

Memory-training for depression

Making memories more specific

SESSION ONE

Depression is always associated with memory problems. Here we discuss three types of memory problems that are frequently present in individuals who feel depressed or down.

1. Problems of attention and concentration

A large part of the memory problems in depression are due to problems with attention or concentration. When someone is depressed they find it harder to keep concentrating. For example, when they read many people with depression find it hard to keep concentrating (especially with longer pieces of text). Watching a film on TV or listening to others in conversations are other examples of situations where individuals typically find it hard to concentrate.

These attentional problems make it harder for things [and events – this is not in the original but I would add it because we don't use the word things in English as you do in Dutch/Flemish] to be stored in memory. And at a later point in time these things [/events] will be remembered less accurately. Imagine for example that someone tells you all kinds of things about what happened in their family during the past week. If you are depressed you will find it difficult to keep paying attention to the conversation for extended periods of time; as a consequence it will be more difficult to memorise the things that the other person is telling you. It will appear as if you forgot these things, whereas in reality you were unable to store them in your memory in the first place because you were unable to concentrate on the conversation.

But even if you did encode those things in your memory it can be a challenging task to retrieve them from your memory at a later time point. This is because recalling memories also requires a lot of effort and commitment (and thus concentration!) if you are depressed. Therefore, problems in attention and concentration are why remembering things is harder for individuals with depression.

Box 1.1 Rita

Rita is 38-years old and has been feeling depressed for a month. There are very few things [again I may substitute this with "activities"] which she still finds pleasurable. For most part of the day she feels down. She would prefer to stay in bed. On top of this she sleeps very badly – she has problems going to sleep: she lays there ruminating about things. Once she does fall asleep she wakes up frequently. She has been admitted to a clinic to treat her depression.

Rita's husband knows she likes to read, and brings her a novel on his next visit to the clinic. As Rita starts reading the book at night she notices that it takes a lot of energy out of her to keep her attention on the reading. When she turns a page she finds it hard to remember what was said on the previous page.

Before becoming depressed Rita read the newspaper every day. In the clinic she tries looking at the newspaper once a day. But she finds it challenging to read. The large titles and some shorter articles she manages to read. Longer articles however take her a lot of effort to read. There is nothing wrong with Rita's eyes. Only the problems with attention due to her depression cause her difficulties concentrating on longer articles in the newspaper. Afterwards she often does not remember all the details of what she has read.

2. Mostly negative memories

A second [type of] memory problem in depression is not so much associated with attention problems but rather with the depressed or dark mood itself. We know from scientific research and from experience with individuals with depression that these people mostly remember negative or unpleasant things [events – see above] from their past. Put differently the depressed mood state, which people experience colours their memories negatively. This does not mean that individuals with depression only had negative experiences in their past. It is simply due to the fact that someone in a negative mood remembers negative events much more quickly compared to positive events.

That is if one feels down or depressed, one remembers the past very ‘tinted’: due to the negative mood (as a consequence of the depression) one remembers mostly negative facts or events. More pleasant experiences or events are more difficult to retrieve from memory when someone is depressed. Due to the depressed mood it is difficult for positive memories to come to mind.

Box 1.2 Roger

Roger is 55-years old and is staying at a clinic to treat his depression. During a break on the ward he starts a chat with someone from the nursing staff. They talk about the past. It is noticeable that Roger can bring to mind mostly negative memories from his own past: his recent redundancy, the divorce from his first wife, the difficult neighbour that keeps hassling him about the division of their gardens, etc... When the nurse asks Roger about pleasant experiences in his past he has to think about it. After a while he tells her how proud he felt on the day he became a grandfather for the first time, and how much fun he had on the wedding day of his daughter a few years ago.

The above holds not only true for memories from the past. It is also the case that a depressed mood leads to fewer pleasant experiences being stored in memory. The more pleasant experiences that are made when one feels depressed are less likely to be stored in memory. This means that it is not only the memories from the past that are “negatively tinted” but the storage of new memories is also “negatively tinted”, in people who feel depressed.

Box 1.3 Ellen

Ellen is 27-years old. She has been feeling down and listless for a while. She doesn't feel like anything. Her GP has referred her to the clinic for treatment of her depression. Ellen likes to draw. On one of the mornings during occupational therapy she makes a painting of a meadow close to her home. It is a beautiful painting. The therapist and the other patients all compliment her on her painting. On the same day Ellen drops a glass of water during the lunch break in the dining hall. Everyone looks at her. Because Ellen has a depression and therefore feels down most of the day she has a good chance to remember the unpleasant experience of dropping and breaking a glass. However, she has less of a chance to remember the pleasant experience of being complimented on her painting.

3. Overgeneral memory

3.1 What does “overgeneral memory” mean?

A third and final memory problem in depression is that events from the past are remembered in a general or overgeneral fashion rather than with specificity. This is called overgeneral memory or memories.

Specifically, this means that if a person with depression is asked to remember specific experiences (events from a specific moment or day) she/he will find that very difficult. They are more likely to name a general memory. This means that individuals with depression have overgeneral memories more often compared to people without depression. They find it much harder than non-depressed individuals to remember a specific moment or event. For example, they are more likely to say “when I am with friends, I feel good” compared to something very specific “a few months ago three good friends of mine and I spent a day in Brussels”. Another example is that someone who is depressed is more likely to think “when I let others down, I feel bad” compared to a specific event “last year I could not attend my best friend’s wedding and I felt bad all evening”.

