

MOST CHILDHOOD MEMORIES VANISH, BUT WHY?

Exercises based on the audio from <https://www.npr.org/2011/06/07/137036454/most-childhood-memories-vanish-but-why?t=1539816706257>

You are going to hear an interview in which they discuss the topic of memory, infantile amnesia and why some memories are more permanent than others.

Listen to the first half of the program and answer the questions.

1. What does the Canadian research show regarding early memories (before two) and later memory? What is infantile amnesia?
2. What theory is behind the lack of memory or infantile amnesia?
3. What is the analogy of computers, google and the brain about?
4. What is generic memory?
5. What is a solidified memory?
6. What is Stephanie's memory? Why is it so vivid in her memory?
7. What is the role of crying and tears?
8. What happened to the Swiss behaviourist Jean Piaget?
9. Why is it 'easy' to have false memories?

KEY

1. What does the Canadian research show regarding early memories (before two) and later memory? What is infantile amnesia?

The Canadian research shows that the earlier the memory is recalled, the more accurate it is. Whereas the later that memory is retrieved (10 or so), the more difficult it is to remember it, even with cues or hints. The children didn't recognize the memories as their own.

2. What theory is behind the lack of memory or infantile amnesia?

According to the researcher, it seems that it is necessary to have some rudimentary language for the brain to store and retrieve those memories. According to the researcher, she believes that it seems necessary to follow the same sequence, the same pathway of fragmented memories in order to be called up again, and there may not be enough pathways yet.

3. What is the analogy of computers, google and the brain about?

She says that sometimes it's like you're searching for information in your brain as a general concept, and the ideas are retrieved.

4. What is generic memory?

It's the general memory of the things, the concepts.

5. What is a solidified memory?

A memory that 'sticks with you' that you recall, more even than the event itself.

6. What is Stephanie's memory? Why is it so vivid in her memory?

She remembers saying hi to her mum when she was hanging laundry, and her mum turned around and asked her 'Who are you? I don't know who you are!' as a joke, but the little girl believed her and freaked out, she was only two or three. She didn't know she was joking and was terrified.

Probably every time she recalls the memory and retells it, it gets stronger in her mind.

7. What is the role of crying and tears?

They studied people in Emergency Rooms. The more the child was crying, the more they remembered from the traumatic experience. They get embedded in our memory more easily.

8. What happened to the Swiss behaviourist Jean Piaget?

He said he had a vivid memory of being kidnapped in Paris at the age of 2, with all kinds of detailed information. It turned out that the nanny had fabricated the whole story. But the story had been told by the family so many times, that it became a false memory.

9. Why is it 'easy' to have false memories?

Because memories are like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, and sometimes you connect them with information that is not correct.