

THE SCIENCE OF MEMORY
AND THE ART OF FORGETTING

Remember



LISA

GENOVA

New York Times Bestselling Author of
STILL ALICE

BOOK CLUB KIT

Discussion Questions



1. Did you imagine the penny at beginning of the book? Did you envision it with 100% accuracy? If not, why did you misremember what a penny looks like even though you've seen one hundreds of times?
2. The author suggests that because we remember what we pay attention to, we might want to be mindful about what we focus on. What do you pay attention to? Might that change now, having read the book?
3. What are some things you remember from ten, twenty, thirty years ago? Having read *Remember*, why do you think you've retained these experiences and information and not others?
4. List some things you can do based on "muscle memory." What did it take to create those memories/abilities?
5. Flashbulb memories are memories for experiences that carried big emotion, were highly unexpected, felt personal, and can be vividly recalled years later. Do you have any flashbulb memories?
6. Memories for what happened can change over time and with each recall. Might some of your memories have drifted from how events actually played out?
7. Why do we experience more "tip of the tongue" moments with proper names, titles, and places versus regular nouns?
8. Prospective memory is your memory for what you intend to do later, and all human brains are poorly designed for this kind of recall. What kinds of external aids can you use to augment your prospective memory (dis)ability?
9. We tend to villainize forgetting. Has your perspective on forgetting changed? In what instances might forgetting be beneficial? Where can you relax?
10. How much sleep do you get? Knowing how essential a good night's sleep is for memory, are you reconsidering your nighttime routine or changing your sleep habits?
11. What's your biggest takeaway from the book?
12. Has your relationship with your memory changed? How so?

TOP TEN TAKEAWAYS FROM
Remember
 YOU WON'T WANT TO FORGET

1. Effective remembering often requires forgetting.
2. Attention is essential for creating a memory of anything. You can't remember what you didn't pay attention to.
3. We don't remember most of our lives.
4. A full night's sleep enhances your ability to establish long-term memories and reduces your risk of Alzheimer's.
5. Your memories of what happened are full of additions, omissions, elaborations, and errors.
6. Being chronically stressed about your memory will impair it.
7. Emotional experiences are better remembered than neutral ones.
8. Repetition makes your memories stronger.
9. Prospective memory is your memory for what you need to do later. Our brains are terrible at this. Use To-Do lists, calendars, and sticky notes instead of your brain.
10. We remember what is meaningful.

Remember: The Science of Memory and the Art of Forgetting by Lisa Genova



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Meet Lisa Genova

Neuroscientist and acclaimed novelist Lisa Genova wants the world to understand human memory. In her first book of nonfiction, *Remember: The Science of Memory and the Art of Forgetting*, Genova teaches the reader how we remember, why we forget, how to improve memory, and how we can protect our memories for the future. Here are some questions Lisa answered about her passion for the science behind memory and the writing of *Remember*.



Q WHY DID YOU WRITE REMEMBER?

A I'd been talking to audiences around the world about Alzheimer's and dementia for over a decade. During the Q&A's and book signings, the conversation always shifted from Alzheimer's to memory in general. Without exception, everyone was concerned. Many were afraid. Most carried misconceptions and a lot of confusion about what is normal forgetting and what is not.

Whenever I had the chance to explain to these folks why they forget things like names, where they parked their car, and whether they already took their vitamin today, when I describe how memory is created and retrieved and why we forget—not because of disease pathology but because of how our brains have evolved—I could instantly see the transformation. These folks now had a new relationship with their memory. They were now relieved and empowered.

But offering this kind of life-changing insight to a handful or even theater full of people at a time wasn't a very efficient way of disseminating this education. So, I set aside time from my novel-writing gig to write this book.

Q WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE CHAPTERS?

A My favorite chapters have to do with understanding why we forget. Why do we experience Tip of the Tongue? Why do we walk into a room to get something and have no memory of why we came in there? Why do we go to the store to buy milk and return home with a bag full of groceries but no milk? These chapters are fun because these normal lapses in memory are so universal. We can all relate. And the answers are easy to comprehend and illuminating. I'm excited for readers to understand what's behind their everyday episodes of forgetting. I also love the chapters on sleep and stress and explaining how these impact memory.

Q WHAT DO YOU HOPE READERS WILL GAIN AFTER READING THIS BOOK?

A It should feel like a friendly conversation and not an academic lecture. I really want to help people understand memory—both remembering and forgetting—so they can improve it and protect it, and mostly so they can relax about it. Chronically stressing about normal memory lapses can actually create a memory problem!

Once we understand memory and become familiar with how it functions, its incredible strengths and maddening weaknesses, its natural vulnerabilities and potential superpowers, we can both vastly improve our ability to remember and feel less rattled when we inevitably forget. We can set educated expectations for our memory and create a better relationship with it. We don't have to fear it anymore. And that can be life-changing.

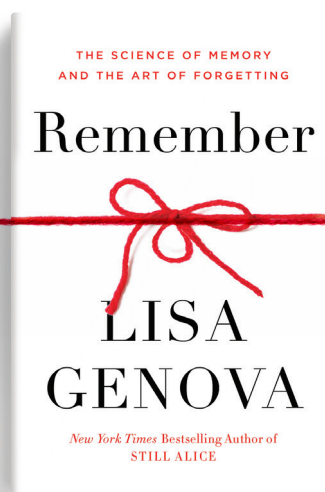
Q WITHOUT GIVING AWAY THE WHOLE BOOK, WHY DO WE REMEMBER CERTAIN THINGS BUT FORGET OTHERS?

A The single biggest reason why we don't remember something: we didn't pay attention to it in the first place. We can't remember what we don't pay attention to.

Q IF YOU COULD OFFER ADVICE FOR KEEPING OUR MEMORIES SAFE, WHAT WOULD YOU SUGGEST?

A In terms of getting the memory into our brains, we remember what we pay attention to and what is meaningful. In terms of strengthening that memory to ensure that we can recall it later:

1. *We remember what we repeat, so practicing, rehearsing, self-testing, and reminiscing all reinforce memory.*
2. *Chronic stress impairs memory; but we live in a continually stressful world. Meditation, yoga, and practices in gratitude and mindfulness help to counter the stress response and protect your memories from eroding due to chronic stress.*
3. *Sleep deprivation causes amnesia. Getting 7–9 hours of sleep every night hits the SAVE button on memories created today and reduces our risk of developing Alzheimer's tomorrow.*



ON SALE 3/23/2021