



Soul Matters

What does it mean to be
a people of MEMORY?



Small Group

November 2018

What Does It Mean To Be A People of Memory?

We start this month with the words of a Soul Matters participant who wants to remain anonymous:

“So I was out for a walk this afternoon and got to thinking a little more about memory, and about the various ways in which we are called back to some previous event or feeling, especially through scent (a certain combination of rotting orange peels and other vegetation takes me right back to the market in Dar es Salaam, and sun on pine needles takes me back to our summer hideouts in the woods) or music, which is so much easier to remember than prose. I think especially of the song, “In the Still of the Night,” which I can sing verbatim, because when I was in junior high we used to take class field trips from White Plains to NYC and sing it all the way there.

It’s all got me thinking about what is it that takes you back, and where it takes you – and, most importantly, how this remembering feels holy? “In the Still of the Night” wasn’t holy, exactly, but it represented community, a whole busload of kids singing together, getting beyond the teenage cliques and the need to be popular or cool. There are other memories that take me directly to the holy – dark vaulted rafters, from a church in Philadelphia where I went for a youth conference. Sitting in the Sunday morning service, I had my first real experience of the presence of God in those rafters – as a total agnostic, if not atheist at that point in my life. Or standing on a mountain trail in the sunlight, totally alone feeling the immensity and the holiness of the moment, the glory of the mountains and the vastness of the sky. All of them are memories that have enormous power in my life still.”

Our friend asks, “What is it that takes you back, and where does it take you?” These may be our most important questions this month. “What takes you back?” invites us to see memory as having its own volition. Not a skill we manipulate, but a sacred energy that “wants” something from us, or “hopes” something for us. And “Where does it take you?” Well, that’s a big question too. The space of memory is elusive. Mysterious. Seemingly beyond our grasp. Who can really say “where” it is? But here’s what we do know: it is in the space of memory that we are somehow held together, and also re-assembled. As we remember, we are re-membered. In that space, memories become these self-animated threads that weave the pieces and parts of us into this more complete thing we call “me” and “you.”

It’s so humbling, and remarkable!

Which makes it all the more sad that throughout much of our history, we Unitarian Universalists have not been overly nice to memory. We’ve given it the label, “tradition,” and treated it mostly as something that holds us back. Tradition, we say, cuts us off from a direct experience with the holy and tries to shape us rather than allowing us the freedom to shape ourselves. This attitude has left us, as a faith, wary of the past, depicting it simply as a place where one gets stuck.

But this is changing, and our Soul Matters friend captures this change perfectly. For her the past is not a place that traps us; it’s more like soil that clings tightly to our roots in order to nourish and stabilize us. If memory had a voice, it wouldn’t sing “remember me.” It would call out, “don’t forget who you are.”

And so, friends, this month, may that be our charge: To allow memory to flow through us in order that it may patch us back together and keep us whole.

Happy re-membering, re-assembling and re-collecting!

Our Spiritual Exercises

Option A : The Memento That Matters

We all have one: a memento that holds one of our favorite memories. The physicality of these objects somehow gives our memories more “substance” and staying power. But they also have a way of getting knocked off the mantle or tucked away in a dusty closet. We lose them. And in doing so, we forget.

So you are invited this month to spend some time dusting off one of your treasured “memory objects” and getting it back into clear view. What value, relationship, aspiration needs to return to the center of your life? What object symbolizes this for you? Maybe it’s a picture of your family that needs put back on your office desk to remind you that your heart lies somewhere other than that desk. Maybe it’s the peace sign t-shirt from your “radical days.” Maybe it’s that old pair of pointe shoes that used to hang by your dresser. Maybe it’s that old train car—the first one your dad bought for you and soon became part of that miniature railroad you and he built together. Whatever it is. Find it and return it to its central place, so it can return those memories back to you.

Bring your memento to the group and be ready to share what surprised you most about the adventure of finding it once again.

Some inspiration to help you along your way...

- Six tips for using mementos to keep happy memories vivid:
<https://gretchenrubin.com/2008/04/this-wednesday-2/>
- Childhood Mementos You Should Keep:
<https://lifestyle.allwomenstalk.com/childhood-mementos-you-should-keep>
- What is your favorite family memento?
<https://www.wikitree.com/g2g/597107/question-of-the-week-what-is-your-favorite-family-memento>

Option B: Your Earliest Memory

What's your earliest memory? Spend some time this month not only remembering it but exploring why you remember it. A simple way to do this is to ask: Why have I held on to this memory for so long? Why has it been holding on to me? What it is trying to give me? Who helped me remember it? Keep in mind that you’re not trying to remember your most profound memory; just your first.

