



My Letting Go of the Past Worksheet

Seven steps to take one thing you keep replaying from a loop to a choice: what it costs you, what was never yours to control, what you'll keep, and what you'll turn towards. If it's trauma or abuse, or it brings flashbacks, nightmares or panic, please talk to a GP or a trauma-focused therapist instead.

01 What I keep going back to

Name it in a line or two, as plainly as you can. Then notice when it tends to show up and how much room it takes.

The thing I keep replaying (what happened, or what didn't):

When it shows up most (times, places, reminders):

How much of my mind is it taking up right now?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Hardly any

Most of it

02 What replaying it gives me, and what it costs me

Going back over the past usually feels useful in some way, or you wouldn't keep doing it. Be honest about both sides. For example, 'it keeps them close' next to 'I can't enjoy anyone new'.

What replaying it gives me

e.g. a feeling of control, closeness, hope of an answer

What it costs me

e.g. sleep, mood, time, chances I skip

Has going over it again brought me anything new lately? If so, what?

03 What was in my control, and what wasn't

Sort the pieces honestly. Your choices go on the left. Other people's choices, luck, timing and things you couldn't have known go on the right. If someone hurt you, what they did belongs on the right.

What was in my control then

What I did, said or chose

What wasn't

Other people, circumstances, what I couldn't know

What did I know at the time, compared with what I know now?

04 What I've learned, and what I want to keep

Letting go isn't throwing everything away. Some of it is worth carrying: a lesson, a good memory, a strength you found, a person who showed up for you.

What this taught me about myself, other people or what matters to me:

What I want to keep from it:

1.

2.

3.

05 A letter I won't send

Write to the person, the place or the past itself. Say what you never got to say: what happened, how it felt, what you wish had been different, and what you're ready to put down. This letter is for you. Don't send it, and don't contact anyone who hurt you because of it.

Start with 'Dear ...' and write until you've said it:

06 A small act of closing

Some endings never got a proper ending. A small, deliberate act can mark one. It doesn't have to be grand or make sense to anyone else. Tick one, or write your own.

- ☐ Tear up or shred the letter I just wrote.
- ☐ Put old photos, messages or objects in a box, and put the box away.
- ☐ Go somewhere that mattered one more time, then leave on purpose.
- ☐ Delete or archive a thread I keep rereading.
- ☐ Say goodbye out loud, on my own or with someone I trust.
- ☐ Do something kind in the spirit of what I want to keep.

What I'll do, and when:

07 What I'll turn towards, and a plan for when it comes back

The past will still show up sometimes. Decide what you want more room for now, and have an if-then plan ready, so a reminder doesn't pull you back into the whole loop.

What matters to me now that I want more time and attention for:

One small step towards it this week:

If...

e.g. I start replaying it in bed

Then I will...

e.g. notice it, name it 'the old loop', and put on a podcast

How much of my mind is it taking up now?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Hardly any

Most of it

When you're done, a moment to reflect

- What am I hoping to find if I go over it one more time?
- What would I tell a friend who had been replaying this for as long as I have?
- What part of my life is waiting for the room this is taking up?
- Who would I be, or what would I do, if this didn't define me?
- What would a day look like where I remembered it but didn't relive it?

Free worksheet from selfgrowth.org. Free self-growth worksheets for real life.

If things feel heavier than a worksheet can hold

These are self-reflection tools, not therapy. If you're struggling, especially if you have any thoughts of harming yourself, please reach out to someone now. In the US, call or text **988**. In the UK & Ireland, call **116 123** (Samaritans). Elsewhere, find a free helpline at findahelpline.com. If you're in immediate danger, call your local emergency number.