain."

These thoughts are understandable. They are not instructions.

Problem-Solving or Worry?

PROBLEM-SOLVING

- Specific problem
- Information can help
- Action is possible
- Ends with a next step

WORRY

- Hypothetical "what if?"
- Repetitive
- Seeks certainty
- Often produces more questions

Notice the cycle. Make room for uncertainty. Choose what is useful now.

Informed by cognitive and metacognitive models of worry and intolerance of uncertainty.