Box 1.4 Steven

Steven is 33-years old and suffers from depression. When the psychologist asks Steven whether he can remember an instant when he was happy, Steven replies “when I am with my family, I feel good”. When the psychologist asks Steven whether can remember a specific situation or day he has to think for a long time. Only after a while he remembers such a specific incident: “last week on Wednesday, at the birthday of my youngest son I felt happy”. The same thing happened when Steven was asked whether he could remember an instance when he felt very sad. Again he first provides a general memory “when I disappoint someone I usually feel sad”. After some probing questions from the psychologist Steven can recall a specific memory “last month when I had to cancel a diner with a good friend I felt sad”.

3.2 An overgeneral memory remains even after the depression is over

The memory problems that are described under points 1 (attention) and 2 (mostly negative memories) disappear or improve when symptoms of depression alleviate. This means that as soon as a person with depression is starting to get better their concentration and attention will improve, and they will remember more positive memories. That is the negative and positive memories will be balanced again.

However, they will still have an “overgeneral memory”. This means that even though the depression is gone the person who had a depression will have overgeneral memories more often compared to those who were never depressed.

Overgeneral memories are thus not simply a symptom of depression but are maintained when someone feels better again. Even when someone is no longer depressed he or she still more likely to recall an overgeneral rather than a specific memory compared to someone who was never depressed. Overgeneral memory then is not only a characteristic of individuals with a depression but also of those who have been depressed in the past (and probably of people who have an increased to become depressed).

3.3 Why is an overgeneral memory a “problem”?

At first sight an overgeneral memory looks fairly innocent, or at least it is not immediately obvious why it should be a **“problem”**. However, scientific research has shown that an **overgeneral memory** is **disadvantageous** for several reasons.

Firstly, it is the case that people with an overgeneral memory suffer from depressive feeling for longer or have a higher chance to develop depressive symptoms again in the future. This is why researchers consider overgeneral memory as a sort of **vulnerability** for depression. Remembering memories in a general rather than specific fashion impedes or delays the recovery from depression.

Secondly overgeneral memories make it harder to **solve problems**. When you are looking for the solution to a problem you call on your past experiences. If you can use a many specific memories, you have a better chance to find a good solution compared to a few vague and general memories.

Thirdly, overgeneral memories also make someone’s **vision of the future** less specific and vaguer. This is common in individuals with depression: their vision of the future is not concrete and often empty or vague and general.

Fourthly, recalling overgeneral memories makes thoughts non-specific, vague and general. This type of general thinking can start rumination.

Fifthly, it probably also the case that overgeneral memories **impair a healthy processing** of unpleasant experiences. This is because unpleasant experiences are simply processed at an overgeneral level and not specifically enough.

In short, there are numerous **scientific indicators that overgeneral memories are disadvantageous**.

Considering the fact that an overgeneral memory is (a) disadvantageous, (b) remains even when the depression [in English I might be more inclined to refer to symptoms], and (c) can make individuals vulnerable to develop symptoms of depression again, it seems to be a good thing to reduce overgenerality and train memory to become more specific.

The aim of this training (4 sessions) is to teach people who suffer from depressive symptoms to remember personal experiences more specifically. We are trying to make the “disadvantageous” memory more specific.

In other words we will aim to reduce the vulnerability of an overgeneral memory and also hope to also (a) speed up recovery from depression, (b) improve problem solving, (c) make vision of the future less vague and (d) reduce rumination.

These type of exercises and trainings to make memories more specific have to date almost never been applied to individuals with depression. It seems however a very sensible aim based on all the scientific evidence that exists to show that an overgeneral memory is disadvantageous. There has only been one study which showed that training individuals with depression to recall more specific memories improved quality of life and reduced depressive symptoms.

RECALLING SPECIFIC MEMORIES FOR WORDS: INSTRUCTIONS

This is always about memories for events that **you** experienced **yourself**. The aim is for you to remember such an event for each of the words. The event can be recent or it could have happened a long time ago (e.g., 15 years).

The event can be a significant moment or completely ordinary and trivial. What is important is that you recall a memory for a **specific** event.

Specific means that the memory refers to a **single well-defined event** that happened on a specific day (but that **did not last for more than a day**).

For example, for the word 'good' you could say 'I always feel good at parties'. But that response is not specific because it does not refer to a **single well-defined event**, which happened on a specific day. It would be a better response if you said 'I felt good at Veerle's last party'. That is a specific event. You could also answer 'last summer I felt good', but that refers to an event that lasted for more than one day. A specific event is an event that happened at a **specific moment** and that was shorter than **a whole day**. It is also important that you always try to remember **different** memories.

TO RECAP:

A **SPECIFIC MEMORY** REFERS TO

A **PERSONAL MEMORY**

OF ONE **EVENT**

THAT TOOK PLACE ON A **SPECIFIC DAY**

OR AT A **SPECIFIC MOMENT**

A FEW BAD AND GOOD EXAMPLES OF SPECIFIC MEMORIES

DESK

WRONG: "I work at my desk every day"

WRONG: "In the past I used to always do my homework on my bed instead of at my desk"

GOOD: "Two months ago I got a new desk at my work on a Monday"

DRAWING

WRONG: "I like to draw"

WRONG: "At school I used to draw on large sheets of paper"

GOOD: "One day last year I received a drawing of a butterfly from the daughter of a good friend of mine"

BORING

WRONG: "I am boring"

WRONG: "I used to find school really boring"

GOOD: "A few weeks ago I had to attend a lecture in England in a small hall; the lecture was very boring; I was yawning the whole time."

