

# Keeping Memory Alive:

Positive Aging Strategies for Memory  
Maintenance in later life

*Psychotherapy Networker Symposium*

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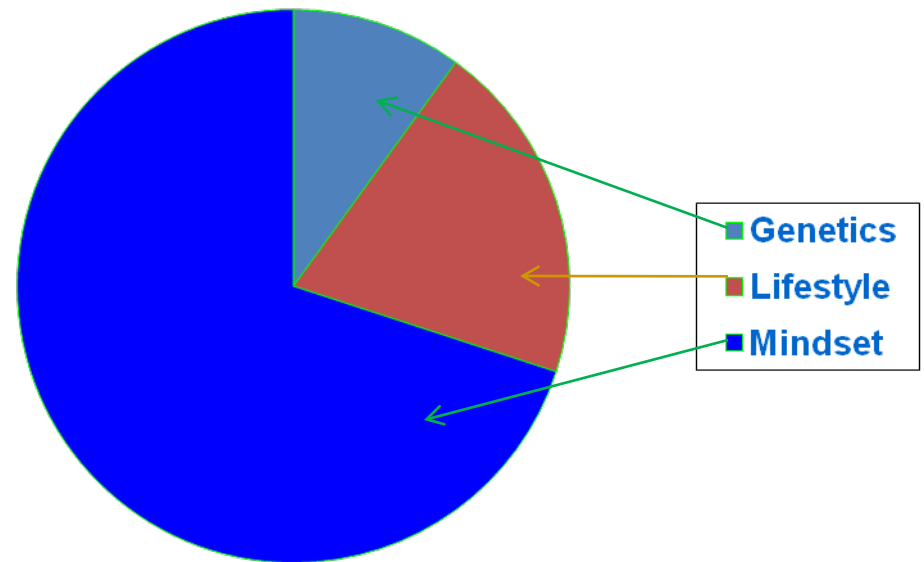
University of Utah

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# *Positive Aging*

- *What is it?*
  - *An affirmative mindset*
  - *An approach to others*
  - *An acceptance of self*

Quality of Life



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# We hope that:

- *Our view of aging will affect how we grow old:*

*Positive Aging*

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# What are the Steps to Becoming a Positive Ager?

