**ONLINE SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS**

Reminder Avoidance: Why People Hesitate to Disclose Their Insecurities to Friends

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**PILOT SURVEY (IN INTRODUCTION)**

Most participants responded that they have insecure aspects about themselves (96%). Among these participants, a majority of them wanted to talk to someone about these aspects of themselves (61.5%) and wanted to get their thoughts/feeling about these aspects of themselves off their chest (71.9%).

1) **Are there aspects of yourself that make you feel insecure and uncomfortable about yourself?**

**Yes**: 96% (96 out of 100)

**No:** 4% (4 out of 100)

2) **I wish I could talk to someone about these aspects of me.**

**Yes**: 61% (61 out of 100)

**No:** 39% (39 out of 100)

* Only Participants who replied Yes to Question #1

**Yes**: 61.5% (59 out of 96)

**No:** 38.5% (37 out of 96)

* Only Participants who replied No to Question #1

**Yes**: 50% (2 out of 4)

**No:** 50% (2 out of 4)

3) **I wish I could get my thoughts and feelings about these aspects of me off my chest.**

**Yes**: 71% (71 out of 100)

**No:** 29% (29 out of 100)

* Only Participants who replied Yes to Question #1

**Yes**: 71.9% (69 out of 96)

**No:** 28.1% (27 out of 96)

* Only Participants who replied No to Question #1

**Yes**: 50% (2 out of 4)

**No:** 50% (2 out of 4)

**PRE-REGISTERED EXCLUSION CRITERIA**

We applied the same one pre-registered exclusion criterion throughout all studies: Participants who did not complete the essay-writing task(s) as instructed (e.g., did not write anything; wrote irrelevant things) were excluded. Study 1 had an additional pre-registered exclusion criterion as this was an in-lab study in which participants had to participate as dyads of friends. Finally, across all studies, participants who did not complete the dependent variable (i.e., audience preference) were treated as missing data points and thus could not be analyzed. For details about each study, see below:

* **Study 1**: All participants passed the first pre-registered exclusion criterion of completing the essay-writing task as instructed. This study also had an additional pre-registered exclusion criterion that participants who report at the end of the study that they are actually not friends with the person they came to the lab with would also be excluded. All participants who passed both pre-registered exclusion criteria (*n* = 196) were included in the analyses. That is, out of 200 participants, two dyads contained at least one member who reported not being friends with the person they came to the lab with and, thus, failed to meet the pre-registered criterion of being friends with the person they came to the lab with. For these two dyads, we excluded both participants within each dyad (4 participants) from analyses.
* **Study 2:** All participants who passed the pre-registered exclusion criterion (*n* = 298) were included in the analyses. Specifically, out of 302 participants, four participants did not complete one or both of the essay-writing task(s) as instructed.
* **Study 3:** All participants who passed the pre-registered exclusion criterion (*n* = 217) were included in the analyses. Specifically, out of 222 participants, five participants did not complete one or both of the essay-writing tasks as instructed.
* **Study 4:** All participants who passed the pre-registered exclusion criterion (*n* = 1,203) were included in the analyses. Specifically, out of 1,259 participants, 55 participants who did not complete one or both of the essay-writing task(s) as instructed also did not respond to the dependent variable and were considered as missing data points; one additional participant who completed the essay-writing task but did not respond to the dependent variable was also considered as a missing data point.
* **Study 5:** All participants who passed the pre-registered exclusion criterion (*n* = 404) were included in the analyses. Specifically, out of 407 participants, three participants did not complete the essay-writing task as instructed.
* **Exploratory Insecurity-Disclosure Content Analysis Study:** All participants who passed the pre-registered exclusion criterion (*n* = 164) were included in the analyses. Specifically, out of 166 participants, two participants did not complete the essay-writing task as instructed.
* **Supplemental WebS1:** All participants passed the pre-registered exclusion criterion, but out of the 202 participants, one participant did not complete the ruminative tendencies measure, leaving 201 participants for final analysis.
* **Supplemental WebS2:** All participants (*N* = 203) passed the pre-registered exclusion criterion.

