

# TMFRS

LET'S MAKE SENSE OF YER STUPID FUCKING BRAIN

## 5.11 Cognitive Basis of Depression

Is depression about weak minds and chosen negativity?

Fall 2025

How can we re-understand depressive minds for self-compassion?

'Stop seeing everything so negatively.' they say. But the cognitive behaviors underlying depression don't allow it. Let's talk about mental reactions and sticky patterns that outweigh false brightsides.

### summary

This conversation delves into the cognitive basis of depression, focusing on how neural networks, memory games, language, cognitive inhibition inhibition, outdated working memory, and rumination contribute to depressive states. It explores the mechanisms behind cognitive depression, compassionate views for the state of human suffering, and offers strategies for managing depression through attention training and environmental changes.

### takeaways

- Neural networks, schemas, and representations automatically shape our understanding of experiences.
- Even singular stimulation events can activate depressive schemas, limiting potential perceptions.
- Memory biases in depression lead to a resonating focus on negative experiences.
- Over generalized and explicit memories are unique experiences associated with depression.
- Cognitive inhibition is ironically inhibited during depression.
- Working memory cannot update with relevant material under depressive spells
- Rumination causes or exacerbates depression, anxiety, and PTSD due to a negative focus on the self.
- Automatic reckoning with the human condition may be the cause of many varieties of cognitive disorders.
- Training attention can redirect focus away from negativity.
- Ambiguous or negative social environments spark rumination which leads to depression.
- Changing environments and behaviors can help disrupt negative neural networks.
- Understanding the cognitive processes behind depression can bolster compassion and help deactivate negative schemas.

### keywords

cognitive depression, memory bias, cognitive inhibition, working memory, overgeneralized memory, semantic memory, rumination, emotional regulation, reappraisal, self-doubt, neural networks

This month, just in time for the holidays and seasonal affective disorder, we discussed the basis of cognitive depression. AKA – the depression that comes from unpleasant environmental events and subsequent thought patterns, not the depression that's caused by chemical imbalance.

And we did so by examining two articles.

### **Cognition and Depression: Current Status and Future Directions**

**Ian H. Gotlib, Jutta Joormann**

**Annu Rev Clin Psychol. 2010**

And

### **Rumination as a Mechanism Linking Stressful Life Events to Symptoms of Depression and Anxiety: Longitudinal Evidence in Early Adolescents and Adults**

**Louisa C. Michl, Katie A. McLaughlin, Kathrine Shepherd, Susan Nolen-Hoeksema**

**J Abnorm Psychol. 2013**

The findings?

#### **Neural networks may be responsible.**

These are the broad, spanning, branching structures made by neuronal connections. They are the foundation of “schemas” or “representations” of what we have learned to understand about life. You see a dog, you have a long history of positive experiences with dogs, you automatically assess that contact with this dog will have similar outcomes as past dogs without any thought in between as the neural network representing “dog” gets lit.

The same thing can happen, in a negative sense, with depressive networks.

If you've had bad experiences and created negative representations from these experiences, even a single similar-enough stimulation event can activate or prime that enormous grouping of emotional, mental, and physical memories. Launching a brain into the same framework of understanding life and limiting what else it CAN perceive.

This is especially true because it brings up memory biases. You won't recall your relaxing vacation when it's incongruent with the tone of your insides. All you can see or remember seeing is similarly-valenced negative material.

This is because:

#### **“like activates like” memories, thoughts, and emotions.**

The mind works by resonance. The neural networks and contents within that will be active during a

depressing set of circumstances are... depressing. If you're sad, you'll remember sad things. If you're thinking of a potential failure, you'll see failure everywhere you look.

The brain becomes biased, very easily, towards seeing more of what it's already experiencing. At the opportunity cost of experiencing or recalling the experience of anything else.

And, memory games don't stop there.

