

Want to improve your memory? Oh, forget it

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The better you can forget, the better you'll be able to remember, scientists now say.

To remember facts that are important in your life today, you have to be able to let go of information that you no longer need, says Benjamin Storm, an assistant professor at the University of Illinois in Chicago.

“For example, if someone asks you who is the current Speaker of the House, you might remember Newt Gingrich or Nancy Pelosi,” explains Storm, co-author of a study on the subject published in *Current Directions in Psychological Science*. “That, of course, is incorrect. So you have to have a way of not thinking about Gingrich and Pelosi, so you can remember that the current Speaker is John Boehner.”

Your brain is stuffed full of information and for you to have important information at your fingertips — or the tip of your tongue — it has to forget facts that aren't currently needed. It's like your belongings: Important stuff you might store on your desk. Less important stuff you'll toss up in the attic. You can get the stuff out of the attic if you really need it, but it's harder to access.

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