**STIMULI FOR STUDY 1**

**Independent variable**

**[Personal insecurity-disclosure condition]**

We would like you to think about **something about yourself that makes you feel insecure and uncomfortable about yourself**. That is, something **that makes you feel that you are not enough** or that you are not who you should be or desire to be.

Take a moment to vividly visualize what it is that makes you feel insecure about yourself.

Then, write about it in the space below. Please be as detailed as you can be in your description.

**[Neutral-disclosure condition]**

We would like you to think about **your daily routine and what it involves.**

Take a moment to vividly visualize your daily routine.

Then, write about it in the space below. Please be as detailed as you can be in your description.

**Dependent variable**

For the purpose of this social interaction research, we now need you toread what you have just written to another person.   
  
You may, however, choose your audience for this task. Your options are provided below.   
  
Please take a moment to think about which audience you would prefer toread what you have just written to.   
  
Then, indicate your preferred audience:   
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**Participant exclusion question**

Is the person you were with when you started this study a friend of yours? (Yes, No)

**STIMULI FOR STUDY 2**

**Independent variable (Within-subject)**

**[Essay 1 of 2: Control/Neutral essay]**

We would like you to think about your **last trip to the grocery store.**

Take a moment to vividly visualize it. Then, write about it in the space provided below:

**[Essay 2 of 2: Insecurity essay]**

We would like you to think about **something about yourself that makes you feel insecure and uncomfortable about yourself.** That is, something **that makes you feel that you are not enough** or that you are not who you should be or desire to be.

Take a moment to vividly visualize what it is that makes you feel insecure. Then, write about it in the space provided below:

**Dependent variable (repeated for each essay)**

Now please imagine that **you must read what you have just written to another person** and that **you could choose your audience.**

If you had to read what you have written to another person, which audience would you prefer to read it to?



**STIMULI FOR STUDY 3**

**Independent variable**

**Essay task 1**

We would like you to think about **a challenge or a mishap you faced recently** that you have nottold anyone yet.

Take a moment to visualize the experience. What happened? Please describe the situation as vividly as possible in the space provided below.

**Essay task 2**

**[Insecurity-focused disclosure condition]**

With every challenging experience, there are elements that make one feel insecure and

uncomfortable about themselves.

Now, please think about some of the **aspects of your experience that makes you feel**

**insecure and uncomfortable about yourself.** Perhaps there were aspects of the experience that made you **feel that you were not enough** or that you were not who you should be or desire to be.

Take a moment to think about the **aspects that make you insecure and uncomfortable**

**about yourself.** Then, write about such aspects in the space provided below:

**[Agitation-focused disclosure condition]**

With every challenging experience, there are elements that make one feel upset and agitated.

Now, please think about some of the **aspects of your experience that makes you feel**

**upset and agitated.** Perhaps there were aspects of the experience that made you **feel irritated or troubled.**

Take a moment to think about the **aspects that make you upset and agitated.** Then, write

about such aspects in the space provided below:

**Dependent variable**

Now please imagine that **you are in a situation where you need to talk about what you**

**have just written about these aspects with another person** (who is not part of what you

wrote about).

If you are in this situation and could choose your audience, **with which audience would you**

**prefer** to talk about what you have just written?



**STIMULI FOR STUDY 4**

**Independent variable 1: Perceived stranger reminder-likelihood**

**[Low condition]**

There are many reasons people talk to strangers.    
  
One common reason a person might talk to a stranger is that s/he will be able to **get something off his/her chest and forget about it**.  
  
In other words, people will sometimes decide to share a story with a stranger because, most likely, **they will never have to see the stranger ever again. This way, the story can be “buried” or “gone” once they part ways with the stranger**.   
  
Indeed, according to recent psychology research, 91% of people who have had an experience sharing a story with a stranger reported that **they no longer thought about the story any more after the interaction with the stranger.**

**[High condition]**

There are many reasons people talk to strangers.    
  
One common reason a person might talk to a stranger is that s/he will be able to **mull something over and keep thinking about it**.  
  
In other words, people will sometimes decide to share a story with a stranger because, most likely, **they will keep recalling and perhaps see the stranger again who now knows the story. This way, the story can “keep living” or be “called to mind” even after they part ways with the stranger**.