CHEERFUL

WRONG: "I was always cheerful as a child"

WRONG: "When I wake up and see that the weather is nice I am cheerful"

GOOD: "Last year when I went to the Zoo in Planckendael, I was very cheerful in the morning"

EXERCISE 1 – SESSION 1

A specific memory for the word **BIKE**

EXTRA DETAILS for my memory for the word **BIKE**

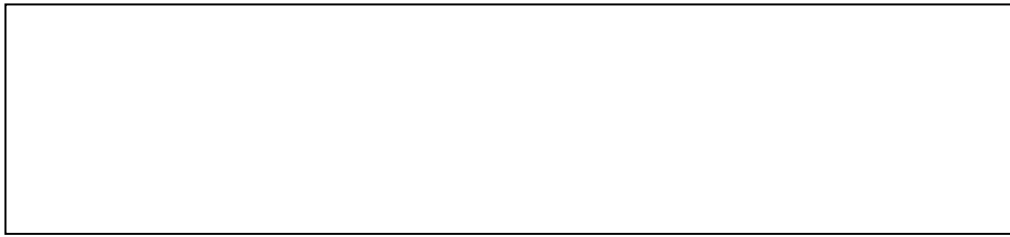
A specific memory for the word **HAPPY**

EXTRA DETAILS for my memory for the word **HAPPY**

EXERCISES AFTER SESSION 1

1. Read pages XX-XX again on memory problems in depression
2. Think of and write down specific memories for the 10 words on pages XX-XX
3. Each evening think of and write down a 'specific memory of the day' on pages XX-XX

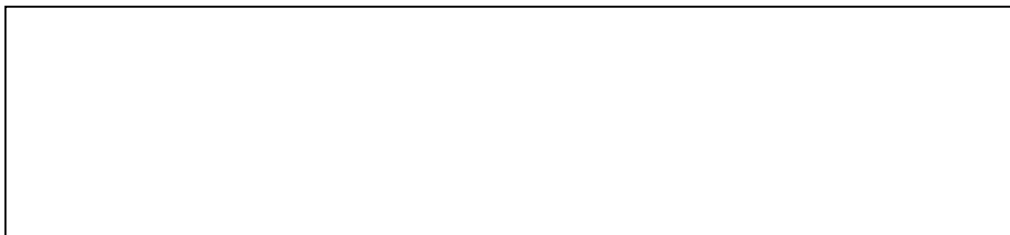
1. A specific memory for the word PROUD:



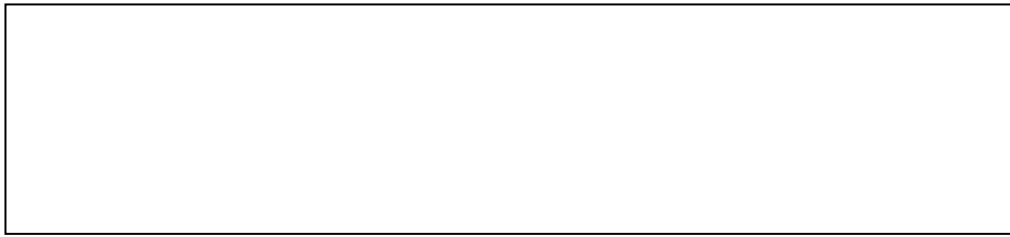
Now take the time to form as detailed an image as possible of your memory for the word **PROUD**. Try to form a detailed image of that situation or event, as if the event is playing as a movie in your mind. Take your time to imagine the memory as if you are now truly in that situation. Evoke images of the situation as vividly as possible.

Now write down some extra details you can remember for your memory for the word **PROUD**. Make the memory as specific and detailed as possible: Where (location)? When? Who else was present? What happened exactly? Who did what? What else could you see?...

EXTRA DETAILS of my memory for the word **PROUD**:



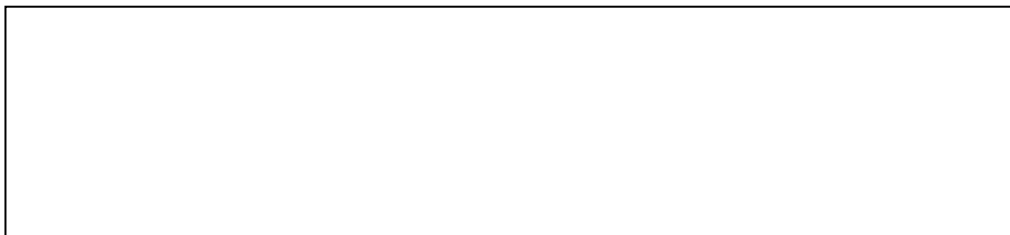
2. A specific memory for the word ANIMAL:



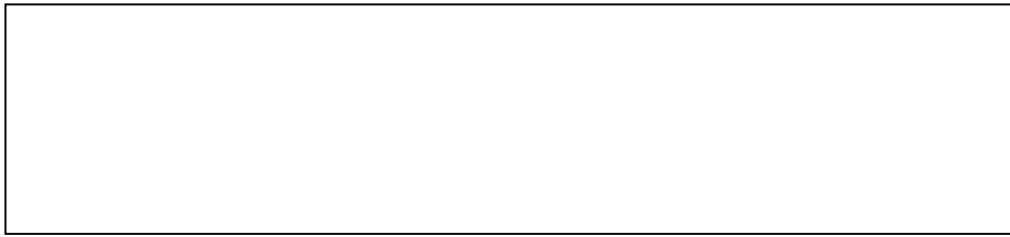
Now take the time to form as detailed an image as possible of your memory for the word **ANIMAL**. Try to form a detailed image of that situation or event, as if the event is playing as a movie in your mind. Take your time to imagine the memory as if you are now truly in that situation. Evoke images of the situation as vividly as possible.

Now write down some extra details you can remember for your memory for the word **ANIMAL**. Make the memory as specific and detailed as possible: Where (location)? When? Who else was present? What happened exactly? Who did what? What else could you see?...