## ■ Step 1:

- Mobilize your hidden resources

## ■ Step 2:

- Use those resources to find meaning

## ■ Step 3:

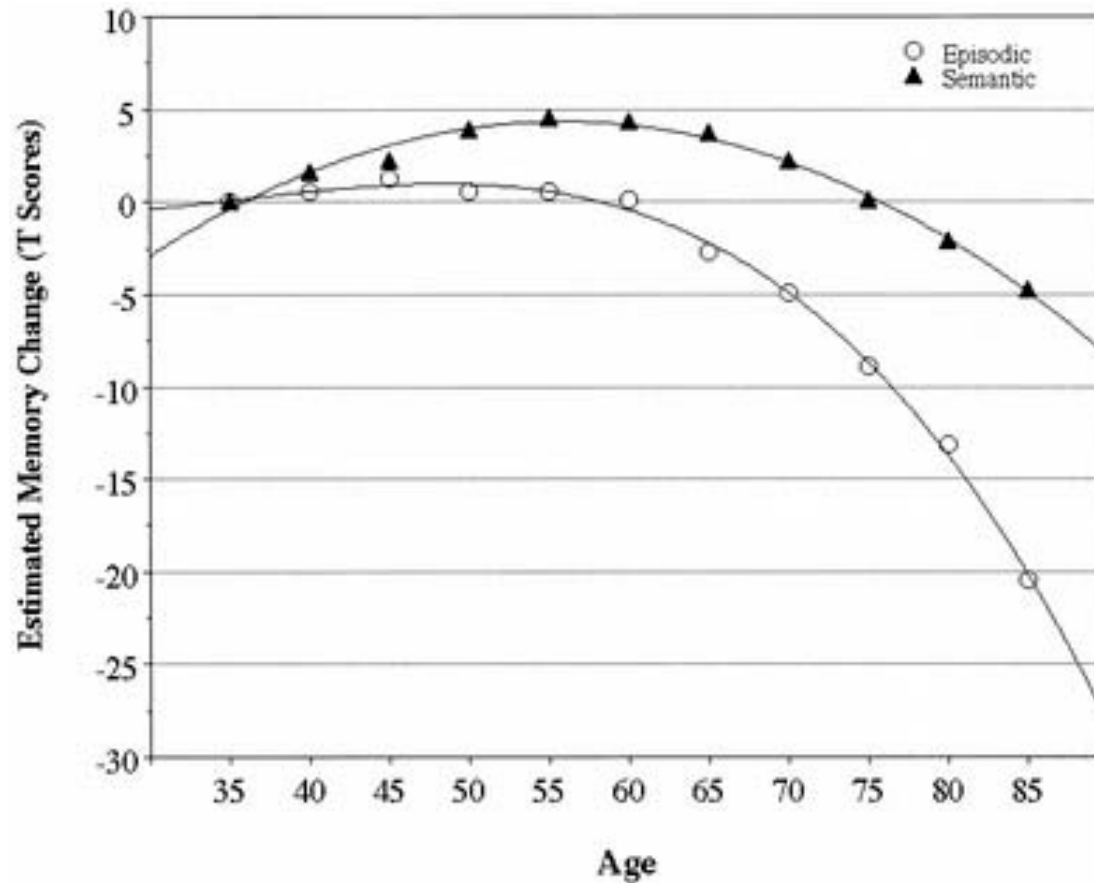
- Apply “Positive Aging Strategies” to negotiate in age-related transitions
  - Age-Related Memory change is a transition in growing old
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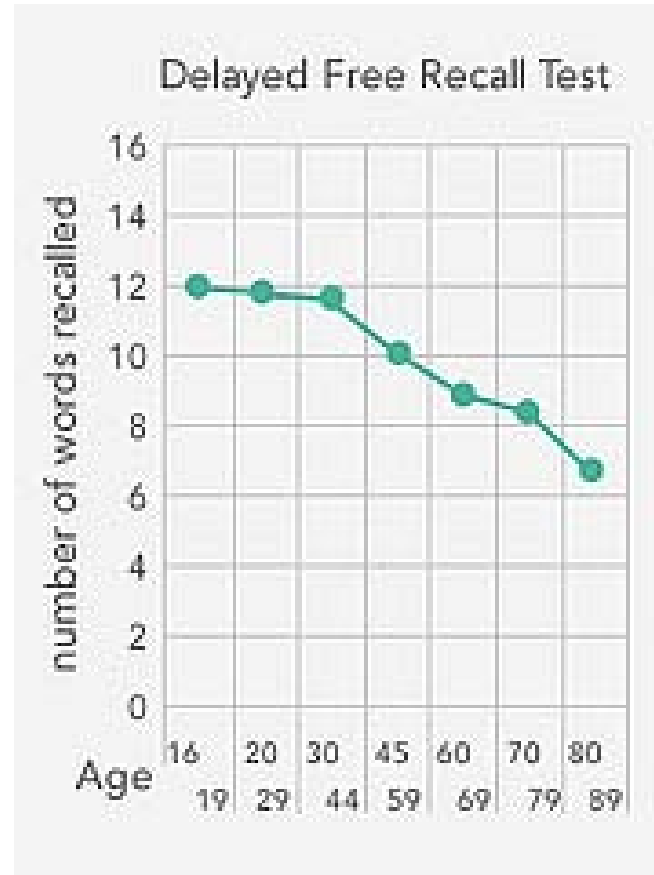
# Memory in later life:

- What we know
  - What we think we know
  - What can be done
  - What can't be done
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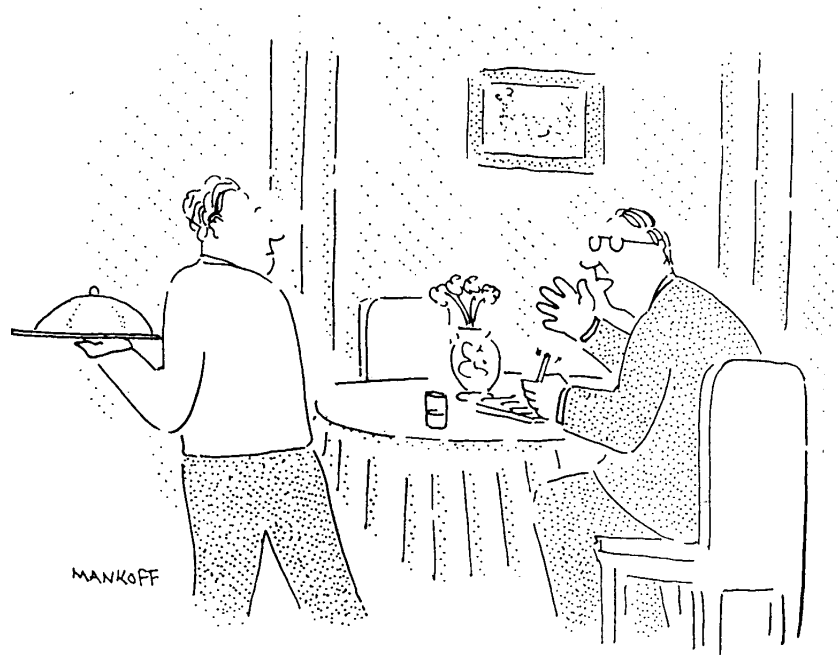
# Memory Changes are not Static



