

PREVENT FORGETTING: DON'T MAKE YOURSELF THINK ABOUT IT TWICE

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When we forget something the implication is that we did not think about the item. That is a misnomer. In most cases we have, in fact, considered the item at one time or another, but we “forgot” because we failed to think about the item at the critical time—such as when we leave the house. Often, we even tell ourselves to be sure to remember something but, unfortunately, we become distracted and, again, fail to contemplate the item at the important juncture.

We forget simply because we make ourselves think about things twice. To prevent forgetting, then, do not make yourself think about things twice but act on the first thought. Consider the following examples: If you need a file for work or school, do not tell yourself to try to remember to bring it; instead, take that file when you first consider it and immediately place it in your book bag or briefcase and put it by the door or in the car. If you want to bring something to a dinner, put it in the car when you first think of it; if the item needs to be refrigerated, put a sticky note on the steering wheel of the car. When you finish a report take it out of the printer and put it where it needs to be, rather than making yourself do so in the morning and risk leaving it in the printer.

Many times while driving I suddenly think that I have forgotten something, only to recall that I, in fact, have that item in the car because I put it there the night before. These experiences continue to reinforce for me that had I not acted on my first contemplation, I would have “forgotten.”

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