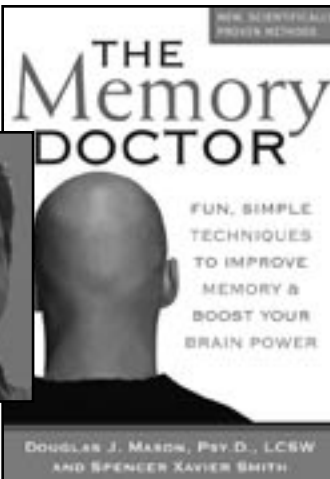


# The Memory Doctor Is In!

FOR AN INTERVIEW REQUEST OR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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Known as “The Memory Doctor,” Douglas Mason, Psy.D., is a neuropsychologist who specializes in memory. In *The Memory Doctor*, he debunks memory myths, offers the cutting-edge tools for sharpening memory, and provides a lay-person’s primer on the latest reports from the vanguard of memory research. He also gives you the truth about some of the much-touted herbs and supplements that are supposed to boost memory and examines the effect of some commonly prescribed medications on memory. Suffused with wit and warmth, *The Memory Doctor*, will have you chuckling your way to a better memory.

## Forget about It: Common Memory and Brain Myths.

**Myth:** Memory naturally fades with age.

**Truth:** Memory does not have to get gradually worse over time. There’s

plenty you can do to keep a sharp memory throughout your life.

**Myth:** Our minds are like computers, in which memories are stored in one place.

**Truth:** Memories are not stored in one particular place in the brain. In fact, they form a vast array of neural networks spread out all over the brain. A memory of any single event is tied to many different systems in the brain.

**Myth:** The ability (or lack thereof) to recall information is what determines how well your memory works.

**Truth:** Even Alzheimer’s patients do not lose their ability to recall information completely. The way you encode or input information plays a much greater role in your ability to recall it.

**Myth:** Brain cells (or neurons) can never be regenerated and over time the brain slowly “dies.”

**Truth:** Recent research has proven this false. We’ve learned that the human brain is much more of a regenerating organ than was originally thought. It is complex, pliable, and malleable, and is much more like a muscle than was thought twenty years ago.

## Rx from the Memory Doctor: Tips You Haven’t Heard Before.

*The Memory Doctor* is chock-full of state-of-the art memory tricks. Here’s just a few of them.

**Pay attention—the right kind of attention.** Mason explains the six different types of attention and how understanding the difference between them can help you maximize your ability to remember.

**Make up a story—the wackier, the better.** So as you’re dashing out of the house on your way to the store your significant other shouts from the window: “Don’t forget green beans and Ben & Jerry’s chocolate fudge brownie ice-cream!” Making up a wacky story about how green beans are the secret ingredient in Ben & Jerry’s chocolate fudge brownie ice-cream can help you remember both items when you get to the store. We tend to remember things that are zany or bizarre.

**Use different memory systems to encode information.** This is called “effective rehearsal,” and involves inputting information into your

more...

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The Memory Doctor: Fun, Simple Techniques to Improve Your Memory  
by Douglas J. Mason, Psy.D., & Spencer Xavier Smith  
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mind in diverse ways. For example, if you want to remember to buy peanuts at the store, say the word “peanuts” aloud, then picture yourself reaching for a bag of peanuts from the grocery store shelf. Finally, imagine yourself cracking open the peanut shell with your hands and popping the peanuts into your mouth. **Play games.** Working on puzzles is a fun way to improve your memory. That’s because crosswords, mazes, and word searches exercise the same skills that are required to pay good attention. Good attention equals good memory.

### **Pavarotti or Picasso?: Verbal and Visual Memory.**

Verbal and visual memory are the main ways in which we consciously store memories and most of us tend toward one or the other. Verbal memory is the ability to remember data that relates to words. Those with good verbal memories are called singers. They tend to read a lot, memorize poetry, and prefer written instructions to maps. Visual memory is the ability to store visually oriented information. Those with keen visual memories are called painters. Typically, they enjoy looking at fine art, notice the shape of a road sign before the text inside it, and pay more attention to the scenery in a movie than the characters’ dialog.

### **Relax: Anxiety Blocks Memory.**

Research has demonstrated that anxiety impairs memory. When anxiety flips on the “fight or flight” mechanism, the higher-level neurological functions actually shut down to a degree and this includes memory. Mason devotes an entire chapter to quick and easy relaxation exercises that can help you to remember.

