

SEE MEMORY

Written by

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BLACK SCREEN

ERIC KANDEL

Memory is one of the most magical capabilities of mind. Without it life is made up of disconnected fragments that do not have any meaning. Memory is the glue that binds our mental life together. We are what we remember.

DANIELA SCHILLER

Memory is a dynamic process and each time we retrieve a memory it may change

ROBERT ELVOLVE

Like a kids game of telephone, you tell something to somebody five times and it's different the fifth time then it was the first.

CHERYL DOLLINGER BROWN

It changes as our cognitive abilities change. So something you remember when you were little - when you remember it later, you add to your understanding of what you are remembering.

PAUL BROWDE

People are absolutely sure that their memories are the way that it happened. And the truth is that every time you remember, it's an act of imagination. You're imagining something in the moment, about how it was then, and things can change along the way.

DANIELA SCHILLER

One way to freeze a memory may be through story telling. Storytelling revives the memory like a visit to the original event.

ROBERT ELVOLVE

Memory is visual—they're images that we add a story to. We add the drama, we add the dialog, we add the meaning.

DANIELA SCHILLER

Most of the brains processing is unconscious and unavailable to us, and a lot of it is influencing the very little we are conscious of.

CHERYL DOLLINGER BROWN

There are experiences that we have that control our behavior and our connections to people. We are not usually aware of those things. We can understand them, we can learn them, we can make the unconscious conscious.

PAUL BROWDE

Explicit memories are memories that you have a story for. You have words, you have images, but the images are part of a narrative already, so it's any memory that we already have. And people generally talk about explicit memories -- they don't talk about the memories that don't yet have language. Implicit memory is memory the body remembers. There are body sensations, there may be moods...

CHERYL DOLLINGER BROWN

You have the feeling but you don't know what it's connected to.

DANIELA SCHILLER

Sometimes you're operating on automatic pilot. You don't really get what happened - so the trauma, or the emotional response to it, can happen even years later.

PIANO PAINTING

PAUL BROWDE

Any two people can come together and out of their two separate stories, can create a third story that's bigger, different, not anything that either of their own stories is alone. Listening shapes telling. If you think of listening as a bowl and telling as a liquid, the telling takes the shape of the bowl that is the listening. The question for me is, how have people been listened to in the past that may get in the way of their telling their story?

GERALD EPSTEIN

Life has been for most people, suffering, and that suffering is a dismembering. There have been stoppages that have been put in the way, discontinuities.

SILVANA RIGGIO

We can't force change, we can only do it at our own time. And the pain that we have to face to change is different for everybody. Sometimes at the right time and the right place, someone tells you something very important and you are able to change.

PAUL BROWDE

People have post traumatic stress,  
because they don't know that it's  
over. The body and the brain still  
believe that it's happening right  
now, even though people consciously  
know that it's not. The brain hasn't  
yet laid down that experience as  
being in the past.  
That's where I see the body  
remembering more than the mind  
remembering.

SILVANA RIGGIO

We may remember it more, or not  
remember it at all. And that's  
where there is a fault in the lack  
of the memory.

ROBERT ELVOLVE

We may remember it and feel  
something about it, or not remember  
and not feel anything about it.  
On and off, just like a light  
switch.

PAUL BROWDE

People live with memories that  
they've never shared with another  
person. So they live with those  
memories in a very lonely way, and  
the memories have a very particular  
quality because they're alone.  
Someone letting me in to be with  
them and really allowing me to  
connect with them transforms the  
memories. They're not alone in  
having those memories anymore. I'm  
there with them.

DANIELA SCHILLER

Emotional memories are every strong  
and very persistent and you're  
constantly subjected to them.  
And we usually think that this is  
just the reality—and we are stuck  
with these emotions.

(MORE)

## DANIELA SCHILLER (CONT'D)

But it turns out that are memories  
are flexible.  
We are not a slave to our past the  
way we think we are.

## PAUL BROWDE

People come in with life, and life  
can't be fixed, life happens.  
And it's trusting that listening is  
enough, listening is a gift.  
Focused, conscious, present  
listening in the moment, with no  
distraction.

## SILVANA RIGGIO

I strongly believe for all of us,  
that no matter who we have in front  
of us, they have something good.  
And it's finding that positive  
thing, and saying "I see this,  
don't you see it?" So helping the  
person to hold onto the good thing,  
to the good part of self and  
then build on it and grow from it.

## DANIELA SCHILLER

We are in a constant investigation  
of the past, trying to make sense  
of it, trying to remember. Instead  
of letting it be and listening to  
who we are now. Because all of our  
emotional experiences are carved  
into our emotional reactions.

## ROBERT ELVOLVE

People develop a story that  
describes how they became who they  
are.

PAUL BROWDE

So we rewrite our stories from a different perspective. We tell a different story.

GERALD EPSTEIN

Like an artist would discover something new when you have your pallet, your easel and canvas, and you start, and something new begins to emerge out of that emptiness.

ROBERT ELVOLVE

If you could make a picture in your mind, like a painting or film, and be the director of the scene, and try different takes on it, you'd find the takes that enable you to feel differently. (repetitive)

PAUL BROWDE

So you can look at any story of the past and tell it multiple ways. You can think of there being a dominant narrative to people's lives— You find other stories that compete with that narrative. You support the non-dominant narratives, and strengthen them, so that people have many different stories that they start to tell. You're not only an angry person; you're an angry person, you're a joyful person, an envious person, a childlike person. You've got all these different parts to yourself, and you can tell stories about each one of those parts.

## DANIELA SCHILLER

You think you are remembering the past, but you're actually telling a story about the present. In a way it's liberating- if you're not bound to your past, you're left with listening to who you are now.

## PAUL BROWDE

And there's something about being able to experience joy. And it's the joy of the moment, of just being alive.

Even in the face of all the pain and all the stories, there's still the capacity to value this moment.