



Going in Circles

By Lehan Stemmet, Ph.D.

Being anchored to something is not necessarily a good or a bad thing, however, it depends very heavily on whether what you are anchored to is a good or a bad thing. Over the years I have met many people who are sometimes very firmly anchored to things. Some of them anchored to good things and others anchored to things dragging them down, preventing them from moving to a better place and sometimes things drowning them in a storm when the waters start rising. Your thoughts, feelings and behaviours could be anchored to things helping you or hindering you, and sometimes to things dragging you down.

In another piece I have noted the consistent findings around rumination reported in the research literature, in both laboratory and natural settings. Rumination could easily be classified as a negative emotional response, with a firm anchor in the way that you think about things, events, people, etc. Rumination is not good when it focusses on negative things. The opposite of this would be meditation, and as more research results are being reported it is clear that prayer is an incredibly effective way to meditate.

There are also other things you could be anchored in. Think about some habitual behaviours. Those behaviours which you do not even consciously think about any longer. One of the principles we talk about in the Deal With It framework is that we often find that changing behaviour is a powerful way to loosen the anchor-hold of some of the negative things in our lives. As I mentioned in my TEDx talk, you can always wait until your thoughts change or until you feel better, before you behave better, but often you need to consider changing your behaviour in order to feel better and consequently to think better.

Consider today what behaviours, feelings and thoughts keep you anchored in a specific and negative way of feeling and thinking. How and what can you do to change that. Can you behave differently? Sometimes I find people are also trying to pull so hard against that anchor to try and free themselves, when they actually need to stop pulling to loosen the anchor from whatever it has hooked onto. In some instances they need to be more drastic and cut the anchor loose completely in order to find another anchor and place to hook it onto.

If you are going to paddle hard, you might as well paddle in circles around something good rather than something not so good. We go in circles around whatever we anchor ourselves to. When you find something good to anchor to, ensure your anchor and chains are strong and maintained. Be deliberate and be consistent and if you need to, find someone to help you with this!