

Supplementary information

Narrative ratings

Thirty-seven independent raters (9 males, $M_{age} = 19.81$, $SD = 1.31$; $M_{years\ of\ education} = 13.84$, $SD = 1.38$) judged one of the two versions of each narrative and target details on 7-point scales for emotional valence (1=strongly negative, 4=neutral, 7= strongly positive), arousal (1=calming/boring, 7=exciting/agitating; note that only 21 participants made arousal ratings), and plausibility (1=low, 7=high). A 2x3 mixed ANOVA was run for each rating, with narrative version as a between-subjects variable, and detail type as a within-subjects variable (positive, negative, neutral). For emotional valence, a main effect of detail was found ($F(1.06, 36.98) = 488.86$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = 0.93$). Pairwise comparisons reveal significant differences between all detail types ($ps < .001$). No main effect of version, or detail type by version interaction was observed ($ps > .25$). For emotional arousal, a main effect of detail was found ($F(1.26, 23.87) = 63.60$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = 0.77$), where positive and negative details were more arousing than neutral details ($ps < .001$). No main effect of version, or detail type by version interaction was found ($ps > .17$). For plausibility, a main effect of detail was found ($F(2, 70) = 7.81$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2_p = 0.18$), where neutral details were more plausible than both positive ($p = .049$) and negative details ($p = .001$). A main effect of version was also found, where details from version one were rated as more plausible overall than version two ($M_{one} = 6.11$, $SD = 1.01$; $M_{two} = 5.48$, $SD = 0.77$; $F(1, 35) = 4.74$, $p = .04$, $\eta^2_p = 0.12$). No detail type by version interaction was observed ($p > .25$).

Table S1. Emotion and plausibility ratings for target details and overall narratives, collapsed across narrative versions.

Subjective rating	Target detail type			Overall narrative
	Positive	Negative	Neutral	
Emotional valence	5.66 (0.51)	2.39 (0.44)	4.09 (0.17)	4.36 (0.60)
Emotional arousal	4.10 (0.86)	4.34 (0.80)	2.57 (0.95)	3.70 (0.70)
Plausibility	5.74 (0.91)	5.69 (0.96)	5.94 (0.97)	5.62 (1.00)

Note. 7-point scale, low-high. For emotional valence, 1=strongly negative, 4=neutral, 7=strongly positive. SD in parentheses.

Task instructions

Simulation phase: You will see everyday scenarios, and for each I would like you to imagine yourself in that scenario at some point within the [next/past] year. Imagine a single event happening on a particular day, from a specific time and place. I do not want you to remember something that you have done before in the past, but invent an event that hasn't happened to you before. You can be creative, but not unrealistic. Think about events that are plausible given your thoughts about the [coming/past] year. You will be asked to imagine the event happening in one of two ways: going well, or going poorly. You will be given three minutes for each event to describe aloud as much detail as you can, and I will be audiotaping your response. After the three minutes, you will be asked a couple of questions about the event. Each question will appear on the computer screen, and you will press a button depending on your answer.

1. Rate how detailed or vivid the event is in your mind, from 1 to 5. If it was vague, give it 1, or up to a 5 if it plays out like a movie in your mind.

2. Rate how emotional it makes you feel to think about this event. Give it a 1 if you feel strongly negative about the event, a 3 if you feel neutral, and a 5 if you feel strongly positive about it.
3. [Exp 2 only] Rate the arousal, that is, what strength emotional response does it evoke in you. Give it a 1 if it does not evoke a response (e.g., calm or bored), and up to a 5 if you feel a strong response (e.g., excitement or agitation).
4. Rate how personally significant the event is, that is how important or life-changing this event might be. Give it a 1 if it makes little difference to your life, up to a 5 if it is a life-changing event.
5. Rate how plausible this event is. Give it a 1 if you think it is completely implausible, and up to a 5 if you think it is plausible.
6. Rate how similar the event you imagined is to experiences you've actually had in the past. Give it a 1 if it is not at all similar to anything you've previously experienced, and up to a 5 if it is almost exactly the same as something you've done before.

Encoding phase: Pretend [it is now a year later/you have regained memories of the last year]. You will find out how these events actually played out. You will be reading short stories describing each event, and what really took place. There will also be stories about new events. These stories will be presented on the computer screen. There is no time limit, so please read each story carefully, at your own pace. Press ENTER once you are ready to move on from each story, and you will then answer a couple of questions about how you found the story. Each of these questions will appear on the computer screen, and you will press a button depending on your answer.