EXTRA DETAILS of my memory for the word **ANIMAL**:



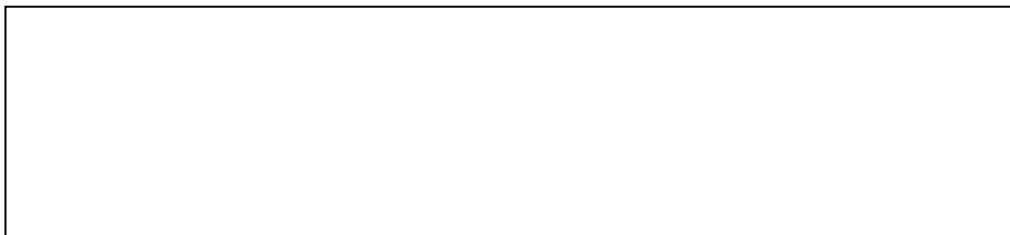
3. A specific memory for the word ENJOY:



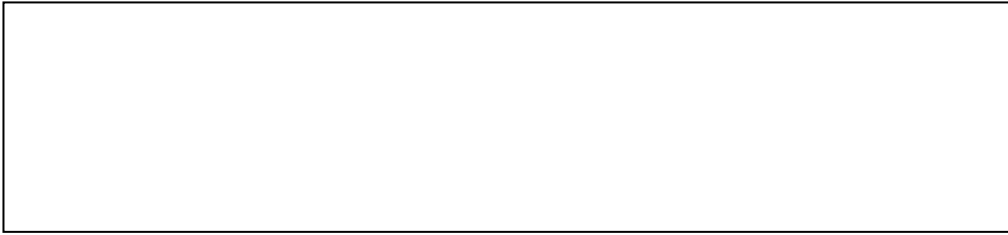
Now take the time to form as detailed an image as possible of your memory for the word **ENJOY**. Try to form a detailed image of that situation or event, as if the event is playing as a movie in your mind. Take your time to imagine the memory as if you are now truly in that situation. Evoke images of the situation as vividly as possible.

Now write down some extra details you can remember for your memory for the word **ENJOY**. Make the memory as specific and detailed as possible: Where (location)? When? Who else was present? What happened exactly? Who did what? What else could you see?...

EXTRA DETAILS of my memory for the word **ENJOY**:



4. A specific memory for the word CAR:



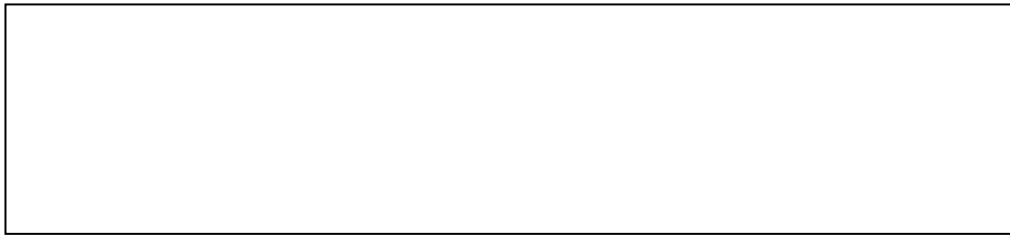
Now take the time to form as detailed an image as possible of your memory for the word **CAR**. Try to form a detailed image of that situation or event, as if the event is playing as a movie in your mind. Take your time to imagine the memory as if you are now truly in that situation. Evoke images of the situation as vividly as possible.

Now write down some extra details you can remember for your memory for the word **CAR**. Make the memory as specific and detailed as possible: Where (location)? When? Who else was present? What happened exactly? Who did what? What else could you see?...

EXTRA DETAILS of my memory for the word **CAR**:



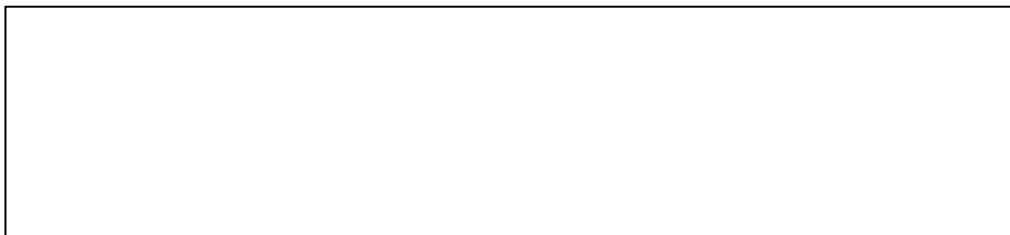
5. A specific memory for the word RELAX:



Now take the time to form as detailed an image as possible of your memory for the word **RELAX**. Try to form a detailed image of that situation or event, as if the event is playing as a movie in your mind. Take your time to imagine the memory as if you are now truly in that situation. Evoke images of the situation as vividly as possible.

Now write down some extra details you can remember for your memory for the word **RELAX**. Make the memory as specific and detailed as possible: Where (location)? When? Who else was present? What happened exactly? Who did what? What else could you see?...

EXTRA DETAILS of my memory for the word **RELAX**:



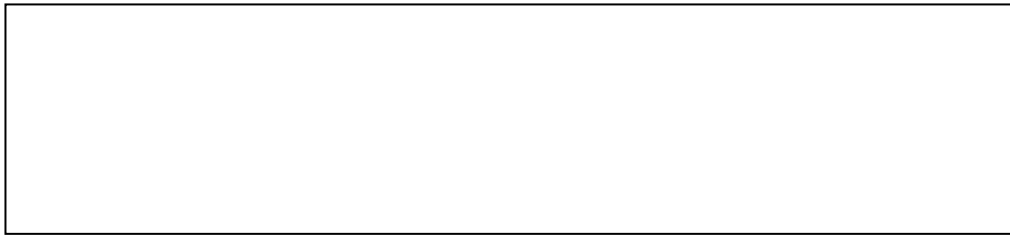
6. A specific memory for the word GIFT:

Now take the time to form as detailed an image as possible of your memory for the word **GIFT**. Try to form a detailed image of that situation or event, as if the event is playing as a movie in your mind. Take your time to imagine the memory as if you are now truly in that situation. Evoke images of the situation as vividly as possible.

