



Why Can't I Remember? (🌈 A Cognitive Health Story) (3rd Grade – 8-9 yrs)

This story describes why we need to learn and remember and why it is better to use and apply information that you learn, rather than just memorize information.

- 🌈 Learning and remembering are behaviors that work together. Humans have the ability to learn more than other animals, because we have the ability to read and write. This means we do not have to remember everything.
- 🌈 As humans, we need to learn about some things that we will need to use all the time, other things we learn teach us how to think and communicate.
- 🌈 When you think about something that you have learned, you move the information around in your brain and you strengthen the connections in your brain that help you to remember that information. Because we are all different, figuring out how you can do this will help your brain stay healthy.

🌈 SLIDE #1 - INTRODUCTION:

Good Morning (Afternoon)!

My name is _____ and I (describe who you are and give your relation to neuroscience – ex. you are a Neuroscientist, you study neuroscience, you have a friend that is a neuroscientist or you have recently been learning a lot about neuroscience).

Neuroscience, that's a really big word! But, a neuroscientist is a person who knows a lot about the brain.

I am here today to talk to you about how you can help to make your brain healthy – feeling good. It is REALLY easy and anyone can do it.

I love to talk about Brain Health because it's SPECTacular!!! SPECTacular means "GREAT". When your brain is SPECTacular, you are a happy and healthy person.

This story is about Cognitive Health – which is the C in SPECTacular. Cognitive Health is about thinking...and not just when you are in school. Cognitive is a big word that means being able to think.

Your brain thinks all the time, that is something you do inside of your head.

It is your brain's job to think and by thinking you are making your brain healthy.

So, let's see how you can keep your brain healthy.

🌈 SLIDE #2 – Why Can't I Remember?

There are lots of things to learn about the world and we go to school so that we can learn what we need to learn to grow up to live a happy and a healthy life.

But, did you know that going to school is not about finding out how smart you are or seeing how smart other children are?

Going to school is about learning about some information you will need to use all the time – like how to read and write.

Going to school is also about learning how to think and use the information you have learned – like how math can help you in the real world.

Going to school is also about learning how to communicate with others – so you can share your talents with others.

SLIDE #3– WHAT WE KNOW CHANGES

We all know that everyone has a brain and that our brains are all different because everything that we do and think changes our brain – so our brains are changing all the time.

The one thing that is the same about all our brains, is that the job of the brain is to keep us alive and living in a world that is always changing.

To do this, our brain has to constantly learn, remember and forget things.

Yes, you heard me...forget things. Because remember the world is always changing – so you have to forget things that you remember that have changed.

Here is an example of how the world changes...

Let's say you lived in one place before and now you have moved and you live in another place.

Most houses have a bathroom and you would have known where the bathroom was in first home, but now the bathroom is probably in a different place in your new home.

We all go to the bathroom, so you need to forget where the bathroom used to be where you used to live and we need to learn and remember where it is – now - in the place that you currently live. This is important...you don't want to get up in the middle of the night and go to the bathroom in the **WRONG** place!!!

SLIDE #4– FIGURE OUT HOW YOU LEARN

So, we all have brains that help us to learn and remember things, but the way you learn and remember may be different from the way your friend learns and remembers.

One of the things that is important for you to know is that **ALL** brains have to learn and remember. Your brain needs for you to learn and remember things so that you can stay alive.

Your job, is to help your brain to help you by figuring out the best way for **YOU** to learn and remember.

You can do this by working with your teachers and by trying out different ways to learn and remember.

If you can figure this out early – like when you are in elementary school – then your brain will be happy and healthy.

SLIDE #5– LEARNING & MEMORY

Usually when you cannot remember something – like the spelling of a word on a spelling test – it is because you did not learn it well enough.

In order to show that you learned something...you need to be able to remember it.

The information you learn has to go into your brain and get stored so you can use it later. So, learning and remembering go together.

There are LOTS of ways to learn something, so that you can remember it.

Let's think about this...

Raise your hand if you know what the letter "b" looks like. Ok, that is something that you learned, and you all remember it. So, your memory is fine. So why can you remember the letter "b", but you cannot remember how to spell a word on your spelling test?