### **Herbs & Supplements: What Works, What Doesn’t.**

Mason puts ginkgo biloba, garlic, Vitamin E, and a host of other products that promise to boost memory under the scientific microscope and tells us what the findings say about each of them...oh, and ginkgo won’t boost memory, garlic might, and Vitamin E may help prevent dementia, but is not likely to help with with normal memory woes.

### **The effect of prescription medications on memory.**

Some of the most commonly prescribed medications, such as antidepressants, antibiotics, cardiac medicines, and allergy medications can impact memory. Mason offers a comprehensive list of these medications and tips for coping with their affect on memory.

### **Women and Memory.**

Fluctuating levels of estrogen and progesterone can impair memory. Mason addresses the particular concerns of women who are experiencing menopause or perimenopause.

**Medication for Memory Enhancement.** When most of us think of memory drugs, we think of Alzheimer’s patients, but there are currently several medications that are used for much milder memory deficits. Mason gives an overview of these medications, their side effects, and what the research tells us about their usefulness.

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## About Douglas J. Mason, Psy.D., “The Memory Doctor”



**Douglas J. Mason, Psy.D.**, is a neuropsychologist who specializes in the diagnosis and rehabilitation of people with brain injuries and other cognitive disorders. He is currently in private practice in central Florida. His practice is called The Memory Doctor, LLC.

Dr. Mason has been interviewed by national and local media, including *ABC World News Now*, NPR, and numerous print publications.

He has served as a consultant on competency to the Florida courts and is the former director of the cognitive rehabilitation team at the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Center at Orlando Regional Medical Center in Florida. In 1999 Mason won the Southeastern Psychological Association’s Graduate Research Award, and he is a former neuropsychology fellow at Duke University’s Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center.

**Spencer Xavier Smith** is a freelance writer and editor based in Santa Rosa, CA.

## Suggested Interview Questions for The Memory Doctor

1. You say that “to forget is normal; to forget that you have forgot is not.” What do you mean by this?
2. We often think that our mind functions like a computer, where everything is stored in one designated area to be retrieved at will, but you say this is not a good metaphor. Why?
3. Give us a lay person’s overview of how memory works and what goes “wrong” when you can’t remember something.
4. Much of what recent research on the brain tells us contradicts what we believed in the past. What are a few myths that still persist about how the brain works?
5. How did you get to be known as “The Memory Doctor?”
6. A chapter of your book, *The Memory Doctor* is entitled “Pay Attention!” In it you talk about the different kinds of attention and which ones contribute most to good memory functioning. Tell us a little about this.
7. Many supplements are believed to improve memory and in your book you take a look at ginkgo biloba and others commonly used for memory enhancement. What does the research say about them so far?
8. Can you give us a few tips for enhancing memory?
9. What effect do psychological factors, such as depression and anxiety, have on memory?
10. In *The Memory Doctor* you include a comprehensive list of prescription medications that can impact memory. Imagine someone who’s taking a medication that’s absolutely essential to his health, but is bothered by the toll it’s taking on his memory. What do you suggest to him?

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## Raves for Dr. Mason's First Book, *The Memory Workbook*

"This engaging approach inspires the reader to discover, connect, and enrich memories in a uniquely meaningful personal tapestry...and sustains attention as it moves the reader from 'why you forget to why you remember.' Try it all the way through—you will like it. It works for me."

—Lisa Gwyther, M.S.W., Director, Family Support Program, Duke Center for Aging

"*The Memory Workbook* is written with a wry sense of humor and entertains as it teaches the reader techniques for improving memory. Although it's written with elders in mind, people of any age can benefit from reading this book and performing the exercises."

—Mari Szymanski, RN, C., Autopsy & Brain Donation Coordinator, Bryan Alzheimer's Disease Research Center, Duke University Medical Center

"The encouraging tone and straightforward presentation of the information in this book will increase the likelihood that readers of all ages will not only improve their memory function but also their outlook on the normal aging process. It is also a 'must read' for anyone who wants to better understand how memory works, in illness and in health."

—Roberta Wallace, M.S.W., A.C.S.W., L.C.S.W., Clinical Social Worker, Bryan Alzheimer's Disease Research Center, Duke University Medical Center

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