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## RESEARCH DIALOGUES

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### Introduction to Research Dialogues

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As March (1978) noted, all decisions involve an element of predicting one's future feelings. A feeling that looms particularly large in many decisions is the possibility of future regret, and decision makers have long been assumed to be motivated to minimize its likelihood (e.g., Bell, 1982; Loomes & Sugden, 1982). Regret has received considerable attention in psychology, marketing, and economics, and Zeelenberg and Pieters (2007) review what has been learned. Their target article proposes an integrative theory of regret regulation that predicts the emergence and intensity of regret as well as its cognitive and behavioral consequences. Of particular interest are the strategies that decision makers use to regulate future and current regret and their implications for consumer decision making (see also Yi & Baumgartner, 2004). The commentaries by Inman (2007) and Roese, Summerville, and Fessel (2007) open a lively debate about core facets of regret regulation theory: Does the regulation of emotion as a proximal variable serve the regulation of behavior as a more distant variable (as Zeelenberg and Pieters propose) or should the regulation of emotion be conceptualized in a broader motivational context of behavior regulation (as Roese and colleagues argue)? Would consumers be better served by strategies that increase rather than decrease anticipatory regret (as Inman

suggests)? To what extent can we improve our understanding of regret through theories of counterfactual reasoning? Pieters and Zeelenberg (2007) respond to these issues with an update of their theorizing in form of "regret regulation theory 1.1."

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