# Evidence from the Laboratory

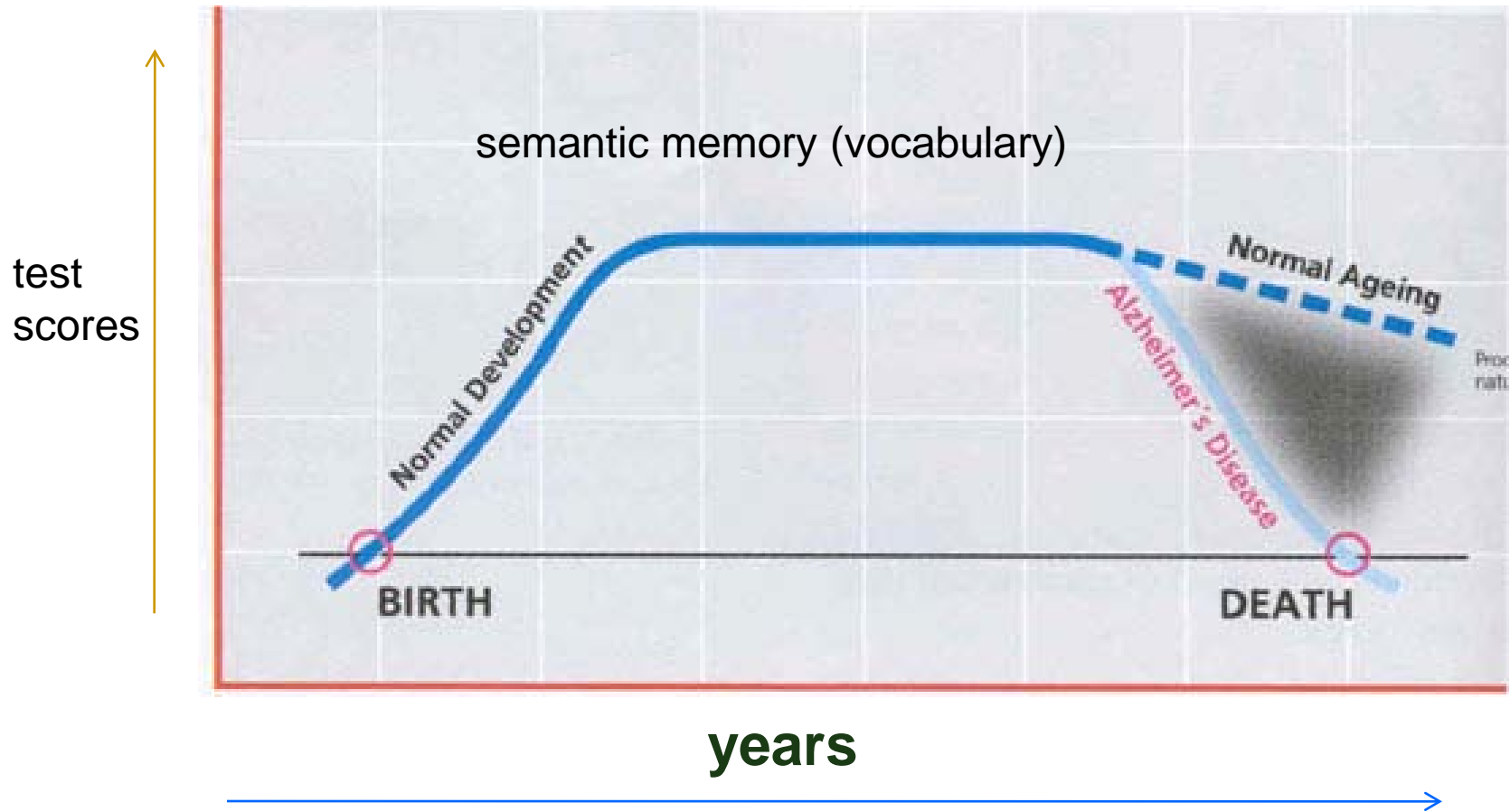


# And, the Real World