Come to your group ready to share not only the story of this first memory but - more importantly - the story of how it’s shown up throughout your life with little nudges and reminders of its own.

To help you on your way, make some time for this visual meditation:

<http://www.exploratorium.edu/memory/earlymemory/index.html>

And here are some additional resources to help you dig deeper:

- The weird science behind our earliest memories:
<https://www.newstatesman.com/2018/04/science-behind-first-earliest-memories-weird->
- Why do memories stick into adulthood?
http://www.slate.com/articles/life/family/2012/04/children_s_memories_toddlers_remember_better_than_you_think_.html
- What’s Your Earliest Memory?

- http://www.slate.com/articles/life/family/2012/04/what_s_your_earliest_memory_how_old_were_you_.html
Remembering, by William Stafford
<https://wordsoftheyear.com/2018/07/02/remembering-by-william-stafford/>

Option C:

The Memory Shared at Your Funeral

Our dance with memory is about looking forward as well as looking back. Our life is driven not just by the desire to collect good memories, but also by the hope that we will be remembered well. Memory's question is not just "Do you remember?" but "How do you want to be remembered?"

So this month, you are invited to become a bit more aware of how you want to be remembered. Here's your focus question:

*If you had to limit the memories shared at your funeral to three,
what would they be?*

And here's the additional twist: before you answer that questions, make room for three conversations:

1. Ask your spouse or life-partner what three memories they would to tell
2. Ask your child or parent which three they'd pick.
3. Ask your newest or oldest friend what'd they'd choose.

After comparing the results of all three conversations, make your three picks. Of course, the exercise is less about what you pick and more about the similarities and differences between everyone's selections. Come to your group ready to share what surprised you about the conversations and how they shaped your final three picks.

Some inspiration to help you along your way...

- Live for Your Eulogy not Your Resume:
<http://www.dailygood.org/story/1537/should-you-live-for-your-resume-or-your-eulogy-david-brooks/>
- Remembering That One Day You Will Die - Video Meditation
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=su9oOdnT8w0>
- Memento Mori — How Remembering Your Mortality Improves Your Life
<https://medium.com/@Jos91/memento-mori-how-remembering-your-mortality-improves-your-life-b056036b76db>
- The App That Reminds You You're Going to Die
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2018/01/when-death-pings/546587/>

Option D:

Ten Things to Remember

From a spiritual perspective, memory is not just about holding pictures of the past in our head; it's also about holding on to our core values. There's a reason we say, "I need to remember who I am." Indeed, this has long been the way UUs think about church. Church, for us, is the place where we come to remember who we are.

To honor and engage this, you are invited to spend some time this month "reminding yourself who you are" by making a simple list of "10 Things to Remember." Think of it as self-talk. As your better self-helping your forgetful self-return to your center. Pull out a sheet of paper or pull up a document on your computer and type

out a list numbered 1-10. Then spend the month filling it in with 10 pieces of wisdom or advice that are important to you but that you also often forget.

Bring this “spiritual reminder list” with you to your group and be ready to share the 3 items on the list that were most surprising or engaging.

Here are some example reminders to get you thinking:

1. Remember that failure stings but regret haunts.
2. Remember that assuming good intentions is not only correct but also often creates good intentions.
3. Remember to “want what you have.”
4. Remember you always have a choice.
5. Remember you’ve already received a death sentence.
6. Remember that everyone is carrying pain, even if you can’t see it, so we must be kind, in every single case.
7. Remember to always buy the good chocolate and good beer. There will be other ways to balance the budget.
8. Remember that grace and goodness don’t always win, but they also can’t ever be completely erased. They linger in the corners, so never stop looking.
9. Remember that you’re not the only one that feels like an imposter. They only look like they have it all together.
10. Remember that you’ve already “made it” and you’re already enough. So you can put the striving and the proving down whenever you want.