1. Rate how interesting you found the story, from 1 to 5. If you found it boring, give it 1, or up to a 5 if you found it really interesting.
2. Rate the emotional tone of the story. Give it a 1 if it was strongly negative, a 3 if it was neutral, and a 5 if it was strongly positive.
3. [Exp 2 only] Rate the arousal, that is, what strength emotional response does it evoke in you. Give it a 1 if it does not evoke a response (e.g., calm or bored), and up to a 5 if you feel a strong response (e.g., excitement or agitation).
4. Rate how well you could visualize the story in your mind. Give it a 1 if you formed no picture in your mind, and up to a 5 if you could picture it taking place as if a movie was playing in your mind.
5. Rate how plausible this story is for you personally. Give it a 1 if you think this event will never happen to you, and a 5 if you think it's definitely something that could happen in your life.

Recognition: I am going to be asking you some questions to see how well you remember the short stories. For each story, I will show you a number of statements. Some of these statements contain information that you read in the story, and some of them contain information that was not presented in the story. Your task is to decide whether you believe each statement is OLD (from the story) or NEW (information you didn't read in the story). Each statement will appear on the computer screen, and you will press a button to indicate your decision. [Exp 2 only] At the end of the questions, you are going to rate the emotional tone of the stories, where 1 is strongly negative, 3 is not emotional, and 5 is strongly positive.

Simulation and narrative scenarios

Bike ride through central park

Dinner for one

First day on camp

Getting a haircut

Going to see a play

Job interview

Going to the laundromat

Painting at the beach

Trying a new restaurant

Baking a cake

Baseball game

Fourth of July party

Setting up a new computer

Ski trip

Supermarket visit

Starting a vegetable garden

Waiting to board a plane

Work holiday function

Example narrative

Broken down by target detail pairs. The first detail in each pair was seen in Version 1 of the narrative, and the second detail in Version 2. N = Negative detail, P = Positive detail.

GOING TO SEE A PLAY

A new play had come to town. You hadn't had a night out for a while, so you and a few friends decided to go check it out.

EMOTIONAL TARGET DETAIL You [N: had to park quite far down the road, and it was a long walk to the theatre / P: found a carpark right outside the theatre doors].

EMOTIONAL TARGET DETAIL You prebooked the tickets online, [P: and managed to get some really good seats near the front / N: but most of the seats were sold out, so you weren't all sitting together].

NEUTRAL TARGET DETAIL You [tucked the playbill into your bag / folded the playbill in half].

EMOTIONAL TARGET DETAIL Before the play started, you wanted a beer from the bar. You considered buying something to nibble on as well, but [P: fortunately the beer came with a free bag of popcorn / N: the food was overly expensive, so you decided to go hungry].

EMOTIONAL TARGET DETAIL The theatre was old and [P: beautiful, with elegant decorations / N: decrepit, with a musty smell].

EMOTIONAL TARGET DETAIL On stage, the deep purple curtain was drawn aside to reveal the first scene. You found the music was [N: too loud to hear the actor's voices clearly / P: lively and really set the mood].

NEUTRAL TARGET DETAIL The actors were dressed in [medieval costumes / army uniforms].

EMOTIONAL TARGET DETAIL One of the people on stage looked a little familiar, you wondered where you might have seen them before. They pranced around the stage jovially, [P: cracking jokes that made the audience laugh / N: but the jokes they made fell flat].

NEUTRAL TARGET DETAIL In the intermission, you went to [the bathroom / get some water].

EMOTIONAL TARGET DETAIL During the second half of the play, [N: the person behind you kept coughing / P: your friend brought out some chocolates to share].

NEUTRAL TARGET DETAIL The actors occasionally burst into song, which you thought was a bit of a clichéd attempt to stretch out a short storyline. The play reminded you a little of a [movie that you saw last week / story your coworker mentioned].

EMOTIONAL TARGET DETAIL Soon enough the actors were standing in a row, bowing to the applause. As you were leaving, [N: you realized you left your jacket behind, so had to fight the crowd to go back for it / P: the actors stood by the door, and you were delighted to shake hands with them].

You all headed out into the cool night air.