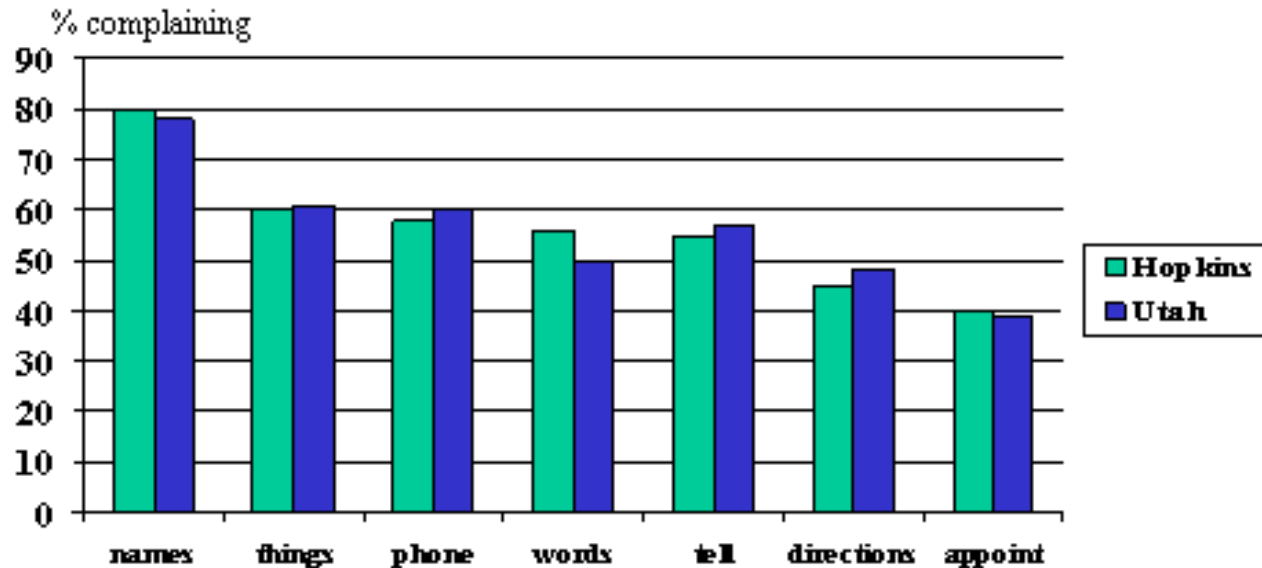
*"Waiter, I'd like to order, unless I've eaten,  
in which case bring me the check."*