Indeed, according to recent psychology research, 91% of people who have had an experience sharing a story with a stranger reported that **they kept reflecting on the story even after the interaction with the stranger.**

**Independent variable 2: Disclosure**

**[Personal insecurity-disclosure condition]**

We would like you to think about **something about yourself that makes you feel insecure and uncomfortable about yourself**. That is, something **that makes you feel that you are not enough** or that you are not who you should be.

Take a moment to vividly visualize what it is that makes you feel insecure. Then, write about it in the space provided below. Please be as detailed as you can be in your description.

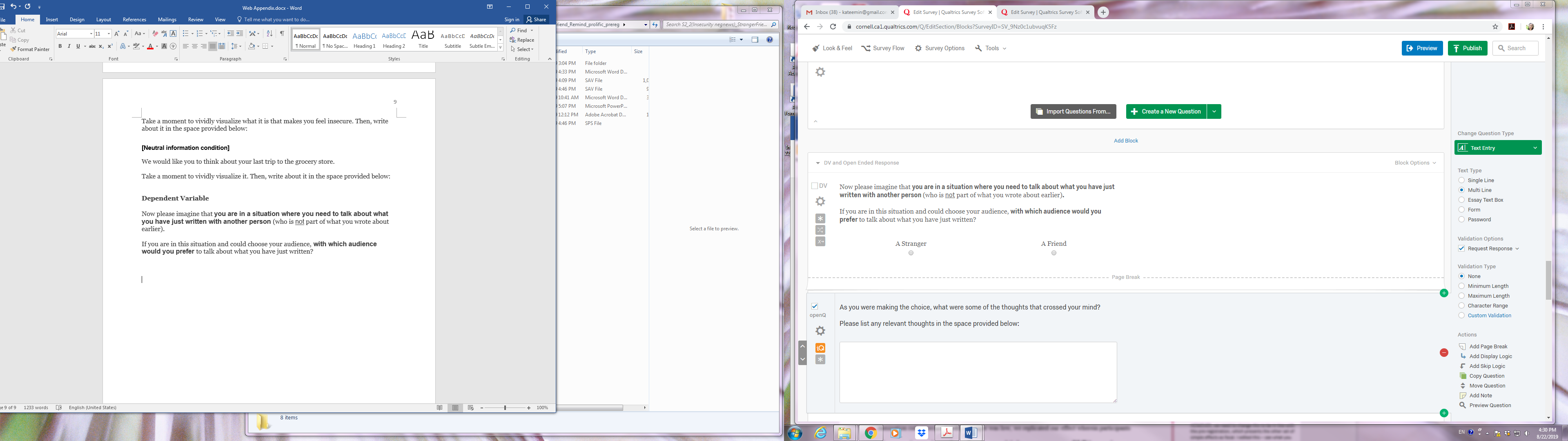
**[Neutral-disclosure condition]**

We would like you to think about your last trip to the grocery store. 

Take a moment to vividly visualize it. Then, write about it in the space provided below. Please be as detailed as you can be in your description.

**Dependent variable**

Now please imagine that **you are in a situation where you need to talk about what you have just written with another person**(who is not part of what you wrote about earlier)**.**   
  
If you are in this situation andcould choose your audience,**with which audience would you prefer**to talk about what you have just written?



**Exploratory item**

As you were making the choice, what were some of the thoughts that crossed your mind? Please list any relevant thoughts in the space provided below. (Open ended)

**STIMULI FOR STUDY 5**

**Independent variable**

**[Insecurity-triggering condition]**

We would like you to think about **a personal story** about a challenge or a mishap you faced in your life **that you have not told anyone yet because it makes you feel insecure and**

**uncomfortable about yourself.** That is, because it **makes you feel that you are not**

**enough** or that you are not who you should be or desire to be.

Take a moment to vividly visualize a personal story of yours that fits this description. Then, write

about it in the space provided below:

**[No-opportunity condition]**

We would like you to think about **a personal story** about a challenge or a mishap you faced in your life that **you have not told anyone yet because you did not yet get a chance to talk about it.** That is, because an **opportunity to talk about it had not presented itself** so far.

