

The Art of Ignoring Things

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The Atlantic:

Let's begin with a little experiment: Whatever you do, as you're reading this short article, don't think about polar bears.

This is, you may have recognized, a classic thought exercise from the writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky. In *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions*, in a passage that launched a thousand psychology theses, he wrote, "Try to pose for yourself this task: not to think of a polar bear, and you will see that the cursed thing will come to mind every minute."

...

"I'm interested in trying to make people better at finding stuff," said Corbin Cunningham, a graduate fellow in the Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences at Hopkins, and the lead author of [a study](#) published last month in the journal *Psychological Science*. "Imagine you're a professional searcher like a radiologist. The act of finding something kind of comes with two parts: It comes with knowing what you're looking for and being able to disassociate from distracting information."

Read the whole story: [The Atlantic](#)