# Memory Problems can Indicate Disease



It is difficult to disentangle memory problems from memory diseases

## Percent Complaining About Memory Problems



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# How is your Memory? Memory Exercise

- Learn two sets of numbers
  - 6 prices (\$XX.00)
  - 6 telephone numbers (582-XXXX)
- Memorize the numbers without written help
- Recall the numbers
  - Write them down
    - On template in a different order

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# A Reserve Capacity Exercise: Memorize These Numbers

- Watch      \$23.00
  - Book       \$11.00
  - Umbrella \$14.00
  - Radio      \$48.00
  - Shoes      \$34.00
  - Gloves     \$17.00
  - Hospital   582-2784
  - Mechanic 582-3528
  - Bank       582-6515
  - Dentist    582-9444
  - Bus         582-5009
  - Electrician 582-6239
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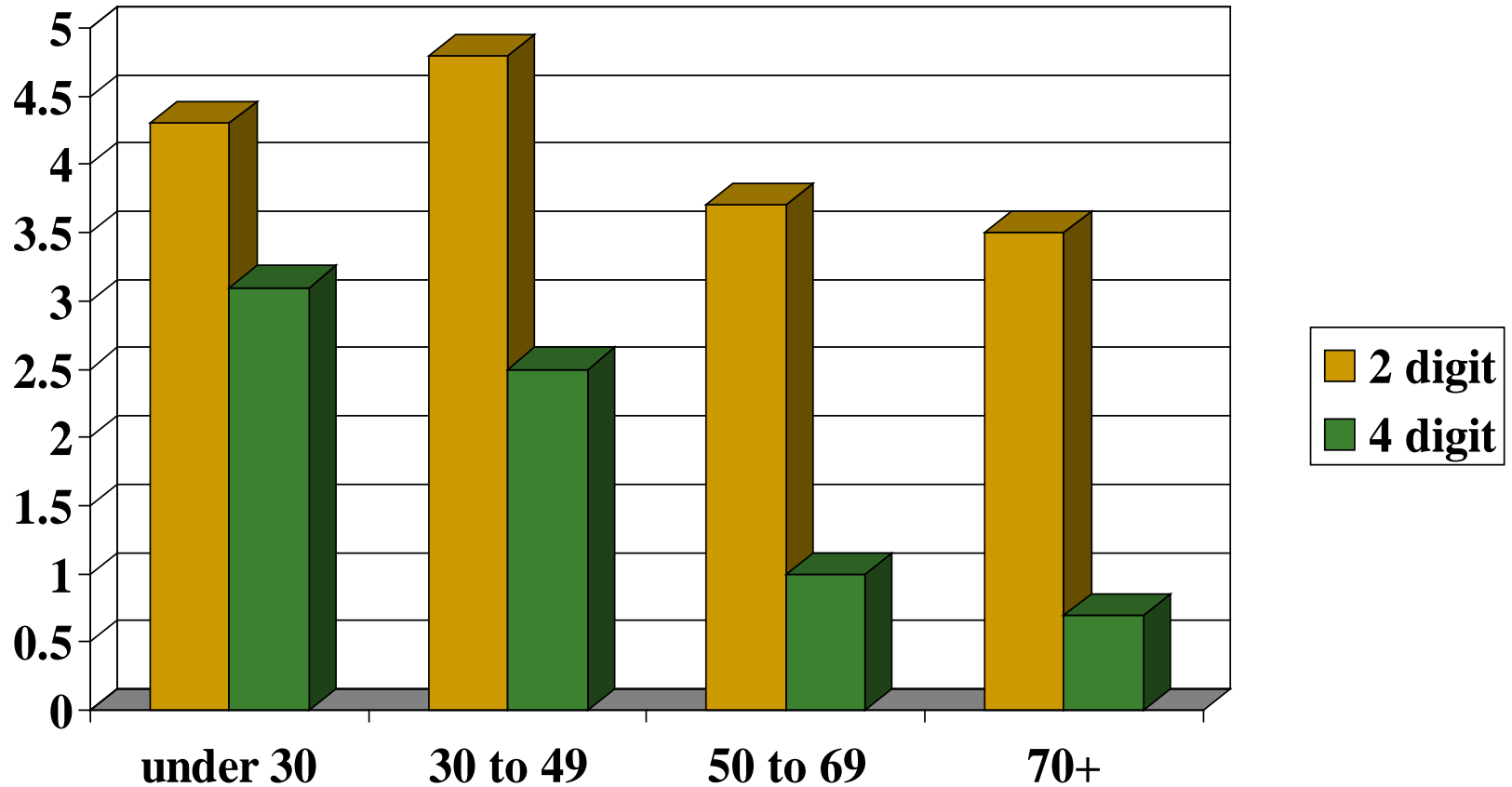
- Mechanic 582-\_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_
- Book \$\_\_ \_\_.00
- Umbrella \$\_\_ \_\_.00
- Hospital 582-\_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_
- Electrician 582-\_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_
- Gloves \$\_\_ \_\_.00
- Watch \$\_\_ \_\_.00
- Bank 582-\_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_
- Dentist 582-\_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_
- Shoes \$\_\_ \_\_.00
- Bus 582-\_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_
- Radio \$\_\_ \_\_.00

