



# The Memory Illusion: Remembering, Forgetting, and the Science of False Memory

By Julia Shaw

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## The Memory Illusion: Remembering, Forgetting, and the Science of False Memory By Julia Shaw

Think you have a good memory? Think again. Memories are our most cherished possessions. We rely on them every day of our lives. They make us who we are. And yet the truth is they are far from being the accurate record of the past we like to think they are. True, we can all admit to having suffered occasional memory lapses, such as entering a room and immediately forgetting why, or suddenly being unable to recall the name of someone we've met dozens of times. But what if our minds have the potential for more profound errors, that enable the manipulation or even outright fabrication of our memories? In *The Memory Illusion*, forensic psychologist and memory expert Dr. Julia Shaw uses the latest research to show the astonishing variety of ways in which our brains can indeed be led astray. She shows why we can sometimes misappropriate other people's memories, subsequently believing them to be our own. She explains how police officers can imprison an innocent man for life on the basis of many denials and just one confession. She demonstrates the way radically false memories can be deliberately implanted, leading people to believe they had tea with Prince Charles, or committed crimes that never happened. And she reveals how, in spite of all this, we can improve our memory through simple awareness of its fallibility. Fascinating and unnerving in equal measure, *The Memory Illusion* offers a unique insight into the human brain, challenging you to question how much you can ever truly know about yourself.

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#### Review

"Truly fascinating." -- Steve Wright, BBC Radio 2 "Shaw's debut book is a spryly paced, fun, sometimes frightening exploration of how we remember - and why everyone remembers things that never truly happened ... Her book is equal parts breezy guide through the recent lessons we've learned about memory, and a loving tribute to the sometimes eccentric researchers who toiled away in the laboratory to uncover them ... Shaw's quirky charm enlivens the book throughout." Pacific Standard "Illuminating and instructive" The Tablet

#### About the Author

**Dr Julia Shaw** is a senior lecturer and researcher in the Department of Law and Social Sciences at London South Bank University, and is one of only a handful of experts in the world who conduct research on complex memory errors related to emotional personal events—so-called "rich false memories." Dr Shaw has published research articles in various international academic journals, has written textbook chapters, is a regular contributor to the popular science magazine *Scientific American*, and gives guest lectures and conference presentations around the world.

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