

# When the Mind Holds On Too Tightly

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## **The Mind Does Not Always Let the Moment End**

Much of what hurts us does not come only from what happens. It comes from what the mind continues to do afterward. An experience passes, but the mind does not always let it pass. A thought forms about it. Then another. A conclusion settles in. “This means something about me.” “This is how life is.” “I need to be careful now.” At first, these are simply responses. Over time, they become positions the mind takes and holds.

We stop noticing that we are holding a thought and begin to feel as though the thought is simply the truth of things.

## **When Meaning Becomes Something We Carry**

The mind is always making meaning. That is natural. But sometimes meaning hardens. A thought such as “I am not safe” or “I am not enough” can become something we carry quietly all the time. We begin to look at life through it. We expect it to be confirmed. We feel unsettled when something challenges it. Without realizing it, we organize ourselves around the idea. What began as a moment of interpretation becomes a way of living.

This is not because we want to suffer. It is because the mind is trying to stay safe and consistent. Holding onto its conclusions feels like protection. Letting them go can feel uncertain, even risky, because the mind does not yet know what will replace them. So it keeps the familiar pattern, even when that pattern is heavy. The moment ends, but the mind continues, as if staying with the thought is safer than entering what is new.

## **Thoughts Are Not Living Events**

Thoughts, however, are not living events. They do not see what is in front of us now. They are impressions, echoes, attempts to make sense of what has already moved on. When we hold onto them as if they are still happening, life begins to feel heavier than it is. Over time, the thought and the sense of self blend together. It no longer feels like “I keep thinking this.” It feels like “This is who I am.”

This is where much of our exhaustion comes from. Not only from pain, but from carrying the mind’s responses long after the moment has passed.

## **Why It Is Hard to See Alone**

It is very difficult to see this process on our own. When we have been holding certain thoughts for years, they do not feel like something we are doing. They feel like reality. Trying to force ourselves to

stop thinking them usually makes them louder. What helps is not force, but a different kind of environment. A space where nothing inside us has to be pushed away or defended. A space where the mind does not have to keep repeating itself in order to be heard.

## **When Holding Begins to Loosen**

In that kind of setting, something gentle begins to shift. The mind slowly discovers that it does not have to keep every thought in order to be safe. It begins to sense that being present with what is here now is actually steadier than holding onto what has passed. This realization is not forced and it is not decided all at once. It happens through experience. The system feels, often quietly, that letting a moment end and allowing the next one to begin is smoother and less effortful than replaying what is over.

Thoughts that once felt urgent begin to feel lighter. Not because they were argued away, but because the grip is softening. We begin to notice that a thought can pass without being kept. That an experience can happen without becoming a permanent conclusion about who we are.

The changes are often small at first. A situation that would have stayed in your head all day moves through more quickly. A familiar worry comes and goes without taking over. There is a little more space inside. A little less pressure to figure everything out. These are signs that the mind is loosening its habit of holding onto what no longer needs to be held.

## **A Mind That Does Not Have to Keep Everything**

You do not have to understand how this happens for it to happen. You do not have to arrive with answers. There are places and relationships where the mind can begin to rest from its constant reviewing, its constant replaying, its constant effort to stay on top of everything. When that rest begins, something natural returns. A steadier way of being. A sense that you do not have to carry every thought in order to be okay.

Sometimes relief comes not from solving what the mind says, but from no longer keeping it. And in that letting go, even briefly, life feels lighter, more direct, and more like itself again.

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