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# Self-Generated Strategies and Recall Performance

- University of Utah study
  - 113 adults 20 years and older
  - Memory test
  - Test the efficacy of self-generated strategies
  - Strategies = reserve capacity
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# Number Recall Performance

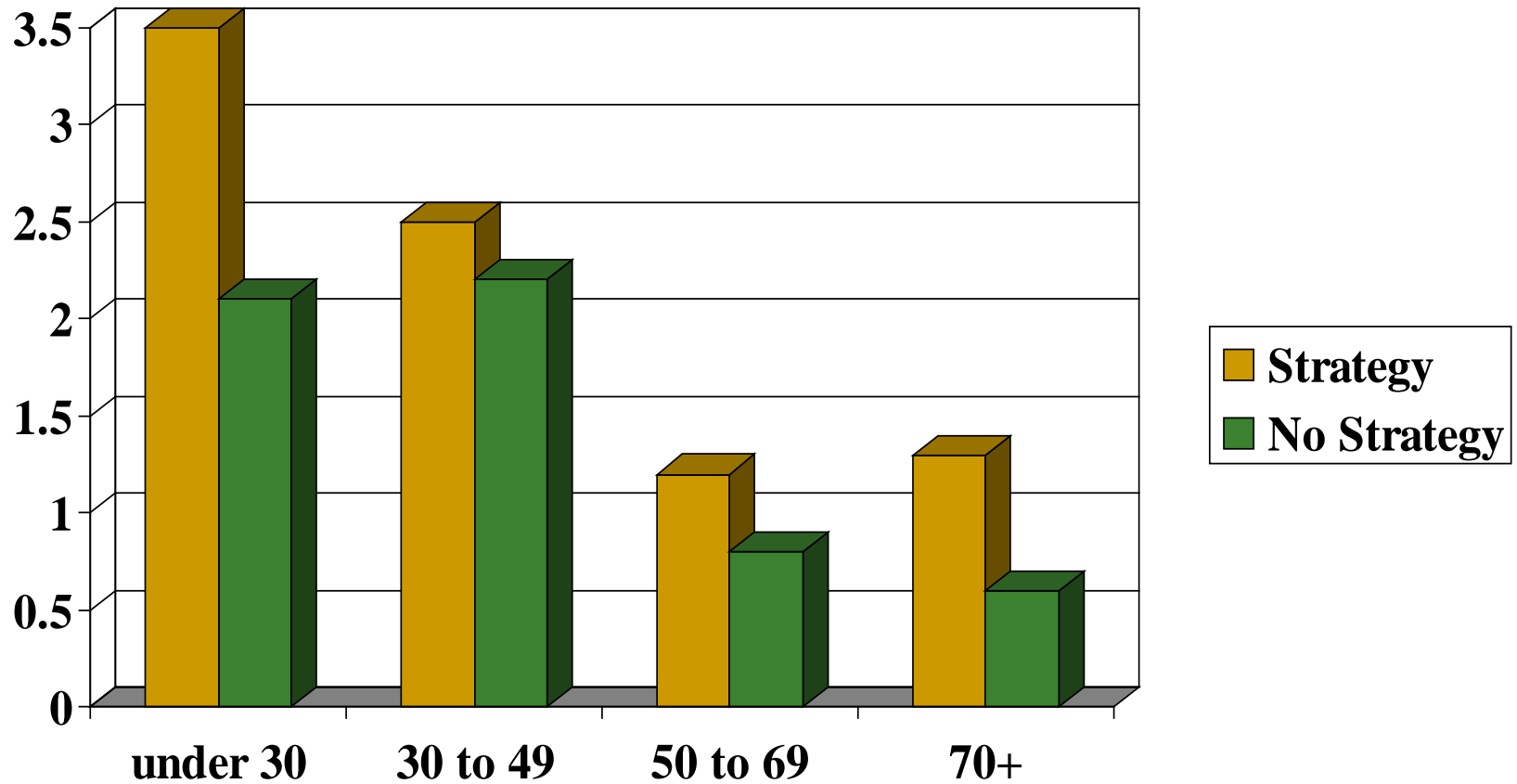


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# What Strategy Did You Use?

- No Strategy
    - Repeated the numbers
    - Read and rehearsed quickly
    - I tried my best
    - Concentrated
  - Strategy Users
    - Grouped numbers from lowest to highest
    - Put single digits in groups of two
    - Made numbers familiar a “4” looks like an umbrella
    - I related the numbers to ages of my friends
    - Difference and sum, 3528: 3 minus 5 = 2 and 3 plus 5 = 8
    - \$11 dollars for book, 11 looks like pages of a book
    - I made up stories with the numbers
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# Strategy Use and 4-Digit Recall



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# Do you have a Memory Disease?

- The 2 Keys to knowing if a disease is present
  - Mental Status
  - Adaptive Function



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# A Brief Picture of Alzheimer's Disease

