



# The Nostalgia Factory

*Douwe Draaisma*

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You cannot call to mind the name of a man you have known for 30 years. You walk into a room and forget what you came for. What is the name of that famous film you've watched so many times? These are common experiences, and as we grow older we tend to worry about these lapses. Is our memory failing? Is it dementia?

Douwe Draaisma, a renowned memory specialist, here focuses on memory in later life. Writing with eloquence and humor, he explains neurological phenomena without becoming lost in specialist terminology. His book is reminiscent of Oliver Sacks's work, and not coincidentally this volume includes a long interview with Sacks, who speaks of his own memory changes as he entered his sixties. Draaisma moves smoothly from anecdote to research and back, weaving stories and science into a compelling description of the terrain of memory. He brings to light the "reminiscence effect," just one of the unexpected pleasures of an aging memory.

The author writes reassuringly about forgetfulness and satisfyingly dismantles the stubborn myth that mental gymnastics can improve memory. He presents a convincing case in favor of the aging mind and urges us to value the nostalgia that survives as recollection, appreciate the intangible nature of past events, and take pleasure in the consolation of razor-sharp reminiscing.

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