Option E: Remembering Where You Came From

Remembering who we want to be is tied up with remembering where we’ve come from. Holding on to our roots keeps us rooted. It’s also keeps us connected to gratitude and humility. To remember where you’ve come from is to remember that you didn’t create yourself or earn your successes all on your own. Remembering where you’ve come from is also a way to celebrate your uniqueness.

So this month, spend some time teasing out the unique roots that make you who you are...***by writing a poem about where you’ve come from!***

Don’t worry; it’s not as intimidating as it first may sound. Poet George Ella Lyon has already laid the ground for us with her poem, Where I’m from. Following her poem’s structure, hundreds of writers and students have written their own.

Here’s Lyon’s poem:

http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/educators/professional_development/workshops/writing/george_ella_lyon.pdf

Read by author: <http://www.georgeellalyon.com/audio/where.mp3>

Here are examples of the poems others have made using Lyon’s as a guide:

<https://journalverse.com/poem-of-the-day-april-5-my-family-tree-alicia/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c02hS9vcsWM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QGb4oiUqlhA>

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/writeit/PDF/wright.pdf>

And if you want, here’s a cheat sheet to guide you on your way:

Where I'm From

by _____

I am from _____,
(everyday item in your house)

from _____ and _____.
(product name) (product or everyday item in your house)

I am from the _____.
(home description including an adjective)

I am from the _____, the _____.
(plant, flower, tree) (plant, flower, natural detail)

I am from _____ and _____,
(family tradition) (family tradition)

from _____ and _____.
(name of family member) (another family name)

From _____
(something you were told as a child)

and _____.
(a song or saying you learnt as a child)

I'm from _____,
(place of birth)

_____ and _____.
(a food item representing your family) (another food item)

From the _____,
(specific family story about a specific person and detail)

and the _____.
(another detail)

I am from _____.
(location of family pictures, mementos, archives, etc.)

Source: <https://onthesamepageelt.wordpress.com/2017/08/28/where-im-from/>

Your Question

As always, don't treat these questions like "homework" or a list that needs to be covered in its entirety. Instead, simply pick the one question that speaks to you most and let it lead you where you need to go. The goal is to figure out what being a part of a people of memory means for you and your daily living. So, which question is calling to you? Which one contains "your work"? Where is it trying to lead you?

1. **What memory has been with you the longest?** What does it want from you so badly that it has held on this long?
2. **How has your memory changed as you've grown older?** Do you think of childhood memories more or less? Is it stories or images you now remember more? Has your confidence about the accuracy of your memory grown or lessened? Or is that no longer a question you worry so much about, as long as the "truth" of those memories remain?
3. **Has memory ever made you smarter?** We think of memory as a warehouse or scrapbook, but for many of us it serves as a teacher and tutor. How has that been true for you?
4. **Has memory ever set you free?** For some of us, all it takes is seeing that swing from our childhood in our mind's eye. Or our favorite dog running with abandon. Or that image of staring at the purple sunrise on the river while fishing with our grandfather. When life starts feeling small, depleted or threatening, what memory do you turn to to remember that open doors are all over the place?
5. **What memories have been entrusted to you?** Families pass down stories. Old friends look to one another to remember each other's childhoods. Spouses safely house their vulnerable stories and secrets with each other. We are all protectors and sustainers of memories that keep pieces and parts of others alive. What precious memory have you been asked to keep alive?
6. **What memory will die with you if you don't pass it on?** Is this the month you finally make a concrete plan to make sure it lives on the memory of another?
7. **What memory holds your truest self?** For some, it comes from childhood, like that time we were handed a paintbrush and canvas and felt a strange sense of home. For others it is from our adult adventures, maybe that time we bravely walked away. We don't just have personality traits, we hold tight to our defining traits through memory. What memories help you hold on to yourself?
8. **What is your favorite shared memory?** Memory is the glue that binds our friendships, marriages and partnerships. Is it time to take your friend or partner out for lunch to reminisce and toast the way that memory's magic has held you together?
9. **Is it time to admit that your memory may not be the complete picture of what happened?**
10. **What if the question isn't, "Did it really happen that way?"** But instead, "Why do you want to remember that it happened that way?"

