Ruminating Thoughts

Ruminating thoughts are very common after someone has experienced trauma, in particular in cases of PTSD & C-PTSD. They are when a person can't stop thinking about their awful experiences.

Like many people, I experienced them once C-PTSD developed, but I still had a slight degree of control over them. Sometimes, I could force them to stop & think of something else. After surviving carbon monoxide poisoning though, my brain was damaged. Part of that damage was no longer having the ability to control those ruminating thoughts. I had to learn new & effective ways to cope with them.

After my mother's sudden death in April, my ruminating thoughts got really, really bad! At first it was incredibly hard to handle them on top of everything else about the situation. With God's help, after a few months of this, I've gotten a much better grip on the awful ruminating thoughts.

When they happen, I've learned it's best if at all possible to get alone & sit with the thoughts. I let them run their course, reminding me of whatever awful thing they are about. I also allow myself to feel the emotions that the thoughts trigger. Whatever it is, be it anger, sadness, hurt, I feel them. No, this isn't easy. In fact it's incredibly difficult, but it is also well worth it. The more times I do this, the less frequent the ruminating thoughts on that particular topic are.

Immediately following my mother's death, I kept having ruminating thoughts about the night the police came to give me the news of her passing. It was hardly a pleasant experience to say the least. I would relive their visit over & over in my mind. At first, I did my best to ignore these thoughts. I didn't see it could do me any good to think about that night.

As time went on though & the thoughts were still frequent, I realized something had to give. I started allowing myself to think about that awful night, & to feel the emotions that I remember feeling that night. I leaned on God to help me but even with Him, it was still quite painful. However, the more I did this, the less painful remembering that night became. As an added bonus, the less frequently the ruminating thoughts about that night became. I still remember that night pretty frequently, but now I think it's on a much more normal level. After all, it's only been just under 4 months since my mother died. That isn't a long time at all, so it's totally normal considering the length of time, our lack of relationship & the rest of the odd situation that I'd still be very upset about her death.

If you suffer with ruminating thoughts, I recommend that you do the same things I have. Get alone with the thoughts as soon as you can. Let them run their course & feel your feelings. Let God help you to get through them, too. Tell Him what you feel & allow Him to validate & comfort you. It's going to hurt at first, but I promise, it gets easier as you do it! I also promise it's well worth the pain you feel at first

when those ruminating thoughts come less frequently or even disappear in time. It's kind of like lancing a boil. That doesn't even sound pleasant & must be awful to experience, but it must be done in order to release the infection so the body can heal. You're doing the same basic thing - you're going through the discomfort of facing these ugly things head on so your mind can heal.

Ruminating thoughts are a miserable thing, I know. They don't have to cause you unnecessary suffering anymore, however! You can make these miserable things work in your favor. You can use them as a tool towards healing!