

# ISSUE 17

## What Did You Forget?

Some people naturally have poor memories, but almost everybody becomes more forgetful as he gets older. People may try to slow this phenomenon by doing mental exercises such as reading and writing, but the process nevertheless continues. Some folks lose their ability to recall names, others can't remember where they parked their car. In extreme cases, they no longer recognize friends or loved ones.

### What do you forget most often?

- (1) I forget where I parked.
- (2) I'm not sure if I locked the door when I left.
- (3) I need a shopping list to remember what I need to buy.
- (4) I forget appointments.
- (5) I forget special days like birthdays and anniversaries.
- (6) Sometimes I lock the car with the keys inside.
- (7) I forget secret numbers and passwords all the time.



# Sample Answers

(A) When I got old, I sometimes forgot to zip my pants back up after I urinated. But now that I'm older, I forget to unzip before I urinate. Do you think I have a memory problem?

(B) Yesterday was a horribly *hectic* day for me. I had an important appointment that I almost forgot about. Fortunately, at the last minute, the person I was supposed to meet called to confirm it, so I left my office in plenty of time to get there. Unfortunately, I was confused about the meeting place and went to the wrong location. After waiting a long time for the man to show up, I was ready to leave in disgust and anger, but he called me again and then I realized I was in the wrong place. Very *graciously*, he forgave me for my mistake, and I rushed off to the correct spot. I thought I knew a *shortcut*, but I was wrong and it took quite a bit longer to get there. Fortunately, he was still waiting for me when I arrived. Unfortunately, I forgot what we were supposed to talk about at the meeting, so we had a friendly but rather *bewildering* chat and then went our separate ways. It was not until I got back to the office and looked in the folder I had left on my desk that I finally remembered the purpose. I immediately called him to set up another meeting, but it was too late, he had already made arrangements with some other firm. So my company lost an important contract. When it's time for my next promotion, I hope my boss will be able to forget about this incident.

## Speak Your Mind

1. What kinds of things are you most likely to forget about?
2. What have you done to improve your memory? Was it successful? Why or why not?
3. Have you ever forgotten anything that seriously mattered?
4. Does your sweetheart always remember your birthday or anniversary?
5. What is the best way to make someone remember special days?

# Speak Your Mind

## Speak Your Mind Helpers

### 5. What is the best way to make someone remember special days?

M : Why do you have that string wrapped around your finger? Is this some new kind of *fashion statement*?

F : It helps me remember things. I'll constantly be seeing it there, and so I'll be forced to remind myself to remember something important.

M : Really? Does it work?

F : It does now, but it took me awhile to learn how to associate the fact that I needed to remember something with the actual item I wanted to remember. But once you *figure out* that trick, it works every time.

M : Very interesting. But what do you mean, "trick"?

F : Developing a good memory is really just playing games with your mind. All of the information is there, but sometimes you just have to be creative in the *retrieval* process. It's easier to do if you make it fun.

M : Can you give me an example?

F : OK. This is a green string on my finger, right? I associate green with a park, so this reminds me that I have to get a gift for my neighbor, Mr. Park, to celebrate his daughter's wedding.

M : Oh, I see. But don't you need lots of colors of string? And how do you keep them all straight in your mind?

+*fashion statement*: manner of dressing that expresses one's personality

+*figure out*: understand

+*retrieval*: process of getting (sth) back

**F** : This isn't about long term memory at all, it's just a hint to remind me. I could just as easily have associated this string with my boss, Ms. Green, or I could have worn a blue string to remind me how *blue* my neighbor was when he found out that he was about to lose his daughter.

**M** : It sounds easy enough. But I really have a terrible memory. I'm sure that I'd forget to tie the string to my finger in the first palace, so I wouldn't have any clue that I was supposed to remember something.

**F** : You just need to get into the habit of doing something (it doesn't have to be a string around the finger) to *jog your memory*. Once you make a *concerted* effort, it's all pretty easy, actually.

