

A paradox of memory

One of the greatest paradoxes in our lives is the fact that we remember. Our ability to remember things on the one hand helps us in so many ways, for example, learning new things in our lives or sometimes remembering mistakes and thus preventing from ourselves from doing them again. On the other hand, there are many situations where it would be good if we could program our memory in such a way that we could remember what to remember and what to forget. Probably if you ask evolutionists, each one would have his own explanation of the thing called human memory.

We talked a few weeks ago about repression and denial, and of course when we repress something, we create it as a suppressed memory, and in this way we prevent ourselves from dealing with memory and its implications, and implications for our present life. The point of view that I want to bring today is not necessarily repression or denial of a particular memory. But rather the question of whether we can choose our memories. Then, choose which memory gives us more power and in what way this could affect our lives.

The question is whether we can try to control our memory instead of it controlling us. At the beginning of my remarks, it is important to say that there are events in the life of every person which are difficult to forget, these events that we legislate in our souls and label them as traumatic, are not easy to forget and I am not at all sure that we need to forget them. In some cases, even traumas such as these and others are important turning points in our lives. In other cases, there are traumatic events that even enable us to create in the end a positive experience. Taking out these cases, let's take the intermediate level of our memories. Those memories, are not very difficult and very traumatic, as well, they are not fun memories and wonderful memories that we naturally want to remember. Keep in mind that sometimes our memories are so deceiving and the emotional experience is so complex that there are times that even our memories are not very accurate. I am talking about the same memories, that are quite simple but painful, such as surprising dismissal from a work place, a sudden and painful romantic farewell and a disappointment from a close friend.

It is very important to look at our memories and have an honest inner conversation with ourselves. Within the conversation we need to identify how much we give the painful memories power and to what degree they conduct our lives in the present, even though they have happened in the past. There are trainees of mine that are still living the painful memory of things, like a broken heart from a relationship that happened years ago. So much, that the same vivid memory, still remains in people. I had a trainee that even after three years from the day her husband parted from her, she would not go out on any date and maintain a relationship just out of fear that it would happen again. A similar thing happened to another trainee of mine, who was unexpectedly fired a few years ago from a position he loved very much. For a year and a half he was unemployed, embittered and hurt because of his dismissal. Even when he found a new job, he got up every morning with a fear that the same thing would happen to him again.

Let's take these two cases for example and think for a moment, if they could have forgotten what happened to them, what do you think would have happened? What quality of life would they be in now? How much pain would have been spared? There is no doubt that this is the preferred option and I wish it was so simple. Because we do not really have the opportunity to forget, so we need to learn how to deal with every painful memory in our lives and we need to make sure that the painful memory does not become the center of our lives.

The best way to do this is to learn a lesson, the lesson from that painful memory on the one hand, and on the other, to do everything to create new experiences and thus new memories.

People who know how to take the hard memories and leverage them in their lives always enjoy a higher quality of life.

So what do we do?

1. Write down three memories that you perceive as difficult, painful, or unpleasant.
2. Write down how these memories hold you back in life and how they affect your daily. Do you deal with them too much and are you still busy managing the consequences they have created in your life?
3. for each memory that you discover that affects your present, create four actions that can positively affect the situation. For example, if you had a difficult and painful separation and you are afraid to go out on dates or commit to a new relationship, start doing things to make it happen, tell yourself that you are putting that painful memory aside for the near future (because it doesn't serve you), Be brave, and go on a dates. Even one date can affect your situation positively and do wonders.

Remember that the power is in your hands and you are the ones who ultimately decide the importance of each memory.