### **Explicit memory is also implicated as a problem in depression.**

Meaning, wordy memories. Narratives. Semantic recollections. These become negatively slanted very easily and cause perceptions to become equally defined by negativity when they are described by the confines of negative, potentiated, language.

When you're in a shitty mood, word choice tends to reflect it. When you think in these buttstained words, life begins to take on the same brown tone.

And we also deal with:

### **Over general memories**

In depression, the mind appears to navigate towards a set of memories again and again. But these memories are not appropriate for every situation – they're over-applied. They come up with inaccuracy.

And research also says that they lack important detail in order to make sense of them.

So an individual returns to the same thoughts and recollections again and again, without access to information that would help lay them to rest.

This can help explain:

### **Negative interpretations of the unknown**

Once we're feeling negative, as already described, ambiguous or uncertain information begins to appear the same way. Shittily.

The mind predicts what's around every corner based on what it has experienced in the past and is currently experiencing now. In a depressed state, all it can anticipate is more disappointment coming its way.

How's the meeting with your boss going to go? I don't know, probably terribly.

What's the weather going to be like during this event you were looking forward to? Who knows, I anticipate a hurricane.

We only see what we can see, and our brains gate those perceptions based on what we've seen already.

### **Attentional elaborators and hangers on**

The interesting thing is, depression doesn't appear to make us vigilant in seeking out negative signs. That's the role of anxiety.

Anxiety causes hypervigilance towards signs of bad things to come.

Depression, on the other hand, causes a hyperfixation what has already happened, which then clouds the ability to have other expectations.

I'm saying, once negative material enters the brain, research suggests that it does not exit. This is because:

### **Cognitive inhibition inhibition**

Depressed individuals struggle to (or cannot) inhibit their thought processes. Normally we have a degree of cognitive control that permits us to disengage from material and redirect attention elsewhere. But this capacity is lacking in depressive spells.

The mind never receives the "stop" signal and instead continues to build the negative narrative on top of the negative thoughts, feelings, and memories that have been crowding the inner experience.

This issue can also be seen in:

### **Working memory clutter**

The depressed person also suffers a loss of working memory function because they cannot update it.

Normally working memory temporarily holds information for us to work with, to manipulate, to make sense of. And then the data is released when it's no longer "the issue of the moment."

But in depression, the information that is no longer relevant due to time or circumstance remains in working memory. The mind attempts to process or utilize the information over and over again without making headway. And this comes at the opportunity cost of allowing other information into working memory.

Problem solving, mental clarity, and motivation take a nosedive.

As you might anticipate, this contributes to:

### **Emotional regulation difficulties**

With this loss of cognitive, emotional, and motivational control... we lose access to our best emotional regulation strategies. Instead, often turning to suppression to try to tamp down the unwanted inner events, because attempting to constructively frame or resolve them are too complex of tasks with all the mental activities and deficits already described.

Notably, this means we have a:

### **Reappraisal ineptitude**

When all we can see, think, feel, and recall is contained in depressive neural schemas and we don't have the mental capacity to dream wildly outside the box of our own lived experience.... we can't reframe or reappraise situations.

Rather than finding an alternative, useful, meaning in any event, the mind gets trapped in its original and historical estimations. Perceiving a story and getting stuck with that narrative.

Only once the depressive spell passes can we emotionally regulate and "let shit go" with the help of reappraisal.

This is partially true because:

### **Lack of motivation for solution finding or implementing**

With the life-distorting cognitive behaviors we've talked about so far, the sufferer struggles to have excess energy or novel thought or constructive planning capacity to tackle the root of their issues. Those issues, themselves, are veiled behind a confounding inner experience and cannot be seen clearly. And the depressed individual doesn't estimate that their actions will be fruitful, even if they could create a detailed plan for action.

So, they get stranded in a depressed state with no way out, no way to help themselves, and no imagination that doing so is a reasonable expectation.

None of which is assisted by perhaps the mental behavior that underlies depression, anxiety, and PTSD.

The real culprit that we need to be on the lookout for....

