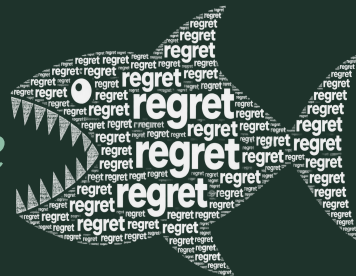


I Don't Have Time to Maintain These Regrets

“I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.” John 10:10



Regret must be fed to survive.

We rehearse:

We replay the scene, sharpening the details each time we tell it to ourselves.

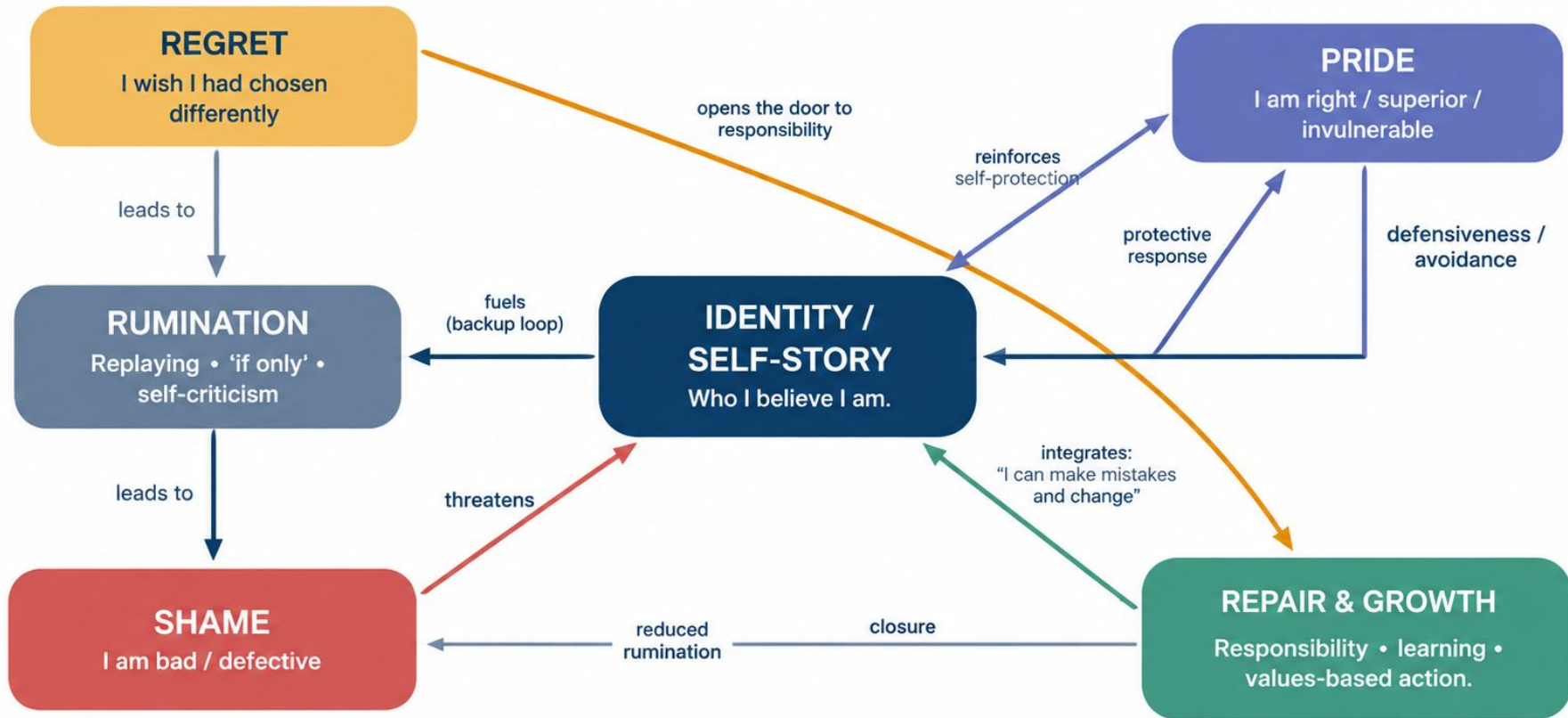
We re-litigate:

We argue the case again — new evidence, new verdict, same defendant.

We revise:

We build a better version of the past that never existed, then grieve it.





Maladaptive loop:

regret → rumination → shame → threatened identity → defensive pride / more rumination.



Adaptive pathway:

regret → responsibility → repair → integrated identity.

DEFINITION

Regret: The ability to imagine a better past

- **Counterfactual thinking**
- **The orbitofrontal cortex**

Regret is not a character flaw. It is a God-built feature of a mind capable of imagining better — it's an ability to weigh options and change so survival is more likely.

Regret was built to be a signal, not a residence

Prediction error

The brain compares outcome to expectation, flags the mismatch, and updates its model so the next decision is better informed. Felt once, regret is instruction.

THE MECHANISM

The maintenance loop: how the brain keeps regret in the room

1 The mind idles

2 Self-focus turns negative

3 The loop deepens the groove



THE BRIDGE

*“The thief comes only to steal and kill
and destroy;
I have come that they may have life,
and have it abundantly.”*

John 10:10

THE DIAGNOSIS

Scripture distinguishes 2 kinds of sorrow

*“**Godly** sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but **worldly** sorrow brings death.”*

2 Corinthians 7:10

TWO MEN, ONE WEEK

Both failed Jesus... and had regrets.

Judas

Matthew 27:3–5

Peter

Matthew 26:75;
John 21:15–19



The difference was not the size of the failure, but the direction they carried it.

Our record has been closed.

Romans 8:1

“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

Lamentations 3:22-23

“Because of the Lord’s great love, we are not consumed... his compassions are new every morning.”

God's attention is on what He is doing next

“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.”

Paul's method: one thing, forward

“But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

Phil. 3:13-14

**God does not merely forgive your history
— He recruits it**

**Regret says the past is wasted. The
gospel says it is raw material.
Nothing surrendered to God is
thrown away.**

Five takeaways

1. Regret is maintained, not merely suffered.
2. Regret is a signal, not an address.
3. Shame and godly sorrow are not the same.
4. The verdict is already in. It's not condemnation.
5. Forgetting means replacing, not erasing.

TWO SPIRITUAL STEPS

Change where you take the sorrow

ONE

Confess once, receive the verdict

Take the regret to God specifically and out loud — then stop. Confession that never ends is rumination in religious vocabulary.

- Name the act, not your identity — “I did,” not “I am”
- Read the verdict aloud over yourself: Romans 8:1; 1 John 1:9
- Ask a trusted believer to hear it once and speak the forgiveness back to you

TWO

Offer the history for use

Move from “forgive my past” to “use my past.” Ask God to recruit the very chapter you would delete.

- Pray Genesis 50:20 over your own story by name
- Identify one person who needs exactly the mercy you received
- Take one step of service that only your history qualifies you for

THE INVITATION

You are not required to keep what Christ has already carried.

“Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” — Philippians 1:6