

Are you creating a miserable life?

Are you making yourself miserable? It seems like a silly question, after all, who wants to be miserable, right? So why would you make yourself feel that way. But the truth is that is what millions of people do every day without knowing it. How does this happen?

It's usually innocent enough. Someone hurts our feelings, and we then run the movie of what happened over in our brains feeding all the feelings of hurt and growing them in intensity over time. People, it seems, do this in order to release themselves from the situation that is causing them pain. They seem to believe that if they think about the situation over and over that it will change what has happened. But it changes nothing, and instead serves to inflame even more our already burning emotions.

According to *The Art of Happiness*, by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Howard C. Cutler, this self-created kind of languishing in that type suffering creates a lot of unnecessary misery. Here are the Dalai Lama's thought on the subject:

"We can see that there are many ways in which we actively contribute to our own experience or mental unrest and suffering. Although, in general, mental and motional suffering can come naturally, it is often our own reinforcement of those negative emotions that makes them so much worse. For instance when we have anger or hatred towards a person, there is less likelihood of its developing to a very intense degree if we leave it unattended. However, if we think about the projected injustices done to us, the ways in which we have been unfairly treated, and we keep on thinking about them over and over, then that feeds the hatred. It makes the hatred very powerful and intense.

The Dalai Lama goes on to say that we often focus too much on small things, and in doing so we cause ourselves to miss the really important things in life. He says that whether you suffer or not depends in large part on how you respond to a given situation. For instance, if you're at work and you find out that one of your co-workers has been gossiping about you, if you become angry or hurt, then you are essentially destroying your own peace of mind. Your pain then becomes your own personal creation. However, if you resist the desire to express yourself negatively, and let the situation pass, then you have protected yourself from indulging in those intense feelings of hurt.

"You may not always be able to avoid difficult situations, but you can modify the extent to which you suffer by how you choose to respond to the situation," he says.