Now write down some extra details you can remember for your memory for the word **GIFT**. Make the memory as specific and detailed as possible: Where (location)? When? Who else was present? What happened exactly? Who did what? What else could you see?...

EXTRA DETAILS of my memory for the word **GIFT**:

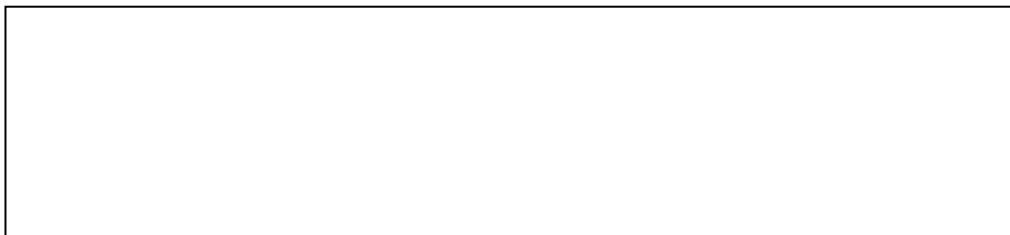
7. A specific memory for the word FUNNY:



Now take the time to form as detailed an image as possible of your memory for the word **FUNNY**. Try to form a detailed image of that situation or event, as if the event is playing as a movie in your mind. Take your time to imagine the memory as if you are now truly in that situation. Evoke images of the situation as vividly as possible.

Now write down some extra details you can remember for your memory for the word **FUNNY**. Make the memory as specific and detailed as possible: Where (location)? When? Who else was present? What happened exactly? Who did what? What else could you see?...

EXTRA DETAILS of my memory for the word **FUNNY**:



8. A specific memory for the word PARTY:

Now take the time to form as detailed an image as possible of your memory for the word **PARTY**. Try to form a detailed image of that situation or event, as if the event is playing as a movie in your mind. Take your time to imagine the memory as if you are now truly in that situation. Evoke images of the situation as vividly as possible.

Now write down some extra details you can remember for your memory for the word **PARTY**. Make the memory as specific and detailed as possible: Where (location)? When? Who else was present? What happened exactly? Who did what? What else could you see?...

EXTRA DETAILS of my memory for the word **PARTY**:

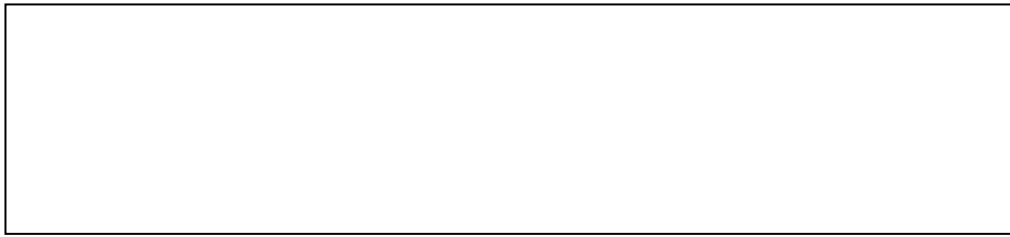
9. A specific memory for the word CHEERFUL:

Now take the time to form as detailed an image as possible of your memory for the word **CHEERFUL**. Try to form a detailed image of that situation or event, as if the event is playing as a movie in your mind. Take your time to imagine the memory as if you are now truly in that situation. Evoke images of the situation as vividly as possible.

Now write down some extra details you can remember for your memory for the word **CHEERFUL**. Make the memory as specific and detailed as possible: Where (location)? When? Who else was present? What happened exactly? Who did what? What else could you see?...

EXTRA DETAILS of my memory for the word **CHEERFUL**:

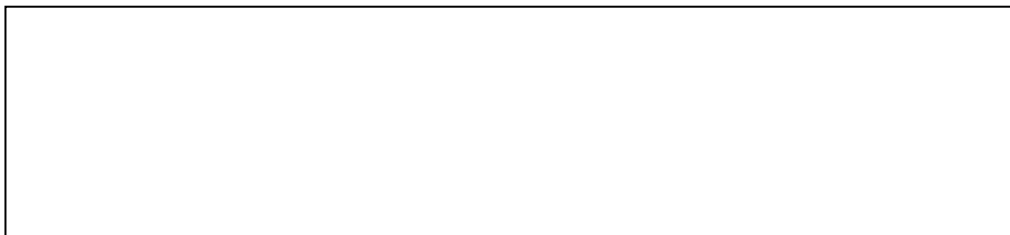
10. A specific memory for the word HOUSE:



Now take the time to form as detailed an image as possible of your memory for the word **HOUSE**. Try to form a detailed image of that situation or event, as if the event is playing as a movie in your mind. Take your time to imagine the memory as if you are now truly in that situation. Evoke images of the situation as vividly as possible.

Now write down some extra details you can remember for your memory for the word **HOUSE**. Make the memory as specific and detailed as possible: Where (location)? When? Who else was present? What happened exactly? Who did what? What else could you see?...

EXTRA DETAILS of my memory for the word **HOUSE**:



SPECIFIC MEMORY OF THE DAY: DAY,/...../20.....