The answer is because when you were learning what the letter "b" looks like, you practiced writing it and looking for it with other letters in words. You practiced what it sounded like when you said it and you could hear it when others said it. You learned that the letter b looks different when it is lowercase or uppercase. So, you really thought – even though you might now have known that you were thinking – about the letter b and what it looked like.

The answer is also because you USE the letter b all the time. You read it and you write it all the time. Using information that you have learned helps to strengthen the connections in your brain that store and help you retrieve the memory.

SLIDE #6– BEST WAY TO LEARN FOR YOU

So, in order for you to remember how to spell the words for your spelling test – you need to figure out the best way for you to learn the spelling.

Should you practice writing the word – like you practiced writing the letter B? Should you practice spelling it out loud or type it on a computer or use letter blocks or play a game with it?

To be honest, there are LOTS of different ways for you to learn how to spell. You need to figure out the best way for YOU to learn this skill.

Practice and using the word will help your brain to learn and then to remember the information. Plus, it makes learning fun – and we all know that is good for your brain health.

SLIDE #7– THINKING & UNDERSTANDING

Part of what you will also be learning as you figure out the best way for you to learn how to spell is how you like to learn.

Learning is about thinking – which is great for your brain's health!

When YOU are thinking about information that YOU are learning, YOU are trying to understand it. When YOU understand something, you no longer just have to memorize it. It makes sense to YOU and YOU just know it.

Notice I keep saying "YOU". That is because there are different ways to think. The way that you think about something – so it may make sense to you – may be different from the way your friend thinks about things.

The fact that there are lots of different ways to think about the same thing is great – that way we can all come up with new and different ideas and ways to do things.

SLIDE #8– MAKE IT RELEVANT AND FUN

So, now let's think about math. What is math? It is learning about how to use numbers.

There are LOTS of ways to use numbers...not just in the classroom.

You can use numbers to figure out how much money you need to buy something you want like a new toy, or how many points you need to score to win a game, or how much gas you need to get to place you want to go, or how to fit a piece furniture through a door to put it into a room. Or, how many slices of pizza to cut so you get REALLY big pieces.

It is ALL MATH!!!

Instead of just memorizing formulas to use, trying to make sense of why you are learning how to use numbers will make it easier. You can also work with others, which can also make learning math more FUN.

SLIDE #9– USE YOUR SENSES

Another thing to understand is that the way you think about and learn how to spell and write, may be totally different than the way you think about and try to learn math.

There are different ways to learn different topics. You need to use your **multiple sensory systems** to make learning different topics FUN!!!

Let me explain...

You can use your vestibular system to balance while you are starting to learn your multiplication tables.

You can play a game to learn about other people's perspectives – how they feel about things.

You can watch a YouTube video to learn how different animals live in different places.

You can read a book to learn about how to take care of your brain.

You can sing a song to help you learn about different explorers.

You need to continue to try to figure out how to learn different topics in the best way possible for you. Plus, as your brain continues to develop, you may have to change how you learn things.

The world is constantly changing, so you have to be constantly changing too.

SLIDE #10– LEARNING CAN BE HARD & BORING

Now, to be honest, sometimes you will have to learn things in school that are really hard to understand, and you feel like your brain is working too hard.

Sometimes what you are learning is just not interesting to you and your brain feels bored.

You find yourself asking, why do I have to learn this stuff? You feel like you will never have to use it – so why learn it.

The answer is that most of the time, these topics that you are learning about are not about learning the information – but about learning how to think.

As a student, your job is to expose your brain to as many different things as possible when your brain is developing.

Yes, some of the topics are not going to fun for you to learn and trying to understand this material may be really hard – but, in trying you are thinking. The thinking that you are doing is helping your brain.

It is also possible that it is preparing your brain for things you will need to learn when you are in college or working at your job.

The topics that you are learning that are hard or not interesting are getting your brain ready to live in the real world.

SLIDE #11– INFORMATION MAY BECOME RELEVANT

Another thing that you might find is that a topic that you thought was not fun or interesting, leads you to topics that you do find fun and interesting.