Take a moment to vividly visualize a personal story of yours that fits this description. Then, write about it in the space provided below:

**Dependent variable**

Now please imagine that **you are in a situation where you need to talk about what you**

**have just written with another person** (who is not part of what you wrote about earlier).

If you are in this situation and could choose your audience, **with which audience would you**

**prefer** to talk about what you have just written?

****

**Mediator: Anticipated pain of disclosed-content reminders** (averaged to form a composite index; *r* = .93, *p* < .001)

To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements?

* It would pain me to be reminded of the things I wrote about earlier

(1 = *Strongly disagr*ee to 7 = *Strongly agree*)

* Being reminded of the things I wrote about earlier would be a painful experience

(1 = *Strongly disagr*ee to 7 = *Strongly agree*)

**STIMULI FOR EXPLORATORY**

**INSECURITY-DISCLOSURE CONTENT ANALYSIS STUDY**

**Independent variable**

We would like you to think about something about yourself that makes you feel insecure and uncomfortable about yourself. That is, something that makes you feel that you are not enough or that you are not who you should be or desire to be.

**[Friend condition]**

Take a moment to vividly visualize what it is that makes you feel insecure.

Then, write about it in the space provided below. You can write as much or as little as you want.

However, when you write, please imagine that you are sharing this story with **a friend of yours who you likely would interact with again in the future:**

Please write as much or as little as you feel comfortable writing:

**[Stranger condition]**

Take a moment to vividly visualize what it is that makes you feel insecure.

Then, write about it in the space provided below. You can write as much or as little as you want.

However, when you write, please imagine that you are sharing this story with **a stranger who**

**you likely would never interact with again in the future:**

Please write as much or as little as you feel comfortable writing:

**Shame and Shyness sub-scales adapted from Izard et al. (1993)’s Differential Emotions Scale**

Imagining that you just shared your story with [target, piped here depending on condition], how do you feel at this very moment?A screenshot of a cell phone

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**STIMULI FOR SUPPLEMENTAL STUDY WEBS1**

**(MENTIONED IN GENERAL DISCUSSION)**

**Independent variable**

**[Personal insecurity-disclosure condition]**

We would like you to think about **something about yourself that makes you feel insecure and uncomfortable about yourself**. That is, something **that makes you feel that you are not enough** or that you are not who you should be or desire to be.

Take a moment to vividly visualize what it is that makes you feel insecure. Then, write about it in the space provided below. Please be as detailed as you can be in your description.

**[Neutral-disclosure condition]**

We would like you to think about your last trip to the grocery store.

Take a moment to vividly visualize it. Then, write about it in the space provided below. Please be as detailed as you can be in your description.

**Dependent variable**

Now please imagine that **you must read what you have just written to another person, face to face,** but that **you could choose your audience**. If you had to read what you have written to another person, which audience would you prefer to read it to?   
  
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**Exploratory moderator measure #1: Two items created for this research** (averaged to form a composite index; *r* = .60, *p* < .001)

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree to the following statements.

* Seeing someone who knows my weaknesses would make me think about my weaknesses (1 = *Strongly disagr*ee to 7 = *Strongly agree*)
* Facing someone who knows my weaknesses would make me feel like I am facing my own weaknesses (1 = *Strongly disagree* to 7 = *Strongly agree*)

**Exploratory moderator measure #2: Tendency to Ruminate Scale (Brinker & Dozois, 2009)** (Cronbach’s α = .93)

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**SUPPLEMENTAL STUDY WEBS1 METHOD AND RESULTS**

**Objective**

This supplemental study tested for moderation of our key effect by one’s ruminative tendencies as well as by one’s tendency to reflect on shortcomings as a result of encountering others who are aware of these shortcomings.