11. **Are you ok with the person you used to be?** Have you been working a bit too hard to wipe the “previous you” from your memory? They say none of you gets to walk through the door unless you’re willing to bring all of you in.
12. **What do you do to remind yourself that you did not make yourself?** What practice do you use to remember that you stand on the shoulders of countless others?
13. **Have you figured out the story you want to be remembered by?**
14. **Does fall come with its own set of memories?** Do you remember differently this time of year?
15. **What has life taught you about memory and pain?** It is said that time does not heal all wounds but gives us the tools to endure them. Has this been true for you? Is there someone in your life that needs this message?
16. **What’s your question?** Your question may not be listed above. As always, if the above questions don't include what life is asking from you, spend the month listening to your days to hear it.

Companion Pieces

Recommended Resources for Personal Exploration & Reflection

The following resources are not required reading. We will not analyze these pieces in our group. Instead they are here to companion you on your journey this month, get your thinking started and open you to new ways of thinking about what it means to be part of a people of MEMORY.

Word Roots

Memory derives from the Latin word *memor* (mindful, remembering), from Proto-Indo-European *smer-* (to remember). The Sanskrit word *chitta* is often translated as memory. It carries the idea of consciousness or awareness, to remember is to bring to awareness.

Wise Words

Memory is intelligent. It's a knowledge seated neither in the senses, nor in the spirit, but in collective memory. It is communal, though deeply personal. Involved with the self, though autonomous. At war with death.

[Etel Adnan](#)

I do not know if the seasons remember their history or... if the oak tree remembers its planting. I do not know if the squirrel remembers last fall's gathering or... if the night remembers the moon. I do not know if the earth remembers the flowers from last spring or if the evergreen remembers that it shall stay so. Perhaps that is the reason for *our* births -- to be the memory for creation.

Perhaps salvation is something very different than anyone ever expected. Perhaps this will be the only question we will have to answer: "What can you tell me about September?" [Burton D Carley](#)

Remembering (the freedom of childhood)

William Stafford

Full poem found at

<https://wordstheyear.com/2018/07/02/remembering-by-william-stafford/>

"...I carry those days in a tiny box

wherever I go, I open the lid...

There is a sigh like my breath when I do this.

Some days I do this again and again."

Everything is Waiting For You

David Whyte

(Remembering that the world is awake and we are never alone.)

<https://onbeing.org/blog/david-whyte-everything-is-waiting-for-you/>

Your great mistake is to act the drama
as if you were alone. As if life
were a progressive and cunning crime...
To feel abandoned is to deny
the intimacy of your surroundings...

What greater thing is there for two human souls
than to feel that they are joined - to strengthen
each other - to be at one with each other in silent
unspeakable memories.

George Eliot

God, God is journal of time marching
through eternity.
She is waking of seasons, phases of moon,
movements of stars.
She is grandmother, mother, daughter.
She is transcending spiral of ages
whose every turn encompasses the rest,
history a mere babe balanced on her hip.
She is spinning of universes
and ancestress of infinenice.
She is memory, she is presence, she is dream.
And we, we are brief instants,
intersections, nanoseconds,
flashing gold-hoped moments in the eons of her.

[Tess Baumberger](#)

The exercise of our memory does not bring us
closer to the past but draws us farther away.

[Sally Mann](#)

Memory is never a precise duplicate of the
original... it is a continuing act of creation.

Rosalind Cartwright

There are lots of people who mistake their imagination for their memory.

Josh Billings

The difference between false memories and true ones is the same as for jewels: it is always the false ones that look the most real, the most brilliant.

Salvador Dali

My Memory Fails Me

Students at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York

<https://whitebearunitarian.org/hearts-will-work-again-09-27-15-sermon/>

My memory fails me. Things happened. We both experienced them. You saw them your way – colored by experiences in your past, or by resentment or impatience. I saw them my way – colored by fear, by pride, by the fact that I am myself and not you.

So our memories of what happened were very different from the start. And then, before we knew it, memories hardened into myths and myths into dogma. Now we find ourselves divided. We stare across the chasm, but we don't see each other. Parent. Partner. Friend. Child. Denomination. Nation. Race. Class. Creed. I'm tired of being alone on my side of the chasm. I'm using up so much energy fearing and resenting you.

Sometimes I wish you and I could crack the dogma, peel away the mythology, and trade memories. What would it be like if we could see each other's pictures of the history we share? If we could see each other?

What we need here, you and I, is a little humility and a lot of house-cleaning. Humility: to say "only God sees history whole and knows the whole truth. All I have is my perception. It's valid, it's precious, it's fragmentary. Maybe I ought to try seeing as God sees, from all the angles."