Now take the time to form as detailed an image as possible of your specific memory of the day. Try to form a detailed image of that situation or event, as if the event is playing as a movie in your mind. Take your time to imagine the memory as if you are now truly in that situation. Evoke images of the situation as vividly as possible.

Now write down some extra details you can remember for your specific memory of the day. Make the memory as specific and detailed as possible: Where (location)? When? Who else was present? What happened exactly? Who did what? What else could you see?...

EXTRA DETAILS for your specific memory of the day

SPECIFIC MEMORY OF THE DAY: DAY,/...../20.....

Now take the time to form as detailed an image as possible of your specific memory of the day. Try to form a detailed image of that situation or event, as if the event is playing as a movie in your mind. Take your time to imagine the memory as if you are now truly in that situation. Evoke images of the situation as vividly as possible.

Now write down some extra details you can remember for your specific memory of the day. Make the memory as specific and detailed as possible: Where (location)? When? Who else was present? What happened exactly? Who did what? What else could you see?...

EXTRA DETAILS for your specific memory of the day

SPECIFIC MEMORY OF THE DAY: DAY,/...../20.....

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Now write down some extra details you can remember for your specific memory of the day. Make the memory as specific and detailed as possible: Where (location)? When? Who else was present? What happened exactly? Who did what? What else could you see?...

EXTRA DETAILS for your specific memory of the day

SPECIFIC MEMORY OF THE DAY: DAY,/...../20.....

Now take the time to form as detailed an image as possible of your specific memory of the day. Try to form a detailed image of that situation or event, as if the event is playing as a movie in your mind. Take your time to imagine the memory as if you are now truly in that situation. Evoke images of the situation as vividly as possible.

Now write down some extra details you can remember for your specific memory of the day. Make the memory as specific and detailed as possible: Where (location)? When? Who else was present? What happened exactly? Who did what? What else could you see?...

EXTRA DETAILS for your specific memory of the day

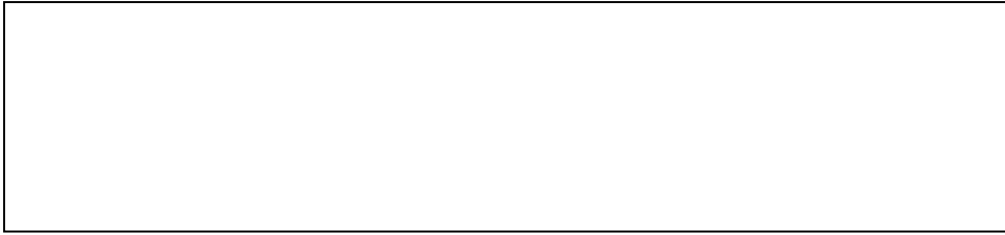
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Now write down some extra details you can remember for your specific memory of the day. Make the memory as specific and detailed as possible: Where (location)? When? Who else was present? What happened exactly? Who did what? What else could you see?...

EXTRA DETAILS for your specific memory of the day

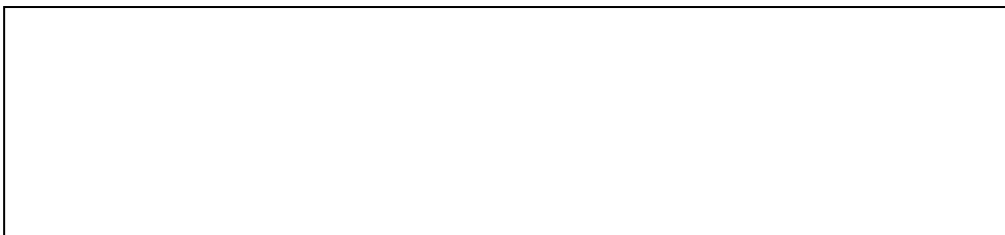
SPECIFIC MEMORY OF THE DAY: DAY,/...../20.....



Now take the time to form as detailed an image as possible of your specific memory of the day. Try to form a detailed image of that situation or event, as if the event is playing as a movie in your mind. Take your time to imagine the memory as if you are now truly in that situation. Evoke images of the situation as vividly as possible.

Now write down some extra details you can remember for your specific memory of the day. Make the memory as specific and detailed as possible: Where (location)? When? Who else was present? What happened exactly? Who did what? What else could you see?...

EXTRA DETAILS for your specific memory of the day



SPECIFIC MEMORY OF THE DAY: DAY,/...../20.....

Now take the time to form as detailed an image as possible of your specific memory of the day. Try to form a detailed image of that situation or event, as if the event is playing as a movie in your mind. Take your time to imagine the memory as if you are now truly in that situation. Evoke images of the situation as vividly as possible.

Now write down some extra details you can remember for your specific memory of the day. Make the memory as specific and detailed as possible: Where (location)? When? Who else was present? What happened exactly? Who did what? What else could you see?...

EXTRA DETAILS for your specific memory of the day

SESSION TWO

EXERCISE 1a – SESSION 2

A first specific memory for the word **RESTAURANT**

EXTRA DETAILS for my first memory for the word **RESTAURANT**

EXERCISE 1b – SESSION 2

A second specific memory for the word **RESTAURANT**

EXTRA DETAILS for my second memory for the word **RESTAURANT**

A *first* specific memory for the word **RELIEVED**

EXTRA DETAILS for my first memory for the word **RELIEVED**

A *second* specific memory for the word **RELIEVED**

EXTRA DETAILS for my second memory for the word **RELIEVED**

A first specific memory for the word **TRIP**

EXTRA DETAILS for my first memory for the word **TRIP**

A second specific memory for the word **TRIP**

EXTRA DETAILS for my second memory for the word **TRIP**

A first specific memory for the word **BRAVE**

EXTRA DETAILS for my first memory for the word **BRAVE**

A second specific memory for the word **BRAVE**

EXTRA DETAILS for my second memory for the word **BRAVE**

EXERCISES AFTER SESSION 2

1. Think of and write down **two** specific memories for the 10 words on pages XX-XX
2. Each evening think of and write down **two** 'specific memories of the day' on pages XX-XX