You may love video games and want to design them when you get older – that sounds like something fun and exciting to you.

You start looking into the history behind how computers and video games platforms were built and how they have changed over time. That makes you think of ways that you can change video games in the future.

So, even though you really do not know why you have to learn names and dates of people in history or what they did or why it was important – you may find that being able to make a timeline of computer and video games helps you to think of new and better ideas in the future.

Understanding how history can play a role in new technology in the future – makes having to learn history worth it.

SLIDE #12– YOUR JOB IS TO LEARN TO KEEP YOUR BRAIN HEALTHY

When you memorize information, without thinking about it or trying to understand it, then you are really not learning the information.

You are also not helping your developing brain to grow and develop.

Your job right now is going to school and helping your brain to develop and stay healthy. You are going to be in school for a while, so help your brain to help you. Make sure you are thinking and learning – then you won't have to memorize.

Think about how you can best learn and try to have fun doing it.

SLIDE #13– USE WHAT YOU LEARN

Being able to remember what you learn is all about using the information you are learning. When you use something over and over – then it becomes a habit, and you no longer have to think about it as much.

You learned how to walk when you were a toddler, you walk all the time. You never have to think about what your body is doing when you are walking.

The same goes for learning information in school. If you “practice” or use the information a lot – like the letters of the alphabet – then you do not forget the information.

So, when you are trying to learn information for school, it is better to keep practicing it instead of trying to cram it in and memorize it the night before you have an exam.

You need to give yourself time to think about the information so that it makes sense to you. This is why you are given homework to do. It helps you to think about the information that you learned during the day.

The more you think about and use the information learned, the stronger the connections get in your brain that help to store the information.

SLIDE #14– SLEEP AND REMEMBERING

Also remember that a lot of the storing of information and strengthening connections in your brain happens when you are sleeping.

Yes, you heard me right...you actually do a lot of the storing of your memories when you are asleep. Remember this when you are thinking about pulling “all nighters” to study in high school or college. It is always better to get a good night sleep after preparing for exams.

So, when someone tells you it is time for bed – they are really trying to help you remember all the things that you have learned during the day.

SLIDE #15– HOMEWORK, PROJECTS & EXAMS

Learning information and then having to take an exam may seem like it is just work for you and a lot of students get stressed out about the homework, exams and projects.

You really need to think about the homework, exams, and projects as fun. They provide you with the opportunity to see if the way you are learning the material is working. If it is not, then you need to try other ways to think and understand the materials.

The homework, exams and projects are your way of communicating what you have learned and understand about the materials you have been working on.

SLIDE #16– SCHOOL HELPS YOU

School is about figuring out how YOU learn how to do things so that you can understand and store the information.


If something is not working, there are lots of other ways for you try. You may like to read about some subjects, listen to others, watch videos to help make the information make sense, or play games to help you learn. You have LOTS of senses – use them to have fun learning.

Plus, remember you are not alone. You can and should ask for help from teachers, friends and family.

Also remember, this is not about how smart you are – everyone has talents and you need to find what your talents are and then use those talents to help you learn. Plus, because our brains develop at different times – something that is hard for you to learn today, may be easier for you to learn tomorrow.

The world we live in is always changing – and you are always going to have to be learning and remembering – so developing good learning and remembering habits is a good for you and your brain health.

So, keep trying different ways to learn, think about and practice what you learn so you understand the information, be sure you are getting enough sleep and before you know it...you will find remembering is a LOT easier.

 **SLIDE #17– CONCLUSION**

Thank you all for letting me talk to you about why you can't remember things sometimes.

I have enjoyed spending time with you today talking about the brain. I hope that you have had some fun and learned something about your brain.

REMEMBER, being able to remember things means you have to have taken the time to think and understand the information. When things make sense to you then it is easier to remember them. Practicing – or using the information – often also helps you to remember. There are so many different ways to learn and you need to take the time to figure out what works best for YOU. Doing this now, will help you and help your brain stay healthy throughout your entire life. And, helping your brain stay healthy is SPECTacular.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR ALL OF YOUR HELP!!! Brain Health is not just SPECTacular...it is FUN!!!