**Method**

**Participants and design.** Participants recruited from Prolific (*N* = 202; 105 female; *Mage* = 32.39 years, *SD* = 11.12, missing age and gender for *n* = 2) participated in this study. This study was pre-registered (<https://aspredicted.org/xe3w7.pdf>). Although all participants completed the essay-writing task, one participant did not complete the ruminative tendencies measure, leaving 201 for further analyses (gender and age descriptive statistics are the same as for the *N* = 202 sample). This study employed a 2 (disclosure: personal insecurity vs. neutral) × rumination/shortcoming-reflection (continuous measured moderators) between-subjects design, with audience preference as the dependent variable.

**Procedure.** Participants were first randomly assigned to one of the two disclosure conditions. Participants in the personal insecurity-disclosure condition were asked to think and write about something that makes them feel insecure and uncomfortable about themselves. Participants in the neutral-disclosure condition were asked to think and write about their recent trip to the grocery store. Then, all participants were asked to imagine being in a situation where they must read what they have written to another person, face to face, and were asked to indicate which audience they would prefer to read it to on a scale ranging from 1 = *a stranger* to 7 = *a friend (who is not part of the event they described earlier*).

Once participants indicated their preference for an audience, they completed two exploratory moderator measures: 1) two author-constructed shortcoming-reflection measurement items and 2) a 20-item measure of individual differences in tendency to ruminate (Tendency to Ruminate Scale: Brinker & Dozois, 2009). For the two author-constructed shortcoming-reflection items (*r* = .60, *p* < .001), participants indicated their agreement with two statements, “*Seeing someone who knows my weaknesses would make them think about my weaknesses*,” and “*Facing someone who knows my weaknesses would make me feel like I am facing my own weaknesses*” (1 = *Strongly disagree* to 7 = *Strongly agree*). For the 20-item Tendency to Ruminate Scale, participants were asked to indicate how well they thought each item described them (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *very well*); sample items from this scale are, “*I find that my mind often goes over things again and again*” and “*I find that some thoughts come to mind over and over again*.” The scale was highly reliable (Cronbach’s α = .93). The two-item shortcoming-reflection measure that we created was correlated with this established tendency to ruminate scale (*r* = .27, *p* < .001). Finally, participants provided basic demographic information.

**Results**

First, we conducted a one-way ANOVA with disclosure as the independent variable and audience preference as the dependent variable, which revealed a marginally significant effect, *F*(1, 199) = 3.57, *p* = .060, *d* = .34. Participants disclosing their personal insecurities were less likely to prefer a friend as their audience (*M* = 4.53, *SD* = 2.34) compared to those disclosing neutral personal information (*M* = 5.10, *SD* = 1.93), conceptually replicating our main findings.

Additionally, we tested for moderation by the tendency to ruminate. We conducted a linear regression on audience preference with disclosure (coded as 0 = neutral and 1 = personal insecurity), tendency to ruminate (mean-centered), and the disclosure × tendency to ruminate interaction as predictors. This analysis revealed a significant disclosure × tendency to ruminate interaction, B = -.70, SE = .28, *t* = -2.51, *p* = .013. To understand this interaction, we conducted a floodlight analysis (Hayes, 2013; Spiller et al., 2012). The analysis showed a significant Johnson-Neyman (JN) region for those who scored greater than 4.87 on the rumination scale (comprising 52.74% of participants), indicating that participants who reported being prone to rumination were less likely to prefer friends as their audience when disclosing their personal insecurities (vs. a neutral topic).

We also tested for moderation by the two-item shortcoming-reflection index that we created for this study. Specifically, we utilized a linear regression and regressed audience preference on disclosure (coded as 0 = neutral and 1 = personal insecurity), the composite shortcoming-reflection index (mean-centered), and the disclosure × composite shortcoming-reflection index interaction. This analysis revealed a directional but non-significant interaction, B = -.29, SE = .21, t = -1.44, *p* = .153. Although directional, we probed to explore the pattern of the interaction. The pattern of the interaction was similar to that observed with the tendency to ruminate as the moderator. For instance, a spotlight test at – 1 SD on the index showed a non-significant effect (t = -.34, *p* = .733), whereas a spotlight test at + 1 SD on the index showed a significant effect (t = -2.38, *p* = .018). Given that this composite index is correlated with the tendency to ruminate scale (*r* = .27, *p* < .001), it is worthwhile to note the similar interaction patterns.