Housecleaning: Memory is selective, and I'm carrying around years of slanted, narrow memories. I can't see past them. It must be the same for you. What we need to do is let some of them go. Trade a few. Listen.

Maybe, if I ask you how things look to you, between us we'll see something we never saw before.

You will lose someone you can't live without, and your heart will be badly broken, and the bad news is that you never completely get over the loss of your beloved. But this is also the good news. They live forever in your broken heart that doesn't seal back up. And you come through. It's like having a broken leg that never heals perfectly – that still hurts when the weather gets cold, but you learn to dance with the limp.

Anne Lamott

Memory sews together events that hadn't previously met.

[*Etel Adnan*](#)

Life is not what one lived, but what one remembers and how one remembers it in order to recount it.

Gabriel García Márquez

Why did I write it down? In order to remember, of course, but exactly what was it I wanted to remember? How much of it actually happened? Did any of it? Why do I keep a notebook at all? It is easy to deceive oneself on all those scores. The impulse to write things down is a peculiarly compulsive one, inexplicable to those who do not share it, useful only accidentally, only secondarily, in the way that any compulsion tries to justify itself. I suppose that it begins or does not begin in the cradle. Although I have felt compelled to write things down since I was five years old, I doubt that my daughter ever will, for she is a singularly blessed and accepting child, delighted with life exactly as life presents itself to her, unafraid to go to sleep and unafraid to wake up. Keepers of private notebooks are a different breed altogether, lonely and resistant rearrangers of things, anxious malcontents, children afflicted apparently at birth with some presentiment of loss... The point of my keeping a notebook has never been, nor is it now, to have an accurate factual record of what I have been doing or thinking. That would be a different impulse entirely, an instinct for reality which I sometimes envy but do not possess.

Joan Didion, from "On Keeping a Notebook" in Slouching Towards Bethlehem

We are well advised to keep on nodding terms with the people we used to be, whether we find them attractive company or not. Otherwise they turn up unannounced and surprise us, come hammering on the mind's door at 4 a.m. of a bad night and demand to know who deserted them.

Joan Didion, from "On Keeping a Notebook" in Slouching Towards Bethlehem

To acknowledge our ancestors means we are aware that we did not make ourselves.

Alice Walker

Where I'm From

George Ella Lyon

Full poem found at

http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/educators/professional_development/workshops/writing/george_ella_lyon.pdf

Read by author:

<http://www.georgeellalyon.com/audio/where.mp3>

...I am from the forsythia bush
the Dutch elm
whose long-gone limbs I remember
as if they were my own.
I'm from the know-it-alls and the pass-it-ons...
I'm from He restoreth my soul...
I am from those moments--
snapped before I budded...

My Family Tree

Alicia, 5th grade

Full poem found at <https://journalverse.com/poem-of-the-day-april-5-my-family-tree-alicia/>

I am from stories
on a cold Monday morning
and strong hot coffee
soaking my grandfather's mustache...

Those who cannot remember the past are
condemned to repeat it.

George Santayana

ask not what your country can do for you
ask if your country is your country
ask if your country belongs to your country folk
ask if your country is addicted to blood
ask if your country is addicted to forgetting...

[Danez Smith](#)

Memory invites us to maintain our grip on the past, but it also calls us to pay attention to the present. Memory's question is not just "Do you remember?" but "How do you want to be remembered?"
Rev. Scott Tayler

Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart.

Steve Jobs

To live in hearts we leave behind, is not to die.

Thomas Campbell

Gratitude is the memory of the heart.

French proverb

In times like these, I look to the past. I come from people not meant to survive, and here is our bloodline, stronger than ever.

Brittany Packnett

Time does not heal all wounds but gives us the tools to endure them. I have found this to be true in the greatest and smallest of matters.

[Patti Smith](#)

Songs and Music

Wanting Memories

Ysaye M. Barnwell

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vW2TpW4gCt8>

choral version

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qEtKDrqEkEU>

"I am sitting here wanting memories to teach me to see the beauty in the world through my own eyes. Since you've gone and left me, there's been so little beauty, but I know I saw it clearly through your eyes..."

Listen To (and remembering all) The Voices

Holly Near · Emma's Revolution

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAWKXIV0tvU>

"Listen to the voices of the old women...

