

Smells Can Help Us Recall Distant Memories

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. nostalgia /nɒs'tæl.dʒə/ a feeling of pleasure and also slight sadness when you think about things that happened in the past:
Example: Some people feel nostalgia for their schooldays.
2. olfactory /ɒl'fæk.tər.i/ connected with the ability to smell
Example: Females rapidly learn the unique olfactory features of their own offspring.
3. multitude 'mʌl.tɪ.tju:d/ a large number of people or things
Example: The city has a multitude of problems, from homelessness to drugs and murder.
4. recollection /ˌrek.ə'lek.ʃən/ a memory of something:
Example: I have many pleasant recollections of the time we spent together.
5. evoke /ɪ'vəʊk/ to make someone remember something or feel an emotion
Example: That smell always evokes memories of my old school.



Scientists have found out why certain smells recall feelings of **nostalgia** and can recall distant memories. The scientists say an area of the brain is responsible for assigning memories to smells and for storing them for decades. The area can instantly recall the memories with great clarity years later if a person encounters the smell again.

Christina Strauch, from the Ruhr University in Germany, said smells are stored in the **olfactory** brain. The word olfactory means anything related to the sense of smell. She said: "It is known that the piriform cortex (part of the brain) is able to temporarily store olfactory memories. We wanted to know if that applies to long-term memories as well."

There are a **multitude** of scents that can transport us back to our childhood. Smells from cookies baking in the oven or the perfume of an elderly aunt can bring back surprising **recollections** of growing up. Professor Strauch said certain scents can take you away to another point in time. Strauch said some odors can make you wish you were actually back in a certain point of time, or make you want to escape. She said it depends on whether or not the smell has a positive or negative association.

Aromatherapists partly depend on this for their patients. Smells can even encourage you to buy things in stores. Many stores introduce fragrances to shoppers to **evoke** nostalgic memories to buy things they loved years ago.

DISCUSSION

1. What smells can you recollect from your childhood?
2. How often do you get nostalgic about the past?
3. Why is the sense of smell important?
4. What's the worst smell in the world?
5. What point in time would you like to go back to?
6. What do you think of aromatherapy?