**FYI: Why does a memory change over time? Chapter 2**

Our memories evolved to use our experiences of the past to serve our present needs (Sandry, Trafimow, Marks, & Rice, 2013). Imagine two ancient tribes, one with extremely accurate but unchanging memory of the past, while the other tribe’s past memory is less accurate because it is being continually updated. While the first tribe has superior accuracy, the second tribe has an evolutionary advantage, they can remember new food sources and dangers. Evolution has shaped our brains to edit our memories and learn from experience (Hardt, Einarsson & Nader, 2010). Importantly, if our recall of stressful experiences were not tempered by the knowledge of how things worked out in the end, we might not reap the benefits of those hard-earned life lessons.We continually rewrite our memories to take advantage of new information, which makes our memories useful for survival but useless for accuracy (Hardt & Nader, 2009).

**FYI: Children’s perception potential: You used to have superpowers! Chapter 3**

While some of children’s memory and cognitive abilities are inferior to adults, there is one area where children are superior, their incredibly sensitive perceptual abilities. These are measured by their **absolute thresholds,** the smallest amount of sensation you can reliably detect (Galantner, 1962).

Here are examples of the maximum sensitivity for each of your five senses. How do your abilities compare?

* Vision - A candle flame 48 kilometers (30 miles) away.
* Hearing - A watch ticking 6 meters (20 feet) away.
* Smell - A drop of perfume in a six-room house.
* Taste - A teaspoon of sugar in 3.79 liters (1 gallon) gallon of water.
* Touch - A wing of a fly on your cheek, dropped 1 centimeter (.4 inch).

**FYI: What’s in a name? A note on nomenclature Chapter 4**

Imagine receiving the results of a test for a driver’s license, university entrance examination, or entry-level job and instead of a score, you see the word “idiot,” “imbecile” or “moron” written in large red letters on the top of the examination! Don’t feel insulted because at one time these terms did not have the negative meaning they do today. In fact, until the 1960’s these terms were commonly used to label intelligence categories (Huey, 1912). If you’re curious, the average intelligence quotient is 100 and these are the criteria for each category…

* “Morons” —Those whose mental development is above that of an “imbecile” but does not exceed that of a normal child of about twelve years. IQ between 70-51
* “Imbeciles” —Those whose development is higher than that of an “idiot,” but whose intelligence does not exceed that of a normal child of about seven years. IQ between 50-26
* “Idiots” —Those so defective that the mental development never exceeds that of a normal child of about two years– IQ below 25.

Fortunately, we have realized that our language reflects our respect for individuals of any population group or designation. Historically, terms that were once widely used, have been replaced by other more appropriate words. For example, the term “mental retardation” was once a common description and is judged to be hurtful to individuals who have low intelligence. In its place, the terms “intellectual impairment” or "an individual with an intellectual impairment” are used (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). We now use a “person-first” model when referring to individuals. For example, instead of the “wheelchair person,” the “woman who uses a wheelchair.” The concept of *having* rather than *being* disabled, allows recognition of other aspects of an individual’s life (grandmother, father, professional experiences). In the same way we do not refer to a person suffering from the sneezing and coughing of a cold as “the cold.”

**FYI:** **If there is a 3rd degree, what were the 1st and 2nd degrees? Chapter 5**

Arrest was the first degree, transportation to jail the second degree, and interrogation was the third degree. Once established, the “third degree” referred to the violence used to obtain a confession or information about a crime – in brief, torture (Rejali, 2007).

**FYI: How are you selected for jury duty in the US? Chapter 11**

If you are requested to serve on a jury, you name was probably drawn from driver's licenses and voting rolls. The details may vary among states and between the state and federal courts, but the basic process is the same. A court selects potential jurors from a list of names that are often obtained from lists of people with driver’s licenses in the state and people who are registered to vote in the state.

When a person is summoned for jury duty, they usually get a letter telling them the date and time they have to appear at the courthouse. After this, one of two things will happen. At the courthouse, there is a chance that you will not be called to serve in a trial that day. If that happens, you may go home, but the courthouse may ask them to return at a later date -- when someone is summoned for jury duty, they're often "on call" for a period of a few weeks, during which the court may call on them two or three times or until they're asked to serve on a case.

If a jury is asked to serve on a case, they will next go through a process called voir dire. Voir dire is the process the attorneys in the case go through to select the jurors they want to sit on the jury. The attorneys and the judges will ask the jurors questions and maybe give them a questionnaire to fill out. Attorneys can then either ask for a juror to be removed without giving a reason (called a peremptory challenge -- attorneys only get a limited number of these) or can ask the judge to excuse a juror for cause because they think the juror may be biased against their client (but the judge has to agree with the lawyer to excuse the juror for cause).

\*TIP: Never ignore a call for jury duty. Failure to attend jury duty can result in fines, suspension of a driver’s license, or in some cases, criminal charges (i.e. spending 24 hours in jail.) While lawyers may put you to sleep, actual jury duty may instill in you a keen appreciation for civic duty and participation in the judicial process!

**FYI: The origin of the electric chair - the “War of the Currents” Chapter 13**

Electrocution as a method of execution came onto the scene in an unlikely manner. Thomas Edison employed a gifted yet mysterious eastern European inventor Nikola Tesla (McNichol, 2006) However, Edison jealously mistreated and undervalued Tesla. Looking for a better life, Tesla took his ideas for alternating current (as opposed to the inferior direct current used by Edison) to work for George Westinghouse. The battle grew around the type of current (alternating current A.C. or direct current D.C.) to be used in homes and businesses, and public areas as the two titans of industry faced off in one of the most vicious battles the marketplace had ever seen (Jonnes, 2004).

Knowing he was selling the limited and inferior technology, Edison carried out a campaign to discourage the use of alternating current, including spreading disinformation on fatal AC accidents (Brandon, 2009). Edison directed his technicians to preside over several AC-driven killings of animals, primarily stray cats and dogs but also unwanted cattle and horses. Acting on these directives, they were to demonstrate to the press that alternating current was more dangerous than Edison's system of direct current. He also tried to popularize the term for being electrocuted as being "Westinghoused" (Essig, 2004).

Thus in 1890 William Kemmler became the electric chair's first victim. He was not, however, the first victim of electrocution. Around this time, a spectacular series of fatal accidents triggered a citywide panic; and New York ordered unsafe wires cut down. Westinghouse protested while Edison applauded: DC cables were underground. Years after DC had lost the "war of the currents," in 1902, his film crew made a movie of the electrocution with high voltage AC, supervised by Edison employees, of Topsy, a Coney Island circus elephant which had recently killed three men (Essig, 2004). Perhaps the greatest irony was that Edison opposed capital punishment, but his desire to vilify the system of alternating current led to the invention of the electric chair. Harold P. Brown, who was being secretly paid by Edison, built the first electric chair for the state of New York to promote the idea that alternating current was deadlier than DC (Brandon, 2009). When the chair was first used, on August 6, 1890, the technicians miscalculated the voltage needed to kill the condemned prisoner, William Kemmler (Moran, 2002). The first jolt of electricity did not kill Kemmler, and only left him wounded and suffering. The procedure was repeated. Later, a reporter described it as *"an awful spectacle, far worse than hanging."* George Westinghouse commented: *"They would have done better using an axe."* (McNichol, 2006, p. 126).