Listen to the voices of the First Nations...

Listen to the voices of the young children..."

Good Old Days

Macklemore & Kesha

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=91&v=1yYV9-KoSUM

Rivers

Allman Brown

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ssxdiaahsJg>

“Run, river, run to the sea
Water always wants to be free
Run, river, run over me
Water, take away my memory...”

Boston

Dermot Kennedy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uk32a6NW8Rc>

“Take me back to places I feel loved in...”

These Memories

Hollow Coves

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=I21ciaoM4CQ

“Now I'm far away
You stay with me the same
Now I'm far away
These memories still remain...”

More “Memory Songs” are found on our November Soul Matters Spotify playlist. Click [here](#) to check them out! You can also explore the playlists from other months [here](#).

Videos

Pieces of my Memories: A Poem to Alzheimer's

Alaya Pierce

What they teach us about what **WE** forget.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPR_1pXXSyE

Remembering That One Day You Will Die - Video Meditation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=su9oOdnT8w0>

Should You Live for Your Resume... or Your Eulogy?

David Brooks

https://www.ted.com/talks/david_brooks_should_you_live_for_your_resume_or_your_eulogy?utm_campaign=Because+life+is+short.+%28M8g2vY%29&utm_medium=email&_ke=eyJrbF9lbWFpbCI6ICJ1dW1pbmlzdGVyQG1lMnVbSlsICJrbF9jb21wYW55X2lkIjogImMyTVNyVSJ9&utm_source=6.+Holstee+Best+Reflections

How do you want to be remembered? “Within each of us are two selves, suggests David Brooks in this meditative short talk: the self who craves success, who builds a résumé, and the self who seeks connection, community, love -- the values that make for a great eulogy. (Joseph Soloveitchik has called these selves “Adam I” and “Adam II.”) Brooks asks: Can we balance these two selves?”

Text: <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1537/should-you-live-for-your-resume-or-your-eulogy-david-brooks/>

Therapy Session - spoken word poetry on memory and race

Atlanta Team

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKLCwSDEix0>

“If you could talk to your ancestors, what would you ask them?”

MTV’s “Decoded Tackles the Ugly Truth about Thanksgiving

Reclaiming a more honest memory of Thanksgiving in honor of Native American History Month

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFfREh7G3ck>

TED talk by Aaron Huey about America’s Native Prisoners of War

https://www.ted.com/talks/aaron_huey

A tough, heartbreaking talk about white privilege and Native Americans. *In honor of Native American History Month and the hope of retrieving a more accurate memory of our history*

In Honor of Transgender Day of Remembrance

- Trans Women Share What Transgender Day of Remembrance Means
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UgWpGLB-QKI>
- The T Word: Full Documentary - MTV
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mDyODhfuxfl>

Podcasts

Alzheimer's and the Spiritual Terrain of Memory - On Being

<https://onbeing.org/programs/alan-dienstag-alzheimers-and-the-spiritual-terrain-of-memory/>

"Alzheimer's disease has been described as 'the great unlearning.' But what does it reveal about the nature of human identity? What remains when memory unravels? Alan Dienstag is a psychologist who has led support groups with early Alzheimer's patients, as well as a writing group he co-designed with the novelist Don DeLillo. He's experienced the early stages of Alzheimer's as a time for giving memories away rather than losing them..."

Looking Back: Reflecting On The Past To Understand The Present - Hidden Brain

<https://www.npr.org/2018/06/14/607757718/looking-back-reflecting-on-the-past-to-understand-the-present>

"So often we get stuck in the past, rehashing what we should have done, and what we no longer have. But researchers say our obsession with the past can tell us something important about our future."

Free Brian Williams -Revisionist History

Malcolm Gladwell

<http://revisionisthistory.com/episodes/24-free-brian-williams>

"NBC news anchor Brian Williams told a war story on national television. It wasn't true. But does that make him a liar? Part two of Revisionist History's memory series asks why we insist that lapses of memory must also be lapses of character."

Articles

Messing with Your Mind

Pat Murphy & Paul Doherty

<http://www.exploratorium.edu/memory/messingwithyourmind/index.html>

"It is easy to think of yourself as the sum of your memories--the end product of all that you've ever experienced. But after doing research into memory, we find that it makes sense to reverse that statement... Who you are is shaped by your memories, and your memories are shaped by who you are..."

