

# TED TALK- How Reliable is Your Memory? (Elizabeth Loftus)



LINK- [https://www.ted.com/talks/elizabeth\\_loftus\\_the\\_fiction\\_of\\_memory](https://www.ted.com/talks/elizabeth_loftus_the_fiction_of_memory)

1. What happened to Steve Titus?
2. In a survey of 300 cases of wrongful conviction, where a person was later exonerated of a crime, \_\_\_\_\_ of them had been incarcerated due to faulty human memory.
3. How is our memory like a Wikipedia page?
4. How are memories manipulated when a simulated accident is shown?
5. How are false memories hurtful?
6. How can false memories be used in a positive way?
7. What is the significance of her work?
8. Think of a time in your life when memory has failed you or a family member. Describe the situation and explain why you think it happened.

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1. What happened to Steve Titus?

Steve Titus was put on trial for rape after the victim thought he looked the closest like the attacker. His car had somewhat resembled the car in the case. He was found guilty and put in prison. He contacted a journalist who investigated his case and went on to find the real rapist who not only admitted to the rape Titus was imprisoned for but for 50 other rapes as well. Titus' life was ruined. He had lost his job, savings, and his relationship afterwards because of this misidentification. He ended up dying of a massive heart attack at the age of 35.

2. In a survey of 300 cases of wrongful conviction, where a person was later exonerated of a crime, \_\_\_\_\_ **three quarters/75%** \_\_\_\_\_ of them had been incarcerated due to faulty human memory.

3. How is our memory like a Wikipedia page?

You can go in there and change it, but so can other people.

4. How are memories manipulated when a simulated accident is shown?

The wording used could change what they remembered. In one study, we showed people a simulated accident and were asked, how fast were the cars going when they hit each other? Others were asked how fast were the cars going when they smashed into each other? And if they asked the leading "smashed" question, the witnesses told us the cars were going faster, and moreover, that leading "smashed" question caused people to be more likely to tell us that they saw broken glass in the accident scene when there wasn't any broken glass at all. They could have also mentioned the stop sign/yield sign and how they led the questions to get different responses.

5. How are false memories hurtful?

Answers here will vary. Students could mention any of the cases where she talked about someone being attacked, lost, etc and the repercussions it had on that person. They could also mention Titus here and how it cost his life. They could even mention how eyewitness testimony can have flaws to it and innocent people could have been incarcerated.

6. How can false memories be used in a positive way?

It could be used to plant a memory of a food making you sick which would later cause you to avoid it or they could plant a positive memory of a food to encourage you eating it. It could be a plus when it comes to one's health.

7. What is the significance of her work?

Multiple answers possible. She has helped us understand how our memory can fail us. She has also helped us look at how we need to potentially change the way we look at eyewitness testimonies. She has given us a better understanding of false memories and their existence.

8. Think of a time in your life when memory has failed you or a family member. Describe the situation and explain why you think it happened.

Answers will vary.