1a. A first specific memory for the word CONTENT

EXTRA DETAILS for my first memory for the word **CONTENT**

1b. A second specific memory for the word CONTENT

EXTRA DETAILS for my second memory for the word **CONTENT**

2a. A first specific memory for the word OUTING

EXTRA DETAILS for my first memory for the word **OUTING**

2b. A second specific memory for the word OUTING

EXTRA DETAILS for my second memory for the word **OUTING**

3a. A first specific memory for the word SOCIAL

EXTRA DETAILS for my first memory for the word **SOCIAL**

3b. A second specific memory for the word SOCIAL

EXTRA DETAILS for my second memory for the word **SOCIAL**

4a. A first specific memory for the word PERFORM

EXTRA DETAILS for my first memory for the word **PERFORM**

4b. A second specific memory for the word PERFORM

EXTRA DETAILS for my second memory for the word **PERFORM**

5a. A first specific memory for the word SUCCESSFUL

EXTRA DETAILS for my first memory for the word **SUCCESSFUL**

5b. A second specific memory for the word SUCCESSFUL

EXTRA DETAILS for my second memory for the word **SUCCESSFUL**

6a. A first specific memory for the word TELEPHONE

EXTRA DETAILS for my first memory for the word **TELEPHONE**

6b. A second specific memory for the word TELEPHONE

EXTRA DETAILS for my second memory for the word **TELEPHONE**

7a. A first specific memory for the word ENTHUSIASTIC

EXTRA DETAILS for my first memory for the word **ENTHUSIASTIC**

7b. A second specific memory for the word ENTHUSIASTIC

EXTRA DETAILS for my second memory for the word **ENTHUSIASTIC**

8a. A first specific memory for the word TRAIN

EXTRA DETAILS for my first memory for the word **TRAIN**

8b. A second specific memory for the word TRAIN

EXTRA DETAILS for my second memory for the word **TRAIN**

9a. A first specific memory for the word MERRY

EXTRA DETAILS for my first memory for the word **MERRY**

9b. A second specific memory for the word MERRY

EXTRA DETAILS for my second memory for the word **MERRY**

10a. A first **specific memory** for the word **TELEVISION**

EXTRA DETAILS for my first memory for the word **TELEVISION**

10b. A second **specific memory** for the word **TELEVISION**

EXTRA DETAILS for my second memory for the word **TELEVISION**

2 SPECIFIC MEMORY OF THE DAY: DAY,/...../20.....

Your FIRST **specific memory** of the day

EXTRA DETAILS for your first specific memory of the day

Your SECOND **specific memory** of the day

EXTRA DETAILS for your second specific memory of the day

2 SPECIFIC MEMORY OF THE DAY: DAY,/...../20.....

Your FIRST **specific memory** of the day

EXTRA DETAILS for your first specific memory of the day

Your SECOND **specific memory** of the day

EXTRA DETAILS for your second specific memory of the day

2 SPECIFIC MEMORY OF THE DAY: DAY,/...../20.....

Your FIRST **specific memory** of the day

EXTRA DETAILS for your first specific memory of the day

Your SECOND **specific memory** of the day

EXTRA DETAILS for your second specific memory of the day

2 SPECIFIC MEMORY OF THE DAY: DAY,/...../20.....

Your FIRST **specific memory** of the day

EXTRA DETAILS for your first specific memory of the day

Your SECOND **specific memory** of the day

EXTRA DETAILS for your second specific memory of the day

2 SPECIFIC MEMORY OF THE DAY: DAY,/...../20.....

Your FIRST **specific memory** of the day

EXTRA DETAILS for your first specific memory of the day

Your SECOND **specific memory** of the day

EXTRA DETAILS for your second specific memory of the day

2 SPECIFIC MEMORY OF THE DAY: DAY,/...../20.....

Your FIRST **specific memory** of the day

EXTRA DETAILS for your first specific memory of the day

Your SECOND **specific memory** of the day

EXTRA DETAILS for your second specific memory of the day

2 SPECIFIC MEMORY OF THE DAY: DAY,/...../20.....

Your FIRST **specific memory** of the day

EXTRA DETAILS for your first specific memory of the day

Your SECOND **specific memory** of the day

EXTRA DETAILS for your second specific memory of the day

SESSION THREE

EXERCISE 1a – SESSION 3

A *first* specific memory for the word **CLUMSY** (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

A *second* specific memory for the word **CLUMSY** (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

EXERCISE 1b – SESSION 3

A *first* specific memory for the word **HANDY** (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

A *second* specific memory for the word **HANDY** (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

EXERCISE 2a – SESSION 3

A *first* specific memory for the word **STRESSED** (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

A *second* specific memory for the word **STRESSED** (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

EXERCISE 2b – SESSION 3

A *first* specific memory for the word **RELAXED** (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

A *second* specific memory for the word **RELAXED** (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

EXERCISE 3a – SESSION 3

A *first* specific memory for the word **SAD** (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

A *second* specific memory for the word **SAD** (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

EXERCISE 3b – SESSION 3

A *first* specific memory for the word **HAPPY** (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

A *second* specific memory for the word **HAPPY** (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

EXERCISES AFTER SESSION 3

1. Think of and write down **two** specific memories for the 10 words on pages XX-XX (**think of the extra details!!**).
2. Each evening think of and write down **two** 'specific memories of the day' on pages XX-XX (**think of the extra details!!**).