### **Rumination and depressive symptoms**

Rumination is the regurgitating and rechewing of mental material, over and over again, attempting to make meaning of it.

It takes place after life stressors and seems to be connected to the chasm between ideal and merely real. When something takes place that we don't desire, the mind has to figure out why, what it means, and how

it's causing suffering. It wants to close the gap between what it anticipated and what it was delivered.

Rumination is connected to semantic memory, it seems to decline when perceptual memories are tagged into the ring.

And rumination centers around discrepancies in self-image versus self-experience. AKA the ego is involved. When a person's sense of self or self-concept is challenged, the mental response is rumination about what went wrong and what it suggests about them, their safety, their capacity, their future.

We won't go into the neurobiological components of rumination here, but understanding the ruminatory circuit explains the experience and provides clarity on the vicious cycle of emotion, memory, self-appraisal, and disjointed autobiographical processing that characterizes the cognitive behavior.

The point here is? Rumination is a self-focused obsession – for sake of staying safe. In order to navigate the planet and a lifetime safely? One has to understand who they are and what they are capable of.

This is where rumination takes over.

And leads, indisputably, to heightened, prolonged, and more chronic depression and anxiety symptoms.

## **Solutions**

Beyond self-understanding and compassion-offering... I do hope you're seeing that depression is out of one's personal control and is a result of the tragic human condition... what can we do with this information? We're doing two shows on this, so I'll just give you a taste.

### **Train attention**

If we can strengthen the ability to inhibit attention and redirect it elsewhere, we can help ourselves with the elaboration and rumination problems that come with depression. Re-opening our perceptions so positive information can sneak through. Then, assisting neutral or positive neural networks to get some action. Easier said than done, so I recommend the ole "imagine a giant stop sign" trick.

### **Use the body**

We can also try to get out of our wordy thoughts and memories, and instead engage with the world through sensory perception. As much and as often as you can stop narrating your life or semantically processing information, you can help retrain your brain to experience and process through emotions and sensations, instead. This circumvents some of the depression and rumination issues with biased language and obsessive verbal processing. Feel shitty! Don't try to explain it away or write novels about the experience.

### **Avoid negative social environments**

Another thing we learned about rumination? It's often socially-mediated. Because it involves the self (small s), it's provoked by fears about how others are seeing and estimating us. So, being in difficult social environments? Not an effective way to avoid rumination. A highly effective way to lay awake at night, fearing how you fucked up. Which will exacerbate every issue we've spoken about today. When depressed? Get into socially supportive environments. Or, at least, move away from socially destructive

ones that cause self-doubt and self-vigilance.

Remember that change is key

Going back to our neural networks... if they're vast collections of stimulation events linked to mental and emotional patterns, what does that suggest? Aspects of the environment that existed during previous depressive spells can elicit activation of negative schemas and depressive networks. And with every bout of depression, NEW stimuli are added to the network, so that it's ever-expanding and more-easily activated.

That means?

Don't live or work or bedrot in the same place as you've been chronically depressed, time and time again, for years or decades. Unless you want this to become your constant state. You might be provoking or sustaining depression, through simply observing your environment (unconsciously). And the admission price – the activation threshold - for entering that depressive state will only decrease every time you have a spell.

Change is key, so your mind can stop revisiting the past, calling it the present, and expecting that nothing else can happen in the future.

## Wrap

And with that... I hope this episode has helped explain the cognitive bases of depression! It's not about "choosing to think bad thoughts" or "refusing to look on the Brightside." It is about the workings of a stupid fucking human brain, obsessed with understanding it's utility and safety on earth. And all the cognitive behaviors that follow, deepening and extending depression, at the direct expense of the cognitive behaviors that would actually help a fucker to escape from the prison of the depressed mind.

This was an excellent series, if I do say so myself.

Til we talk again next time, you know...

Hail yourself.

Take care out there.

Learn about the brain so you can outsmart its well-meaning antics.

