

How to Leverage the Complexities of Memory to Drive Behavior Change

On this episode of the [Behavior Change Podcast](#), Greg Stielstra, Senior Director of Behavioral Design at [Lirio](#), [Matt Johnson](#), Professor of Consumer Neuroscience and Neuromarketing and [Prince Ghuman](#), Professor of Neuromarketing and Entrepreneurship at [Hult International Business School](#), discussed the science behind human memory, including how to make memories, how to shape them, and how our memories influence the decisions that chart our future.

**GUEST****Price Ghuman**

(PG), Professor of Neuromarketing and Entrepreneurship at Hult International Business School

**GUEST****Matt Johnson**

(MJ), Professor of Consumer Neuroscience and Neuromarketing at Hult International Business School

**HOST****Greg Stielstra**

(GS), Senior Director of Behavioral Science at Lirio

Episode Takeaways

Greg provided an overview of the in-group bias and how this can contribute to positive behavior change when leveraged appropriately. Matt and Prince then discussed their book, Blindsight: The (Mostly) Hidden Ways Marketing Reshapes Our Brains. They focused on the ways marketing can reshape our brains, common misconceptions of memory and how it operates, and different kinds of memories and the roles they play in influencing future behavior.

Here are the key takeaways:

- **In-group bias** occurs whenever the world of an individual is clearly dichotomized into “us” and “them.” In other words, our differences don’t define us, but focusing on our differences as defining characteristics does.
- **Mark and Prince are co-authors of the book Blindsight: The (Mostly) Hidden Ways Marketing Reshapes Our Brains**. It is a collaboration of their respective backgrounds in academics and applied marketing and covers a wide range of behavioral topics, including memory.
- **Memory is our brain’s attempt at connecting us to the past.** We are technically different from one day to the next, but we have memory to make us a consistent entity. We may feel as if we have the “record” button on when having an experience and that we hit the rewind button when recalling. However, neither of those feelings is valid.
- Mark and Prince devoted two chapters of their book to unpacking and exploring the depth of the science of memory and how often it goes against our general intuition about what memory is and how it operates.
- Our **explicit system** is the type of memory in which we’re consciously aware we’re creating an experience, such as studying for a final exam in order to recall information later. Our **implicit system** is the type of memory in which we’re not consciously aware we’re creating an experience. These memories can affect our thoughts, emotions, and future behaviors.
- Not all aspects of our experiences are weighted the same when it comes to memory. **We’re more likely to remember experiences associated with strong emotions.**
- Introducing a little difficulty into processing, or in other words, friction, **helps to solidly encode a memory** so you can engage with your audience in a memorable way.
- **Dual process theory is often underutilized in the customer journey.** Communications need to architect the customer journey psychologically, so that customers leverage System 1 and System 2 appropriately at each stage.
- **Peak end effect** refers to the idea that not all aspects of an experience are weighted equally when it comes to creating a memory. Peak moments and final impressions impact whether someone remembers an event positively or negatively.

- **The reason we partake in a certain behavior or make a decision is often not the reason we attribute to it.** Our memory doesn't strive for accuracy; it strives for consistency. Therefore, we will attempt to make sense of our behavior or decisions with confabulatory reasons instead of the true motivation, which may be subconscious.
- **Pain frame** is what Matt and Prince call loss aversion applied to a call-to-action.
- **Cognitive dissonance** is the idea that we must see ourselves as having a consistent set of beliefs. When things are inconsistent, it causes psychological discomfort and we act or rationalize in a way which resolves the conflict.
- **Memories are incredibly suggestible.** Falsely implanted memories are just as strong and robust as memories of real experiences.
- The **COVID-19 pandemic** has introduced an inflection point that is pushing people to consider telehealth and is creating behavioral nudges that hasten the transition. Our memories from this period of time will shape future behaviors.

Learn More

To listen to the full interview or read the transcript, [download the podcast here](#). And, if you'd like to find out how Lirio can help your organization, [contact us](#) for a strategic consultation.