

Lamentations



**NURSING
REGRETS OVER
PAST FAILURES
IS A FORM OF
SELF-SABO-
TAGE THAT
GETS HARDER
TO OVERCOME
WITH THE PAS-
SAGE OF TIME.**

RUMINATING OVER THE PAST is something everyone does from time to time. Most of the time it's insignificant, but it's always time that is wasted and more often than not, if we were going to grade the self-destructive impact on your ability to maximize your performance, I would rate it in the 7 to 9 range on a 1 to 10 scale. Some of the time the impact may be as devastating as getting hit on the chin by a heavy-weight boxer.

You may ruminate over your personal life as well as your career. You may ruminate over a past success, lamenting that you will never be able to match it, but more often than not you will find yourself re-living past failures, over and over again. In your personal life you may re-live all of the steps that led to a painful break-up. Professionally, you may experience the same depression each time you re-live losing your best client, or procrastinating a call to a referral where — when you finally made it — you learned that the prospect had opened a \$5 million account with a financial advisor who was cold calling. How often do you call up those “negative feelings” that you experience each time you remember the casual conver-

sation when you discovered that your best friend had opened an account with another financial advisor?

How many hours have you wasted wondering what might have happened if you had taken an alternate route with your life? For example, how would your life have turned out if you had married someone else? Worked a little harder at your marriage? Spent just one night a week with your children? How often do you re-live those moments when you should have been listening instead of talking? What would have happened if you had acted rather than procrastinated? How would those high-net-worth prospects that you could never turn into clients have changed your career?

How many times have you lamented: “What if I bought Yahoo when ...?” “If only, I had sold Enron.” “What if, I had bought that McDonald’s franchise 10 years ago?” “If I had only called my referral last week.” “I had it so good, and I didn’t even know it. Why didn’t I just stay where I was?” Or simply, “Where did I go wrong?” Or: “I knew better than that! Why do I make the same mistake over and over again?” Or: “Every quarter I procrastinate until the

last month, and then I have to work night and day to have a respectable quarter.” With 20–20 hindsight, we can see just how easy it is to make the wrong choice or how close success is to failure in the financial industry.

Self-Sabotage For some financial advisors, this is not a problem; their failures amount to no more than a few poor decisions in a symphony of success. But for others, sour notes struck in the past have had major consequences and continue to reverberate. Some financial advisors continue to feel guilty, to feel they have irrevocably “messed up” their lives, to feel they have squandered their resources, to feel

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victimized by others.

They have succumbed to some of their self-sabotaging thoughts. We call them “what if” and “if only” thoughts — continuing to ruminate about what would, could, or should have been “if only” things had been different.

These self-sabotaging thoughts are immobilizing. Financial advisors who feel caught in the spider webs of their past have a tendency to quit too soon in the present and ultimately to give up on their future. They find it difficult to get their act together and take the specific steps needed to maximize today’s prospecting and client-building activities. When they do succeed, they have a difficult time taking credit and saying to themselves, “Good job!” When they do achieve success, they are unable to

enjoy their successes. Take the self-quiz below and rate yourself on a 1 to 10 scale, 10 being the worst.

If you score 7 or higher on two or three of these questions, use it as a wake-up call. Admit to yourself that you are having problems that you haven’t solved by yourself and possibly never will and that if you want to maximize your performance you are going to have to ask for help.

You not only need to understand how “what if” and “if only” thinking gets started, you have to learn how to use psychological skills to eliminate it before it gets any stronger; left unattended it only increases in strength as the years go by. You have to learn how regrets over the past force you to underachieve. You have to learn more

about how to live in “the here and now.”

Psychological training is designed to enable financial advisors to use proven change techniques to increase emotional strength, make a quantum leap in production, as well as learn how to relax and enjoy the moment and add more fun to your life.

Irrational Thinking, the Primary Source of the Problem Write down every failure that pops into your mind, personal and professional (the more you write, the more effective the exercise). Then read through your list and see if you can spot the type of self-sabotaging habits that you use to underachieve. For example, the top 10 are listed below:

“WHAT IF” AND “IF ONLY” QUIZ

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. I look at the past and see more failure than success. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I just can't get over how somebody I respected misunderstood (or misled or unfairly treated) me. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. As long as that person is happy, I can't be. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. I would like to change my life, but it's too late now. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. I believe that if I had handled things differently, I could have had the respect I need. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. If I knew then what I know now, I'd be more successful in developing referrals. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. I still feel guilty. I can't seem to get over it. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Every time I fail, I spend too much time ruminating over my past failures and re-living my lost opportunities. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. I'd like to forget what happened, but others won't let me. I can't get away from a constant refrain of, "I told you so." | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. I feel I have wasted the best years of my life. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. I've always had the potential for success, but I've been dogged by bad luck. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. I kick myself for not taking advantage of an opportunity I had years ago.
I should have or could have realized that opportunities like that don't come around often. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. It seems to me that I'm always thinking about my failures. I just can't get over them
and I feel depressed all the time. I can't seem to motivate myself anymore. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. I feel as if I have wasted the last (5) years. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

TOTAL YOUR SCORE

All-or-nothing thinking “If I can’t have exactly what I want, I’ll take nothing. If I’m not a total success, I’m a total failure.”

Perfectionism “I have to be perfect or I will fail.”

Overgeneralization “I called on a friend and didn’t get the account. I will never call on a friend again.”

Global labeling “I asked five of my clients about managing their money. Not one was interested. I’ll never be able to build a financial-planning business.”

Catastrophizing “One failure means total disaster. I’m ruined. I’ll never succeed.”

Minimizing “No doubt about it, I’m not smart enough to ...”

Mind reading “I know they will object to the idea of giving me referrals. There’s just no point in asking.”

Personalization “They said they didn’t know anyone who they could refer to me. That proves they don’t like me, they don’t respect me, they certainly don’t believe in me.”

Wishful thinking “If my clients really appreciated me, they would just call and give me referrals. They know I’m in the business and I shouldn’t have to ask; it’s embarrassing.”

Fortune telling “There is no sense in asking for referrals. They are just going

to say, ‘No.’”

When you make yourself aware of your thoughts, you begin the growth process. Whatever mistake, missed opportunity or cause for regret exists in your life will still be a part of your past. But what can change is the way it is preventing you from maximizing your prospecting and sales performance.

With the proper type of help you can eliminate all of your irrational thoughts. And you can eliminate them forever, which is critical because they grow stronger with age. When you learn how to identify, confront and eliminate them from your unconscious mind, you will make a quantum leap in your production. No doubt about it. **R**

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