

Memories: Our Past, Our Present, and Our Future

By Daniel Lange, LCSW

Memories are made of our experiences and they keep playing. Things that have appeared, both good and bad, keep coming back to us.

This is important for a family to know and think about. Memories are especially important for children as they develop a sense of security within their family. As parents, when you spend time with your children remember to listen and share feelings, they will forever remember this. Whenever we extend any kindness, encouragement, or sympathy, it becomes a lifetime investment. We make a contribution to the health of our families by investing time and interest in them. It becomes a positive memory that is never forgotten.

It has been said that about 50% of what we are at any point in our lives is determined by the memories we carry. They keep talking to us. To a great extent, they determine how well we relate to other people and how happy we are. Our memories are an important part of us.

Clients, coming in for counseling, often say that their problems go back to their childhood. Their problems may be related to memories. If healing and closure is to occur, a place to start is with memories that have a hurting effect. Childhood memories often play in our minds and it can be a matter of reinterpreting those experiences.

It is important to observe the effect of memories on a person's feelings and emotions. Think about this as you reflect on your own childhood memories for recurring emotions of fear, anger, confidence or success. It is a way for you to get in touch with your own emotions as an adult. Childhood memories and the feelings you attach to them, speak volumes about who you are and your current lifestyle. Adults can better understand themselves in the light of their childhood memories. These memories reflect their responses to everyday life.

Memories present a consistent history to what you decided was true when you were young. When you recall early memories, your self-talk comes into play. Memories of past experiences mold who you are.

Self-talk is the belief system that influences the way you think. It is a powerful force in people's lives. Thoughts and emotions go together. It has always been this way; and as King Solomon said several thousand years ago, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." What we believe and tell ourselves will dictate our actions.

What you remember from your childhood does not have to continue to be your reality today. It is possible to reinterpret those memories and change some long-standing self-defeating behaviors. Part of reinterpreting those memories may include forgiveness of people from your past. A key to permanent change is in your perceptions of your memories.

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