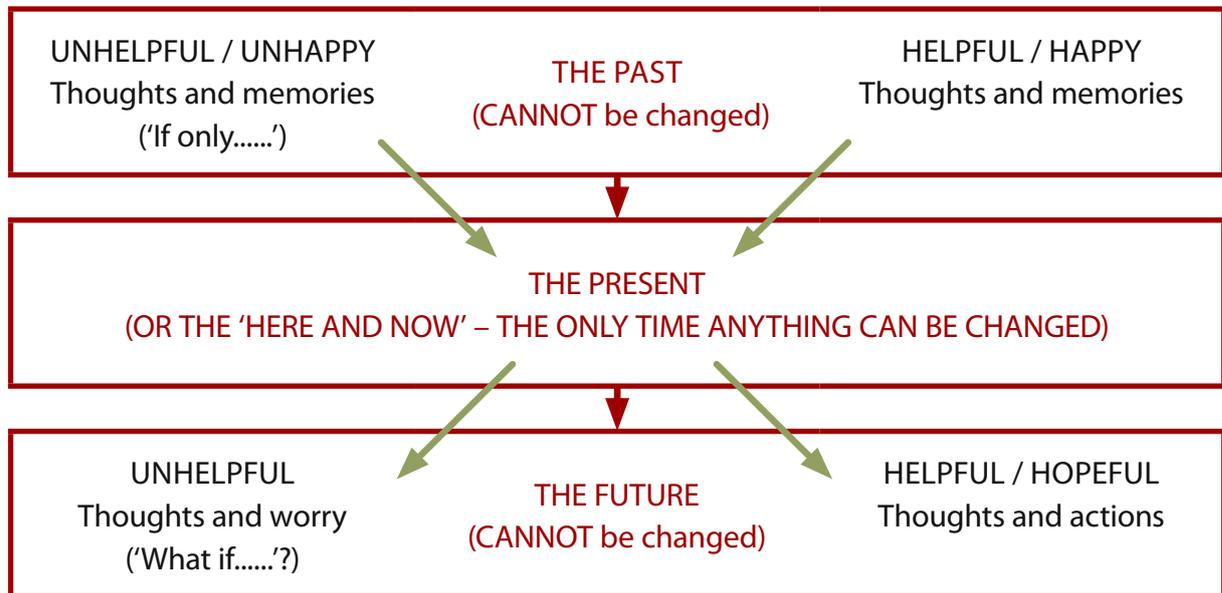


Changing Unhelpful Thinking – Guilt & Worry



The diagram shows how we can make helpful or unhelpful choices in our thoughts about the past and the future.

- We can choose to feel sad, guilty and angry about things which cannot be changed because they are in the past ('If only I hadn't been bullied at school' or 'If only I hadn't changed my job') – instead, we can choose to learn what we can from the past and then let it go.
- We can choose to worry about things which haven't happened yet, and may never happen ('What if my partner leaves me?' or 'What if I get made redundant?') – instead we can choose to prepare for an uncertain future as best we can and get on with making the most of the present moment.

Remember – you can't change the past or the future!

So what can you do to stop yourself going back over the past and feeling upset, or worrying about things which haven't happened yet?

1. Take responsibility for your own thoughts, feelings and behaviour.
Other people can only make you feel guilty and worried if you let them. Just because they are upset doesn't mean that YOU have to be. You can choose not to feel like this. It doesn't mean that you don't care – just that you have chosen to think in a more helpful and positive way.
2. Accept that nobody is perfect.
It's only human to make mistakes. We have all done it and are likely to make more in the future. Learn what you can from your own and other people's mistakes change what you can and approach the future hopefully and positively

Changing Unhelpful Thinking – Guilt & Worry

Continued...

3. Allow yourself some 'worry time' or 'guilt time' each day.
Whenever a worry or regret comes into your mind, tell yourself to put it off until the time you have chosen. This stops you feeling unhappy all the time.
4. Keep things in proportion.
Ask yourself how much time you want to spend worrying about things you cannot change. Think back about all the worries you have had which have never happened. How important will your fears be next week, or in a year's time?
5. Accept that unhelpful thoughts might keep coming back.
Trying to get rid of them could make them worse. Don't try to get rid of them, just let them be and fill your mind with thoughts, people and activities that make you happy.

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