And I'll talk to you soon.

Cheers.

**Notes (fill in blank)****Neural networks**

\_\_\_\_\_ are the broad, spanning, branching structures made by neuronal connections.

Neural networks are the foundation of \_\_\_\_\_ - of what we have learned to understand about life.

If you've had bad experiences and created negative representations, even a single \_\_\_\_\_ can activate or prime that enormous grouping of emotional, mental, and physical memories.

**Resonance**

The brain is biased towards seeing and recalling more of \_\_\_\_\_.

**Explicit memory**

Wordy memories, narratives, and semantic recollections become negatively slanted and cause perceptions to become equally defined by negativity when described \_\_\_\_\_.

**Over general memories**

In depression, the mind appears to navigate towards a set of memories again and again. But these generalized memories are not appropriate for every situation – they're \_\_\_\_\_. They come up with \_\_\_\_\_.

**Negative interpretations of the unknown**

Once we're feeling negative, \_\_\_\_\_ information begins to appear the same way.

**Attentional elaborators**

Depression doesn't appear to make us vigilant in seeking out negative signs. That's the role of \_\_\_\_\_.

Depression causes a hyperfixation on \_\_\_\_\_, which then clouds the ability to have other expectations.

**Cognitive inhibition inhibition**

Normally we have a degree of cognitive control that permits us to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. But this capacity is lacking in depressive spells.

**Working memory clutter**

In depression, information that is no longer relevant due to time or circumstance  
\_\_\_\_\_. This comes at the opportunity cost of allowing other to enter.

**Emotional regulation difficulties**

With this loss of cognitive, emotional, and motivational control we lose access to \_\_\_\_\_.

**Reappraisal ineptitude**

In depressive spells, rather than finding an alternative, useful, meaning in any event, the mind gets trapped in its \_\_\_\_\_ - perceiving a story and getting stuck with that narrative.

**Lack of motivation for solution finding or implementing**

With the life-distorting cognitive behaviors we've talked about, the sufferer struggles to have  
\_\_\_\_\_ to tackle the root of their issues.

### **Rumination and depressive symptoms**

*Rumination takes place after life stressors and seems to be connected to the chasm between \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Rumination is connected to \_\_\_\_\_, it seems to decline when perceptual memories are tagged into the ring.*

*When a person's sense of self or self-concept is challenged, the mental response is rumination about what went wrong and \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Rumination leads to \_\_\_\_\_ depression and anxiety symptoms.*

### **Solutions**

*If we can strengthen the ability to inhibit attention and redirect it elsewhere, we can help ourselves with the \_\_\_\_\_ that come with depression.*

*As much and as often as you can stop \_\_\_\_\_ information, you can help retrain your brain to experience and process through emotions and sensations instead.*

*Rumination is often socially mediated, meaning being in \_\_\_\_\_ is not an effective way to avoid rumination.*

*Don't live or work or bedrot in the same place as you've been chronically depressed, you might be provoking or sustaining depression, through \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Change is key, so your mind can stop \_\_\_\_\_ that nothing else can happen in the future.*

**Wrap**

*Cognitive depression is about the workings of a stupid fucking human brain, obsessed with understanding it's \_\_\_\_\_. And all the cognitive behaviors that follow, deepening and extending depression, at the \_\_\_\_\_ that would actually help a fucker to escape from the prison of the depressed mind.*

## Notes Key

### Neural networks

\_\_\_\_\_ are the broad, spanning, branching structures made by neuronal connections.

### Neural networks

Neural networks are the foundation of \_\_\_\_\_ - of what we have learned to understand about life.