**STIMULI FOR SUPPLEMENTAL STUDY WEBS2**

**(MENTIONED IN GENERAL DISCUSSION)**

**Independent variable**

**[Personal insecurity condition]**

We would like you to think about **something about yourself that make you feel insecure and**

**uncomfortable about yourself**. That is, something **that makes you feel that you are not**

**enough** or that you are not who you should be or desire to be.

Take a moment to vividly visualize what it is that makes you feel insecure. Then, write about it in the space provided below. Please be as detailed as you can be in your description.

**[Neutral personal information condition]**

We would like you to think about your last trip to the grocery store. 

Take a moment to vividly visualize it. Then, write about it in the space provided below. Please be as detailed as you can be in your description.

**Dependent variable**

Now please imagine that **you must read what you have just written to another person, face**

**to face,** but that **you could choose your audience**.

If you had to read what you have written to another person, which audience would you prefer to read it to?

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**Exploratory moderator measure #1: Two items created for this research** (See the items in Supplemental Study WebS1 Stimuli) (averaged to form a composite index; *r* = .61, *p* < .001)

**Exploratory moderator measure #2: Tendency to Ruminate Scale (Brinker & Dozois, 2009)** (See the scale items in Supplemental Study WebS1 Stimuli)(Cronbach’s α = .95)

**SUPPLEMENTAL STUDY WEBS2 METHOD AND RESULTS**

**Objective**

This supplemental study 1) tested whether disclosers would also prefer acquaintances less for disclosures of insecurities (vs. a neutral topic) and 2) again tested for moderation, using the same two moderator variables as in Supplemental Study WebS1.

**Method**

**Participants and design.** Participants recruited from Prolific (*N* = 203; 90 female; *Mage* = 34.85 years, *SD* = 12.70) participated in this study. This study was pre-registered (<https://aspredicted.org/ue9dr.pdf>). This study employed a 2 (disclosure: personal insecurity vs. neutral) × rumination/shortcoming-reflection (continuous measured moderators) between-subjects design, with audience preference as the dependent variable.

**Procedure.** This study was similar to Supplemental Study WebS1, except that we compared audience preference between a stranger and an acquaintance (rather than between a stranger and a friend, as in WebS1).

**Results**

First, we conducted a one-way ANOVA with disclosure as the independent variable and audience preference as the dependent variable, which revealed a significant effect, *F*(1, 201) = 9.33, *p* = .003, *d* = .43. Participants disclosing their personal insecurity were less likely to prefer an acquaintance as their audience (*M* = 3.88, *SD* = 2.35) compared to those disclosing a neutral topic (*M* = 4.75, *SD* = 1.64).

Additionally, we tested for moderation by the tendency to ruminate (Cronbach’s α = .95). We regressed audience preference on disclosure (coded as 0 = neutral and 1 = personal insecurity), tendency to ruminate (TRS, mean-centered), and the disclosure × TRS interaction as predictors. The analysis revealed a significant disclosure × TRS interaction, B = -.66, SE = .24, *t* = -2.76, *p* = .006. To understand this interaction, we conducted a floodlight analysis (Hayes, 2013; Spiller et al., 2012). The analysis showed a significant JN region for those who scored greater than 4.33 on the rumination scale (comprising 69.46% of participants), indicating that participants who reported being prone to rumination were less likely to prefer acquaintances when disclosing their personal insecurities (vs. a neutral topic).

We also tested for moderation by the two-item shortcoming-reflection index (*r* = .61, *p* < .001). Specifically, we utilized a linear regression and regressed preference for audience on disclosure (coded as 0 = neutral and 1 = personal insecurity), the shortcoming-reflection index (mean-centered), and the disclosure × shortcoming-reflection index interaction. This analysis revealed a marginally significant interaction, B = -.32, SE = .19, t = -1.68, *p* = .094. We then probed the marginally significant interaction to explore its pattern. The pattern was similar to that observed with the tendency to ruminate as the moderator. For instance, a spotlight test at – 1 SD on the index showed a non-significant effect (t = -.80, *p* = .423), whereas a spotlight test at + 1 SD on the index showed a significant effect (t = -3.21, *p* = .002). While this analysis is exploratory, it is worthwhile to note the similar interaction patterns, given that this index is correlated with the tendency to ruminate scale (*r* = .25, *p* < .001).

