

SOLUTIONS

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Living with Regret: **MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR MISTAKES**



Should've, would've, could've—we're all haunted by this trinity of regret from time to time, but when does it go too far? Can you get rid of these ghosts?

According to a study conducted by Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management, 90 percent of people carry a major regret. The top regrets involve romance, family, education, career and finances.

No one gets through life without regrets, but it's the way that you utilize them that matters. We all know people who are chained by their regrets, so instead of making yours into shackles, form them into springboards for change. Here are a few steps to help you learn to live with regret and make the most of your mistakes.

Step One: Own Your Regret

This first step is often the hardest, but most essential. In order to move beyond regret, it's critical to properly identify it. Answering these questions truthfully will not only help you uncover the root of the sadness, but also your role within it. Stepping outside of the situation may even change your viewpoint.

- Do you regret something you did or didn't do?
- Did you hurt someone?
- Was the circumstance beyond your control?

Once you have identified the regret, it's time to take responsibility for your actions. Avoid blaming others, as this may throw you off track.

This step also calls on you to review the circumstances and outcomes. Could you have acted differently? It's sometimes helpful to enlist the help of a friend during this stage to serve as a sounding board.

Step Two: The Fix

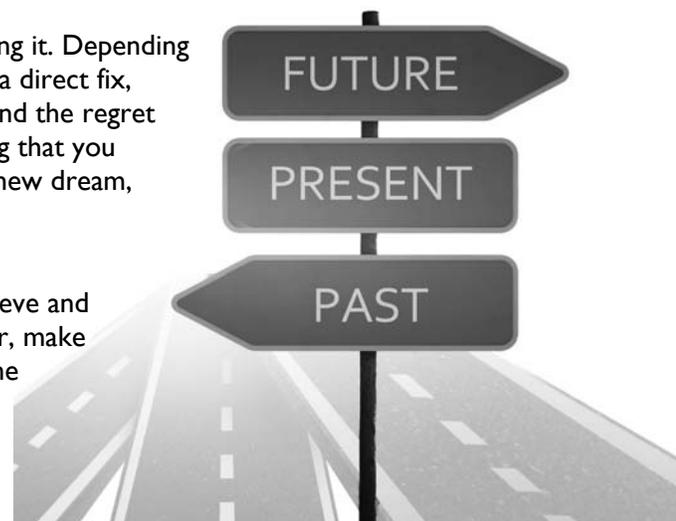
Now that you have examined the regret, it's time to move toward fixing it. Depending on the circumstances around the regret you may not be able to make a direct fix, like reaching out to apologize, but that doesn't mean you can't still mend the regret by making a point to be nicer to others. If your regret lies in something that you did not do, look at what you can do right now in your life. Establish a new dream, or use our talents to help someone attain theirs.

Step Three: Move On

It's important when you feel regretful to take the time you need to grieve and feel the sadness; it can help you to stop revisiting the regret. However, make sure not to dwell, make sure to look at the work you've done to fix the regret.

Many people journal about regrets and the actions they have taken to make things right, as both a way to move on and to create a guide to help with future sadness and regret.

When making amends, people may not always be ready to forgive or appreciate your efforts, but do not let that stop you. Just remember that you have taken positive actions to fix the situation and just as you cannot change the past, you also cannot change other people.



BE A QUITTER

As the holiday season has come and gone — so too have many New Year's Resolutions. We all start out with goals for the new year but 92% of people don't stick with them. It's always interesting to see the ads after the holidays for sales on aids to help people kick the nicotine addiction. I would bet the percentage rate for sticking to this resolution is even lower! Louisiana currently ranks 44th in the country for tobacco use — not a thing to be proud of. I imagine everyone is well aware of all the health problems related to smoking, but that doesn't seem to do much to deter people from its use. The majority of health problems caused by nicotine use aren't seen until many years down the road. So instead of talking about all the risk factors, let's talk about the positive changes that occur when you quit:

Within **20 minutes** of your last cigarette your heart rate and blood pressure return to normal, circulation in your hands and feet improve

Within **8 hours** oxygen level in the blood normalizes

Within **24 hours** your chance of a heart attack decreases

Within **3 days**, you breathe easier, nerve endings start re-growing, taste and smell improves

Within **several months**, you experience a decrease in shortness of breath and increased energy

Within **1 year**, your risk of heart disease is half of what it was when you were smoking

Within **2 years**, your risk of heart attack is back to normal levels

Within **5 years**, the chance of you getting lung cancer decreases by 50% and your risk of stroke is that of a non-smoker

After **10 years**, your risk of heart disease is that of a non-smoker

You don't need a New Year's holiday to make a resolution to do something healthy for yourself. Good things can happen quickly and noticeable by making the change to be nicotine free.



For caring and confidential help for personal and family problems, call Solutions Counseling & EAP.

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