“schemas” or “representations”

If you've had bad experiences and created negative representations, even a single \_\_\_\_\_ can activate or prime that enormous grouping of emotional, mental, and physical memories.

similar-enough stimulation event

### Resonance

The brain is biased towards seeing and recalling more of \_\_\_\_\_.

what it's already experiencing

### Explicit memory

Wordy memories, narratives, and semantic recollections become negatively slanted and cause perceptions to become equally defined by negativity when described \_\_\_\_\_.

by the confines of negative, potentiated, language

### Over general memories

In depression, the mind appears to navigate towards a set of memories again and again. But these generalized memories are not appropriate for every situation – they're \_\_\_\_\_. They come up with \_\_\_\_\_.

over-applied ; inaccuracy

**Negative interpretations of the unknown**

Once we're feeling negative, \_\_\_\_\_ information begins to appear the same way.

*ambiguous or uncertain*

**Attentional elaborators**

Depression doesn't appear to make us vigilant in seeking out negative signs. That's the role of \_\_\_\_\_.

*anxiety*

Depression causes a hyperfixation on \_\_\_\_\_, which then clouds the ability to have other expectations.

*what has already happened*

**Cognitive inhibition inhibition**

Normally we have a degree of cognitive control that permits us to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. But this capacity is lacking in depressive spells.

*disengage from material and redirect attention elsewhere*

**Working memory clutter**

In depression, information that is no longer relevant due to time or circumstance \_\_\_\_\_ . This comes at the opportunity cost of allowing other to enter.

*remains in working memory*

**Emotional regulation difficulties**

With this loss of cognitive, emotional, and motivational control we lose access to \_\_\_\_\_.

*our best emotional regulation strategies*

**Reappraisal ineptitude**

*In depressive spells, rather than finding an alternative, useful, meaning in any event, the mind gets trapped in its \_\_\_\_\_ - perceiving a story and getting stuck with that narrative.*

*original and historical estimations*

*Lack of motivation for solution finding or implementing*

*With the life-distorting cognitive behaviors we've talked about, the sufferer struggles to have \_\_\_\_\_ to tackle the root of their issues.*

*excess energy, novel thought, or constructive planning capacity*

*Rumination and depressive symptoms*

*Rumination takes place after life stressors and seems to be connected to the chasm between \_\_\_\_\_.*

*ideal and merely real*

*Rumination is connected to \_\_\_\_\_, it seems to decline when perceptual memories are tagged into the ring.*

*semantic memory*

*When a person's sense of self or self-concept is challenged, the mental response is rumination about what went wrong and \_\_\_\_\_.*

*what it suggests about them, their safety, their capacity, their future*

*Rumination leads to \_\_\_\_\_ depression and anxiety symptoms.*

*heightened, prolonged, and more chronic*

**Solutions**

*If we can strengthen the ability to inhibit attention and redirect it elsewhere, we can help ourselves with the \_\_\_\_\_ that come with depression.*

*elaboration and rumination problems*

**As much and as often as you can stop \_\_\_\_\_ information, you can help retrain your brain to experience and process through emotions and sensations instead.**

**narrating your life or semantically processing**

**Rumination is often socially mediated, meaning being in \_\_\_\_\_ is not an effective way to avoid rumination.**

**difficult or ambiguous social environments**

**Don't live or work or bedrot in the same place as you've been chronically depressed, you might be provoking or sustaining depression, through \_\_\_\_\_.**

**simply observing your environment (unconsciously)**

**Change is key, so your mind can stop \_\_\_\_\_ that nothing else can happen in the future.**

**revisiting the past, calling it the present, and expecting**

**Wrap**

**Cognitive depression is about the workings of a stupid fucking human brain, obsessed with understanding it's \_\_\_\_\_. And all the cognitive behaviors that follow, deepening and extending depression, at the \_\_\_\_\_ that would actually help a fucker to escape from the prison of the depressed mind.**

**utility and safety on earth ; direct expense of the cognitive behaviors**

## Multiple Choice Notes/Quiz

Neural networks are the foundation of \_\_\_\_\_ - of what we have learned to understand about life.

the PFC

dissociative delusions

“schemas” or “representations”

anxious tailspins

If you've had bad experiences and created negative representations, even a single similar-enough stimulation event can \_\_\_\_\_ that enormous grouping of emotional, mental, and physical memories.

shut down

activate or prime

reprogram

lead to avoiding

Wordy memories, narratives, and semantic recollections become negatively slanted and cause \_\_\_\_\_ to become equally defined by negativity when described by the confines of negative, potentiated, language.