**PARTICIPANT ESSAY SAMPLES FOR STUDIES 1-5**

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| **Study 1** | **Personal Insecurity Condition** | **Neutral (Control) Condition** |
| Something that makes me feel insecure and uncomfortable is my social anxiety. I'm an introvert, so I struggle with handling a lot of social interaction or feeling comfortable in reaching out to people because I often think they might not want to put in the same effort into making relationships with me. This often gives me the feeling of isolation and a lack of confidence. | I wake up around 8am and eat breakfast before leaving my house around 8:30. I go to class and stay on campus until 5pm either doing school work or working out at the gym. Then I return home and make dinner. I start homework about 6:30 and finish until 11:30pm. I try to go to bed around midnight. |
| I think my physical health is something that makes me not enough. I have been overweight since middle school, and it has always been hard to me and it makes me insecure about how others see me and if someone would not like me because of my body image | I wake up; I hit snooze on my alarm about 5 times before I finally force myself up from my bed. I look at my closet, and haphazardly throw together an outfit that looks presentable. From there I quickly brush my hair, and apply some bb cream so I don't look as dead as I feel. This takes about fifteen minutes in total. From here i grab a protein bar and head out the door. |

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| **Study 2**  **(Within-Subject Design)** | **Essay 1 of 2: Neutral (Control)** | **Essay 2 of 2: Personal Insecurity** |
| My last trip to the grocery store was two days ago and I remember it well because I was picking up things to make sesame chicken in my new wok that I got for Christmas. I went aisle to aisle picking spices, flour, salt, chicken, oil and some drinks to go with. The total was only around three hundred dollars total because I bought in bulk. | I'm a physically fit guy and I workout daily but the thing I'm most insecure about is taking off my shirt still. I'm in shape and I have no reason to be insecure but I grew up being severely overweight so I've always had that mentality even now it just sticks in my head. |
| The last trip to the grocery store was very short. I was missing a few ingredients for that night's dinner so I went to a nearby one. When entering, the first thing that greeted me was the bakery where bread and pastries are baked, packaged, and sold in bundles or a la cart. Then was the produce. I went primarily for cucumbers and tomatoes so I grabbed what I needed; the cucumbers were on sale. I walked through the aisles in search of some soy sauce that I needed and headed to the cash register to pay. | I feel very insecure about my future. I have no idea what to do from now on and am afraid that I will be stuck in this dilemma for too long that it will end up too late for me to make something out of myself. There are a couple of events that have occurred over the last year that have placed me here, but I feel that using them as excuses is just a way for me to avoid any responsibility and that by using them I am just proving to others that I am not in fact worth the investment others have one me. |