1a. A first specific memory for the word **DISAPPOINTED (EXTRA DETAILS!!)**:

1b. A second specific memory for the word **DISAPPOINTED (EXTRA DETAILS!!)**:

2a. A first specific memory for the word **GARDEN (EXTRA DETAILS!!)**:

2b. A second specific memory for the word **GARDEN (EXTRA DETAILS!!)**:

3a. A first specific memory for the word INSECURE (EXTRA DETAILS!!):

3b. A second specific memory for the word INSECURE (EXTRA DETAILS!!):

4a. A first specific memory for the word BRAVE (EXTRA DETAILS!!):

4b. A second specific memory for the word BRAVE (EXTRA DETAILS!!):

5a. A first specific memory for the word **AFFRAID (EXTRA DETAILS!!)**:

5b. A second specific memory for the word **AFFRAID (EXTRA DETAILS!!)**:

6a. A first specific memory for the word **ASHAMED (EXTRA DETAILS!!)**:

6b. A second specific memory for the word **ASHAMED (EXTRA DETAILS!!)**:

7a. A first specific memory for the word **SCHOOL** (EXTRA DETAILS!!):

7b. A second specific memory for the word **SCHOOL** (EXTRA DETAILS!!):

8a. A first specific memory for the word **FORREST** (EXTRA DETAILS!!):

8b. A second specific memory for the word **FORREST** (EXTRA DETAILS!!):

9a. A first specific memory for the word **PROTECTED (EXTRA DETAILS!!)**:

9b. A second specific memory for the word **PROTECTED (EXTRA DETAILS!!)**:

10a. A first specific memory for the word **ALONE (EXTRA DETAILS!!)**:

10b. A second specific memory for the word **ALONE (EXTRA DETAILS!!)**:

2 SPECIFIC MEMORY OF THE DAY: DAY,/...../20.....

Your FIRST specific memory of the day (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

Your SECOND specific memory of the day (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

2 SPECIFIC MEMORY OF THE DAY: DAY,/...../20.....

Your FIRST specific memory of the day (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

Your SECOND specific memory of the day (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

2 SPECIFIC MEMORY OF THE DAY: DAY,/...../20.....

Your FIRST specific memory of the day (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

Your SECOND specific memory of the day (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

2 SPECIFIC MEMORY OF THE DAY: DAY,/...../20.....

Your FIRST specific memory of the day (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

Your SECOND specific memory of the day (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

2 SPECIFIC MEMORY OF THE DAY: DAY,/...../20.....

Your FIRST **specific memory** of the day (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

Your SECOND **specific memory** of the day (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

2 SPECIFIC MEMORY OF THE DAY: DAY,/...../20.....

Your FIRST **specific memory** of the day (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

Your SECOND **specific memory** of the day (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

2 SPECIFIC MEMORY OF THE DAY: DAY,/...../20.....

Your FIRST **specific memory** of the day (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

Your SECOND **specific memory** of the day (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

SESSION FOUR

NOTICING OVERGENERAL MEMORIES/THINKING

We often engage in overgeneral thinking or recall of overgeneral memories without being aware of it. Overgeneral thinking can also start specific memories. That is, someone can recall an unkind comment by a colleague (specific memory) and then start thinking of 'all the times that this colleague treated me unkindly'. And this can be overgeneralized even further by thinking of 'every time colleagues treat me unkindly' or 'when other people treat me unkindly'. It appears to be a **negative spiral** that keeps expanding and that keeps becoming **more general**, and that leads to very **negative general thinking about the self**, such as: 'others often treat me unkindly', 'there has to be something wrong with me', or 'how did I deserve this?'. As is exemplified here overgeneral thinking can quickly lead to rumination.

Another example:

"the one Wednesday last year when I had family members over for dinner and I burnt the dinner"



"when I cook things often go wrong..."



"when I do something it often goes wrong"



"everything I do goes wrong..."

"I can't do anything, I am not good at anything"

STOP!

In such situations it is good to FIRST notice the general thinking in the self: “Signal to yourself: I am thinking overgenerally again.” SECONDLY return to the specific “Try to remember the specific instance you started the overgeneral thinking” or “Try to remember a specific event as an example for your overgeneral thinking?”. Thirdly, find and **O**pposite and thus more **P**ositive memory.

STOP!

Signal to yourself that you are engaging in overgeneral thinking

Try to remember a specific memory

Find an **O**pposite more **P**ositive memory

An example:

“everything I do goes wrong...”

“I can’t do anything, I am not good at anything”

Signal to yourself that you are thinking overgenerally.

Try to remember a specific memory.



“the one Wednesday last year when I had family members over for dinner and I burnt the dinner”

Find an **O**pposite, more **P**ositive memory



“last week a made lasagne for a few friends, and my friends really liked it”

EXERCISE 1a – SESSION 4

A *first* specific memory for the word **UNPLEASANT** (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

A *second* specific memory for the word **UNPLEASANT** (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

EXERCISE 1b – SESSION 4

A *first* specific memory for the word **PLEASANT** (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

A *second* specific memory for the word **PLEASANT** (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

EXERCISE 2a – SESSION 4

A *first* specific memory for the word **BORED** (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

A *second* specific memory for the word **BORED** (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

EXERCISE 2b – SESSION 4

A *first* specific memory for the word **EXCITED** (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

A *second* specific memory for the word **EXCITED** (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

EXERCISE 2a – SESSION 3

A *first* specific memory for the word **LAZY** (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

A *second* specific memory for the word **LAZY** (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

EXERCISE 2b – SESSION 3

A *first* specific memory for the word **NOT LAZY** (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)

A *second* specific memory for the word **NOT LAZY** (+ EXTRA DETAILS!!)