Perceptions

Dreams

Flashbacks

Intrusive thoughts

In depression, the mind appears to navigate towards a set of memories again and again. But these generalized memories are not appropriate for every situation – they're \_\_\_\_\_.

traumatic fragments

painful memories

over-applied

sensory disturbances

Depression doesn't appear to make us vigilant in seeking out negative signs. That's the role of \_\_\_\_\_.

OCD

Anxiety

Schizophrenia

ADD

Depression causes a hyperfixation on what has already happened, which then clouds the ability to \_\_\_\_\_.

think about the past

have other expectations

strengthen the self

have positive social interactions

Normally we have a degree of \_\_\_\_\_ that permits us disengage from material and redirect attention elsewhere. But this capacity is lacking in depressive spells.

active avoidance

self-defense

preventative ignorance

cognitive control

In depression, information that is no longer relevant due to time or circumstance \_\_\_\_\_ . This comes at the opportunity cost of allowing other to enter.

remains in working memory

becomes more active and applied

causes anxiety

creates ruminatory avoidance

In depressive spells, rather than finding an alternative, useful, meaning in any event, the mind gets trapped in its \_\_\_\_\_ - perceiving a story and getting stuck with that narrative.

best assumptions

more delusional narratives

original and historical estimations

strongest constructive thought patterns

When a person's \_\_\_\_\_ is challenged, the mental response is rumination about what went wrong and what it suggests about them, their safety, their capacity, their future.

depression

historic victim narrative

sense of self or self-concept

previous survival response

Rumination leads to heightened, prolonged, and more chronic \_\_\_\_\_ .

self-doubt

human centered suffering

social environment failures

depression and anxiety symptoms

Rumination is often socially mediated, meaning being in \_\_\_\_\_ is not an effective way to avoid rumination.

highly supportive social networks

difficult or ambiguous social environments

accepting environments

Environmental and lifestyle change is key, so your mind can stop revisiting the past, calling it the present, and expecting that \_\_\_\_\_.

nothing else can happen in the future

things will get better

recovery is around the corner

Wrap

Cognitive depression is about the workings of a stupid fucking human brain, obsessed with understanding it's \_\_\_\_\_. And all the cognitive behaviors that follow, deepening and extending depression, at the \_\_\_\_\_ that would actually help a fucker to escape from the prison of the depressed mind.

future plans ; cost of having generalized thoughts

value to other humans ; prompting of biased semantic memories

utility and safety on earth ; direct expense of the cognitive behaviors

**Notes/Multiple Choice with Key**

Neural networks are the foundation of \_\_\_\_\_ - of what we have learned to understand about life.

the PFC

dissociative delusions

**“schemas” or “representations”**

anxious tailspins

If you've had bad experiences and created negative representations, even a single similar-enough stimulation event can \_\_\_\_\_ that enormous grouping of emotional, mental, and physical memories.

shut down

**activate or prime**

reprogram

lead to avoiding

**Explicit memory**

Wordy memories, narratives, and semantic recollections become negatively slanted and cause \_\_\_\_\_ to become equally defined by negativity when described by the confines of negative, potentiated, language.

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**Anxiety**

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think about the past

**have other expectations**

strengthen the self

have positive social interactions

Normally we have a degree of \_\_\_\_\_ that permits us disengage from material and redirect attention elsewhere. But this capacity is lacking in depressive spells.

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preventative ignorance

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In depression, information that is no longer relevant due to time or circumstance \_\_\_\_\_ . This comes at the opportunity cost of allowing other to enter.

