

Accuracy of memories

Psychology



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A second way is that memory can become scrambled and when recalled, it is the scrambled memory that comes forth. One reason for this aside from the disorganization of memory is the fact that some of it comes from other people and is merged with the existing idea in one's head (Loftus, 2003).

A third technique is the use of fake photographs and imagining that the same thing happened to the person who is looking at it. For example, based on the report by Loftus, those who were shown a photograph of Bugs Bunny shaking hands with someone were made to believe and remember that they themselves shook hands with Bugs Bunny. The amazing result was that they indeed remembered it (Loftus, 2003).

Another technique by which memory can be changed is through the use of falsified or superimposed photographs that have been prepared from a real one. These photographs did not involve imagination, unlike the previously mentioned method. An example of this particular technique is when a photograph of a family was taken and superimposed upon that of a hot-air balloon. Those who have seen the falsified photo were made to believe that the family riding the hot-air balloon actually happened when in fact it did not.

A fifth possible way to alter memories would be the mental suggestions inherent in some psychotherapy techniques that somehow convince and lead patients to develop false beliefs and memories that they will vehemently believe. An example, which is rather negative, was that of a psychiatric patient who accused her doctor of drugging her. Another example of such was that of Donna Parmeter, a prison guard wrongly charged for kidnapping because of some problems with the plaintiff's lack of reliability (Loftu, 2003).

Because of the different ways of altering memory, as mentioned above,

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there are many negative consequences to it. First, usually, the innocent person is accused. Second, the truly guilty person is not convicted. There are many more disadvantages to the alteration of memory but these two are the most noteworthy.

The solutions to the problem of memory change also include a few techniques. Firstly, there should be scientific research. With scientific research, such erroneous slips in memory could be easily dealt with. Secondly, constantly changing memories may be remedied only if there are venues of education about the nature of memory. Thirdly, there should be the cooperation of the legislative branch of the government in order to protect the innocent in case accusations from dubious sources are being held against them. Fourthly, there should be an innocence commission to be formed by the government in order to study why the legal system has wrongfully convicted people. (Loftus, 2003).