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| **Study 3** | **Essay Task 1**  **Personal Challenge**  **(Same for All Participants)** | **Essay Task 2**  **Insecurity-Focused Condition**  **vs. Agitation-Focused (Control) Condition** |
| Despite having a looming deadline, I haven't been able to make progress on a grant proposal for over 2 weeks. While those around me see me doing work and being productive it's something that I continue to avoid working on with minor tasks such as cleaning, emails, other projects, etc. | **Insecurity-Focused:** I'm insecure about being lazy. Sometimes I am a workaholic and can be extremely hard on myself. In light of current events that narrative has given me a lot of anxiety about working. I don't want to seem like I am incapable of handling my current work load. My work is closely tied to my identity and if I fail at working I feel bad about myself |
| I have been losing motivation to be productive while staying at home during quarantine. I have been watching Netflix and Hulu all day long and scrolling on social media instead of getting ahead in my classes and preparing for online classes. | **Agitation-Focused:** I am upset that I have wasted two weeks doing nothing but relaxing. I wish I was more productive with my time and taken advantage of all of my free time. |
| One challenge I've had recently is losing weight. Since going back home, I've had the privilege to have access to way more food than I've been used to, and I've been overindulging, leading to a slight weight gain, I've always been slightly heavier so this has been a setback for me. | **Insecurity-Focused:** When I was in high school, I had an extremely fast metabolism that allowed me to eat junk food every day and still manage to be under weight. During freshman year of college, my metabolism began slowing down and I noticed myself gaining weight quickly. I have gained around 15 pounds since college (I am a sophomore now), and although I am currently at a healthy weight, it makes me insecure because of how effortlessly skinny I used to be without even trying. Now, I have to watch what I eat in order to keep a small figure. |
| Recently, in about the last two months, I have been struggling with my eating habits and disordered eating. With no previous history of eating disorders in my family and my best friend currently in recovery from anorexia, I feel as though my eating problem isn't as drastic as those of other people and I know and therefore I don't want to tell anybody. When I came back to [XX] after winter break, I immediately fell into a depressive state, likely caused by increased school work, homesickness and seasonal depression. Instead of dealing with stress head-on, I remember trying to control my eating as a form of handling this difficult period. I would sit down for lunch with friends and eat everything in sight at the cafeteria. Then, I would be so full that I wouldn't be able to eat for 24 hours, creating a vicious cycle of binge eating and starvation. It was so challenging to get out of this cycle and took me more than 2 months to break this dangerous habit. | **Agitation-Focused:** I feel like my disordered eating affected every single aspect of my spring semester, which was already cut short because of coronavirus. Instead of hanging out with friends, I would cry at [XX] because I felt so hopeless that my eating would never be normal. Instead of studying enough for my classes, I would focus on not fainting from dehydration and starvation in the library. It feels as though I wasted time obsessing over food and eating and now that school on the [XX] campus is over for the semester, I feel upset at myself for how I handled stress and depression. I also feel irritated at myself for not seeking help sooner and addressing my problem when it first began. |

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| **Study 4** | **Personal Insecurity Condition** | **Neutral (Control) Condition** |
| I am insecure about arguing with people. I have been told I argue to much, so when I argue I feel insecure and should stop. | In the grocery store I bought a bunch of vegetables and lunch meat for my brothers, my mom is too busy to go to the grocery tore so she will just pay me back. |
| I feel insecure when thinking about the future. There is a lot that must happen (haven't finished undergrad yet) before I think I will be where I would like to be. Having a good job is important to me, and I am worried about the future and question whether or not I am doing enough. | I walked into the store, strolled through the deli, then proceeded to make my way through the frozen food section before picking yogurts from the dairy case. |

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| **Study 5** | **Insecurity-Triggering Condition** | **No-Opportunity (Control) Condition** |
| I have a job where I give advice to people and answer questions. There is one person who has been with the company longer and who I asked advice from once. Now it seems that every time she thinks I'm not handling something as she would, she tells me what to do. It makes me feel like I'm being judged all the time about the quality of my work and I'm being found incompetent. | A challenge I've faced recently has been with my boss, who is increasingly requiring deadlines and projects to be completed by unreasonable deadlines. For instance, she has been giving us about 2 days to complete work that takes around 1 week, if not more, and piling on more work on top of it. |
| Recently, my girlfriend broke up with me. It was heart-breaking and sent me in a deep depression. I haven't had the courage to tell my parents or family yet because I'm scared of what they will think of me. The situation makes me feel very insecure because it's essentially a blow to my self-esteem and a tough pill to swallow. | I recently decided to take a break from my girlfriend because of two reasons - 1. she was not respecting my parents and my family and their wishes, and 2. she wasn't respecting mine either. On some moments, it almost felt like she was belittling me for having my own wants and needs and that is not what a relationship is about. I also took time from her because I wanted to also indirectly show my family that I was making a stand for myself and the family as well. She has been very emotional about it since we started and I am a bit less so - more because I've mentally prepared myself for it and it still sucks. |

*Note.* The datasets containing all essays are available at Open Science Framework (https://osf.io/a5wxj/?view\_only=3ae954ab23c54a0d8bea1bb9020d0da9). Any potentially identifying information (e.g., specific physical characteristic details of an individual person, institution, or location) within participants’ open-ended responses has been replaced with “[XX]” in the open data files (also in the examples above).

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