### **remains in working memory**

becomes more active and applied

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creates ruminatory avoidance

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best assumptions

more delusional narratives

### **original and historical estimations**

strongest constructive thought patterns

When a person's \_\_\_\_\_ is challenged, the mental response is rumination about what went wrong and what it suggests about them, their safety, their capacity, their future.

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historic victim narrative

### **sense of self or self-concept**

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Rumination leads to heightened, prolonged, and more chronic \_\_\_\_\_ .

self-doubt

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Environmental and lifestyle change is key, so your mind can stop revisiting the past, calling it the present, and expecting that \_\_\_\_\_.

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Wrap

Cognitive depression is about the workings of a stupid fucking human brain, obsessed with understanding it's \_\_\_\_\_. And all the cognitive behaviors that follow, deepening and extending depression, at the \_\_\_\_\_ that would actually help a fucker to escape from the prison of the depressed mind.

future plans ; cost of having generalized thoughts

value to other humans ; prompting of biased semantic memories

**utility and safety on earth ; direct expense of the cognitive behaviors**

**Reflection Qs**

**Have you ever experienced rapid-onset depression from what seems like an insignificant event? Describe it**

**Considering the environmental triggering of neural networks, can you find any “activation points” of your depression that may have been overlooked?**

**When it rains, does it pour? Do associative network help explain this?**

**Do you notice your mind begins telling elaborate stories, rather than objectively “taking the event in stride”?**

**Can you find compassion for yourself, for having a brain that’s designed to “snap back” into prior realities in order to navigate current and future ones?**

**If you were to be kind to yourself during a depressive spell, would that provide different stimulation to your brain than usual, allowing at least one neural node to deactivate?**

**If we can stimulate depressive neural networks with negative stimulation, can you think of a way to activate optimistic or neutral networks to offset the schema?**

**When you're depressed, do you notice a negative language bias? i.e. certain words or phrases you use more often?**

**Does the voice in your head become scrutinous?**

**Do certain words grip your attention, while others feel repulsive? If so, are those repulsive words unrelatably positive?**

**Do other people chide your language usage? Can you explain why it's not your choice?**

**Can you de-activate your verbal brain and focus on perceptions? If you can, how does it feel? What are the cognitive results?**

**Does the negatively-valanced deficit in cognitive inhibition help to explain why it's impossible to simply find the "bright spots" when depressed?**

**Do you recall having cycling, repeating thoughts that couldn't be stopped, despite the misery they created?**

**Do positive observations and thoughts feel insignificant or "swallowed" by the negative ones?**

**Could you explain how attentional inhibition is related to these experiences?**

**Once in a negative depressed mood, does your brain pile on additional negative material?**

**Does trying to "just stop" become another negative stimulation event / process?**

**Have you noticed that attempts at cognitive control -> perceptions of "failure"  
-> additional self-scrutiny?**

**Does rumination take place alongside your anxiety and/or depression?**

**Does it ever provide clarity or resolution?**

**Does it seem to perpetuate the disorders?**

**Can you tell which comes first? Rumination or persistent anxiety?**

**Do you think often/torturously about what you expect compared to what you experience(d)?**

**Could the gap between ideal and merely real cause your mind to seek reasons and resolutions for the discrepancy?**

**If you were happy with how things transpired, would your brain be a less convoluted place?**

**Could you explain how the difference between desires and reality leads to an overactive, repetitive, brain to an outsider?**

**When you ruminate is the underlying (sometimes hidden) theme your own self-worth ; actions ; confidence in yourself past, present, or future?**

**At face value what have you been ruminating about recently?**

**Would this issue be an issue if you were ruthlessly self-assured of your correct actions and worthiness?**

**Do you have a sense of fear or insecurity when your mind is very active?**

**When you lie down at night and struggle to fall asleep because your brain is too busy, is it cycling through thoughts and feelings about your actions or nonactions?**

**Would these issues be issues if you were ruthlessly self-assured of your correct actions and worthiness?**