

Memory as a Way of Knowing part one

How do we know through memory?

If memory is what we carry, then we carry: skills; the past; past experiences; shared knowledge of a personal nature (family, friends); shared knowledge gained formally (school, study, training); shared knowledge gained informally

MEMORY IS PART OF OUR PERSONAL IDENTITY.

QUESTION FOR SELF-REFLECTION:

To what extent is memory part of our personal identity.

QUESTION FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION:

How does memory as a Way of Knowing intersect with other Ways?

Types of memory:

PRECEDURAL MEMORY: Our skill sets (encoded information that we do not consciously recall)

Another way to consider this is that we have become Unconsciously Competent

DECLARATIVE MEMORY: Facts and information (knowledge we have learned)

Declarative memory can be broken down further: **SEMANTIC** (memory based on information)

EPISODIC (memory based on experience)

POINT OF CONSIDERATION: How accurate are we?

Eyewitness testimony

Elizabeth Loftus; TED talk:

What are we to take from the following (US Supreme Court ruling of 08/09):

“Memory is a constructive, dynamic and selective process.”

Loftus says we have to consider THREE STAGES OF MEMORY:

ACQUISITION

RETENTION

RETRIEVAL

Eyewitness testimony is not nearly as reliable:

1. Problems with the nature of instructions given to witnesses
2. Problems with the passage of time between **OBSERVATION and IDENTIFICATION**
3. Problems with the composition of police line ups
4. Problems with the administration of identification (what led to the **DOUBLE BLIND SYSTEM**)

Therefore, **METHODOLOGY** is a significant consideration when we think about **ERROR**.

Memory and Intuition:

HINDSIGHT BIAS: we tend to edit out aspects of past events; further, generally speaking, we tend to cast ourselves in a better light or more in keeping with who we presently are.

We tend to edit out aspects that do not lead to the linear conclusion of:

I knew it all along

Hindsight bias is closely linked to **CONFIRMATION BIAS**

Confirmation bias: We interpret our past in ways that are consistent with how we are now. We flatter our pasts.

AVAILABILITY HEURISTIC: a shortcut that relies on that which comes immediately to mind; that which we immediately recall we deem more important; however, this may not be the case, and we tend to not be as accurate as we think.

We judge how likely something is to occur based on information readily retrieved from sources like recent media coverage and current events.

FUHGEDDABOUDIT:

Loftus: We have the ability to edit out harmful, haunting sequences of our memory; she says of this ability: "accurate memory, in some instance, would simply get in the way."

Forgetting helps us recover from distressing past events. We can **WILFULLY** forget; it is similar to that **IMPULSE CONTROL** we develop over time.

How do you interpret the following:

Loftus: "forgetting enables us to make sense of the world by clearing a path to thoughts that are truly valuable."

Solomon Shereshesky and the failure to forget
Jill Bolte Taylor

Wickelgren Try to Forget...

SUGGESTIBILITY OF MEMORY

FALSE MEMORY SYNDROME: www.fmslonline.org

Loftus says creating false memories in others can be easily done by way of suggestibility of patients; the influence of therapists; the nature of questions.

FRAGILITY OF MEMORY: memory is susceptible to suggestion; we can be manipulated and persuaded to believe in a particular biased slant on past events

HYPNOSIS AND SUGGESTIBILITY (look up h-s test online)

FLASHBULB MEMORIES: emotional shading of memories; these memories remain vivid over time to us although they tend to be far more inaccurate than we perceive as we tend to rely on "I swear it happened."