Speak, Memory

Oliver Sacks

<https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2013/02/21/speak-memory/?pagination=false>

"Legendary neurologist Oliver Sacks exposes the remarkable mechanisms by which we fabricate our memories, involuntarily blurring the line between the experienced and the assimilated...One phenomenon Sacks argues is particularly common — if not adaptive — in the creative mind is that of autoplagerism..." - [Maria Popova](#)

Memento Mori — How Remembering Your Mortality Improves Your Life

<https://medium.com/@Jos91/memento-mori-how-remembering-your-mortality-improves-your-life-b056036b76db>

Time Does Not Heal All Wounds - On Being Reflection

<https://onbeing.org/blog/omid-safi-time-does-not-heal-all-wounds/>

The Black Hole in the White UU Psyche - UU World Magazine

Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed

<https://www.uuworld.org/articles/black-hole-white-uu-psyche>

The consequences of excluding black UU history from our faith's memory and the hope of constructing a more honest and complete remembrance.

The Empowerment Tragedy - UU World

Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed

<https://www.uuworld.org/articles/empowerment-tragedy>

Ten Things To Remember: Anti-Racist Strategies For White Radicals

<http://www.soaw.org/resources/anti-opp-resources/108-race/491>

Books

Beloved

Toni Morrison

Morrison's masterpiece about living with a painful past, both personal and cultural.

The Things They Carried (Connecting memory and Veterans' Day)

Tim O'Brien

https://www.amazon.com/dp/B002TWIVNA/ref=dp_kindle-redirect?encoding=UTF8&btkr=1

"By questioning the role that imagination plays in helping to form our memories and our own versions of truth, he places 'The Things They Carried' high up on the list of best fiction about any war..." -

<https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/98/09/20/specials/obrien-carried.html>

Movies

Eternal Sunshine Of The Spotless Mind

https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/eternal_sunshine_of_the_spotless_mind/

"An off-beat romantic drama presenting the psychological conundrum: do away with the pain or hold onto the memories?"

Big Fish

https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/1127787_big_fish?

"The story of a braggart and exaggerator, Edward Bloom, and his son, William, who--after a long estrangement--returns home only to learn his father is dying of cancer. Desperate to possess true memories of this complicated man before it's too late, William sets out, trying to unravel fact from fiction."

Blade Runner

https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/blade_runner

"From its opening scene, where a manufactured Replicant betrays himself (itself) because he (it) lacks memories of a mother, Blade Runner explores the futuristic realms of evolving and fabricated memory."

The Tree of Life

https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/the_tree_of_life_2011

"To imagine a reconciled future in the face of sin and suffering, Jack must do a deep dive into his vast storehouse of memories..." "The result is a fragmented but beautiful kaleidoscope of a film that is closer to a prayer set to music than to a story."

The Thin Blue Line

https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/thin_blue_line

"Errol Morris's groundbreaking documentary—about a man who spent a dozen years in prison and was almost executed for a murder he didn't commit—looks at how police officers and other witnesses, including one who says he has the power of 'total recall,' couldn't get their facts straight."

Vertigo

<https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/vertigo>

"Alfred Hitchcock's Vertigo remains one of the great films about memory's dangerous allure. Its spiral-shaped narrative concerns detective Scottie Ferguson, who, haunted by a series of failures, makes an idol of memory and becomes imprisoned by the past."

Rashomon

The [widely-honored](#) classic crime film that daringly explores the elusiveness of memory.

Inside Out - Family Movie

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pecha-7QOV0>

Coco - Family Movie

https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/coco_2017/

"Coco's rich visual pleasures are matched by a thoughtful narrative that takes a family-friendly -- and deeply affecting -- approach to questions of culture, family, memory, life, and death..." Engages Day of the Dead - Oct.31 - Nov. 2

Get daily inspiration
on the monthly theme by liking our
Soul Matters Facebook inspiration page:
<https://www.facebook.com/soulmatterssharingcircle/>

Find musical inspiration
on each theme by following our monthly
Spotify lists:
<https://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com/spotify-lists.html>



© 2018-19 Soul Matters ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Packets are for use only by member congregations of the Soul Matters Sharing Circle.

Learn how to join at <http://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com>