

MEMORY LIST

Memories are stored emotionally for survival purposes. We want to get at your memories, both good and bad. In your brain, you have a little videotape or DVD library that has recorded all your significant emotional events as little movies or episodes of your life. Under stress or when we are in danger, those videos play to warn us what to avoid and what to be attracted to. With your help, I want to identify as many memories as possible and allow you to decide which ones to keep and which ones to deal with.

Start with your earliest memories both good and bad and work forward. This allows us to keep some order in your life as we review your significant emotional events, those things *you* see in your mind's eye.

AGE DESCRIBE THE MEMORY WAS IT GOOD OR BAD?

Memory Card Handout

Now that we have reviewed your history and created a memory list, it is time to resolve any memories that are giving you difficulty. Memories serve many purposes. Some are there to keep us from repeating a bad experience like returning to a restaurant that has given us bad service with bad food. Some are designed to protect us from danger, especially as children. We only want to work with actual memories you remember. In addition, you are the one in control deciding what memories you want to deal with and what memories you want to change.

From your memory list, history, and forgiveness list, identify any memories you desire to work on for further resolution. On an index card place one memory in sufficient enough detail so you can recall the memory you want to work on. In addition to the specific memory, describe how the memory makes you feel today as you see it in your mind's eye. You might describe the associated emotion as well as where you feel this in your body. For example, "when I see my mom looking at me that way I feel scared and sick to my stomach". Frequently memories are accompanied by associated physical sensations. These will help us understand how the memory affects you as well.

Finally, describe what the memory makes you want to do. Do you want to run or scream or yell or fight back? When you look at the memory in your mind's eye what does it make you want to do in addition to how does it make you feel?

List as many memories as you like or want to work with. We will only work with a few at a time. Memories are powerful and may make you feel worse initially rather than better. That's normal. It is not because we are creating more pain, it is because you are getting in touch with the pain that is within you that was already created.

Be sure to place each unique memory on a separate index card. We will deal with them one at a time when you are ready to do so. In our next session, we just want to review the cards together to make sure we have all the cards you want to deal with and all the cards you have you want to deal with. You can change your mind on any card or memory at any time. Usually when we begin to work on memories we will only do two to three per session. That is usually as much as any one wants to deal with at one time.

As you prepare your cards do not be surprised if more memories occur. This is normal since memories are layered and dealing with one will frequently produce another. Feel free to record these new ones and bring them in as well. The next time we get together, we will not be working on the memories, per se, but rather considering which ones you want to work on. As always you are in charge of your memories and what you want to do with them if anything.

Continue with Memory Cards or Wait on Meditative Image Development

At this point in the process you have some decisions to make. We can now move on and deal with your memories or wait until you are more confident and comfortable with your meditative images. It is up to you to decide. If we move on and you are not yet ready, the process of removing or neutralizing the images and emotions of the memories we are working with will be difficult. However, if we don't move on, you may allow your fears to overcome you and even in some cases to immobilize you from continuing. The choice is yours to make and should be made prayerfully and carefully.

Some factors to consider before moving on are (1) do I feel comfortable or at least safe with the image of God I am relating to; (2) do I think I am ready to proceed or do I need a little more time to practice and relax; (3) as I pray about proceeding, do I believe in my heart that the process is meant for me; (4) are there other things I still need to clear up before proceeding; (5) do I feel safe enough in my life at this point to proceed since the process may make me feel and function worse initially; (6) what will happen if I don't proceed, will I be worse or better off at this time; (7) as I think back through the entire process, is there anything that I need to discuss or clarify with my counselor before continuing?

As you review the above as well as other questions that might come into your mind, don't hesitate to bring them in to the next session for discussion. Even if we proceed with your memories, you may need to discuss these or other questions first. If you do decide to proceed with the memory process, we will need at least one but no more than three memories to begin with. Please look over your memory cards and select the memories or memory you wish to start with. Remember, we rank ordered and discussed this in your last session. However, it is not too late to change if you have a specific memory or set of memories that are bothering you and you believe or feel you need to deal with these first.

After identifying the memory or memories you want to work on in the next session, put them aside and don't continue to dwell on them. Dwelling on them will just make them worse. Instead, spend as much time as possible relaxing, praying, and meditating on your meditative image of God. Developing an even greater or deeper rapport and relationship with God will be extremely helpful both in the memory sessions and in your own devotional life.

Whatever decision you make, I, or your counselor, will respect and work with you on. Don't be afraid to discuss it with us.

Continuing Instructions for Memory Work with Meditative Images

In order for us to continue our work on your memories so that healing of your past can continue there are a few things that you'll find helpful between sessions. First, you need to rest. It is usually not wise to either exert your self or learn something else new in the first 24 hours following a memory session. In addition, we need you to select the next two to three memories you want to work on. Wait a couple days before doing that.

It is also appropriate to continue your meditation so that you can be prepared for the next session. Do not feel that we must continue with the memory work in the next session if you're not ready to do so. Sometimes it's good to stop or take a break before dealing with two to three additional memories especially if the last session was painful or the memories particularly difficult to deal with.

The other thing you need to do between sessions is to continue playing the new memories with your meditation. This allows each new memory to continue to take the place of the old one we have just dealt with. As each new memory becomes stronger, the old memory will continue to lose its grip on you and the affect it has had on your life to date. We need to take time to allow this to happen and move as gradually as necessary for this to occur. I would rather go slower and take longer than necessary than to go to faster and not allow time for the new memories to assimilate and replace the old ones.

You may come in for the next session prepared to work on new memories, continue to deal with the ones from the last session, or deal with something else if need be. In addition, don't be surprised if the memory work we did the last time releases new memories or additional memories that you hadn't previously remembered and that may need to be dealt with. Also don't be surprised if you begin to make changes in your current life or see the world differently as each memory is resolved. While this may or may not happen all at once or with a specific memory, it is to be expected that as your memories change, you will change.

This is the approach we will take until either all the memories are resolved and healed or you are ready for a break. Consider the above from week to week as we continue to work together until we are ready for the next step.

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