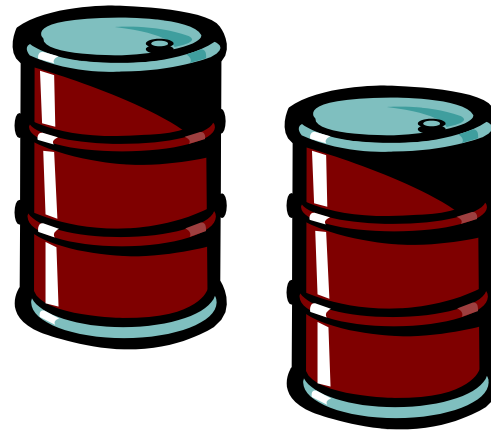
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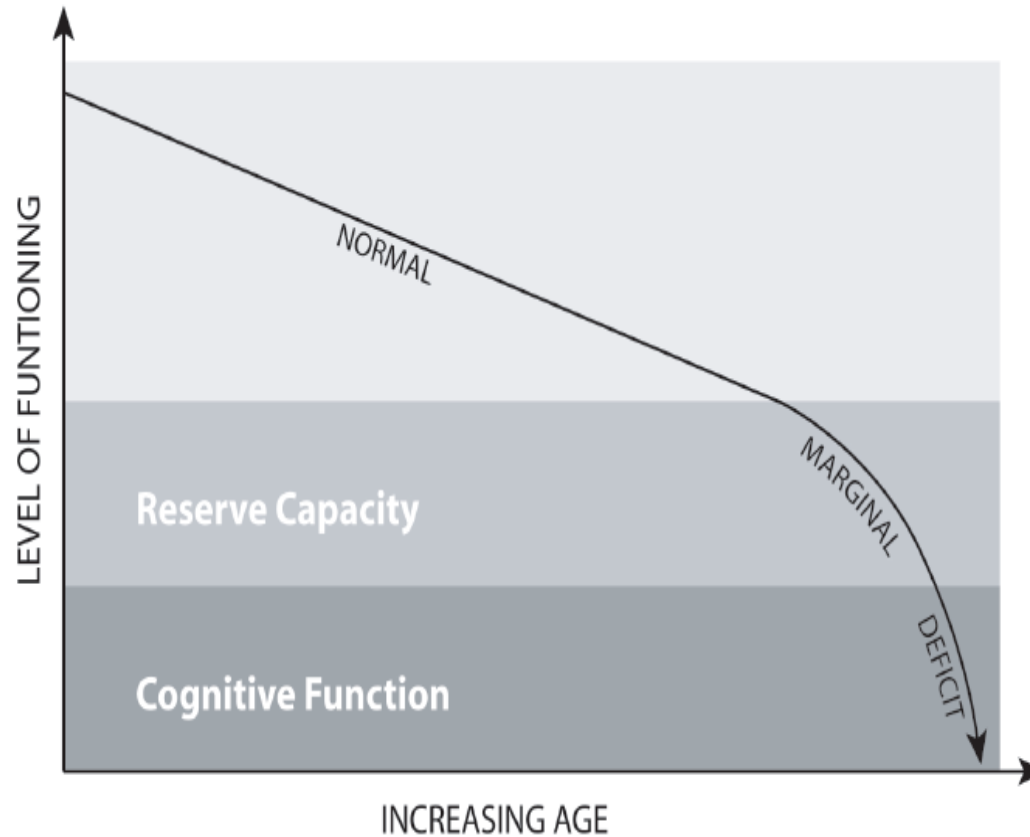
# Positive Aging Principle #1

## “Reserve Capacity”

- Every person has reserve capacity
- Accessing reserve capacity mediates loss
- Skills access reserve capacity



# Reserve Capacity Offsets Cognitive Loss



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# Positive Aging Principle: #2

## Strategies Tap: Reserve Capacity

- Strategies mitigate memory deficits
- Strategies access reserve capacity



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# SOC – A Positive Aging Strategy for Functional Maintenance

- (S)electivity
    - Eliminate what you don't need
    - To focus on what's important
  - (O)ptimization
    - Practice
    - To preserve what you have
  - (C)ompensation
    - Adjust what can't be fixed
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# SOC – Applied to Memory

- ❑ Selectivity
    - Decide what is *important to remember*
  - ❑ Optimization
    - Organize and Practice *Memory Routines*
  - ❑ Compensation
    - Learn *alternative techniques* to offset memory loss
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# (S)electivity Strategies: Examples

- What you need to keep
  - What you need to eliminate
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# Checklists are an Essential Everyday Living **Tool**



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# (O)ptimization Strategies: Examples

- The value of routines
- The overlearning rule



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# Strategies the Combine Elements of SOC

- Mnemonics
  - Focusing
  - Practicing
  - Linking familiar with unfamiliar



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# Types of Mnemonic

- Acronyms/Acrostics (E<sub>very</sub> G<sub>ood</sub> B<sub>oy</sub>  
D<sub>oes</sub> F<sub>ine</sub>) – *notes on a clef*
  - Peg-Words
  - Name-Face Mnemonic
  - Number-Consonant Mnemonic
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# A Mnemonic for Remembering a Name

- Identify a prominent feature
  - white hair, mustache
- Connect the feature with something familiar
  - That white hair reminds me of a “pile” of “snow”
- Form a visual image linking name to feature
  - When I see that face I notice that white hair and it reminds me of a “pile” of “snow”



Paul Snowden

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# The Number Consonant Mnemonic

- Numbers are hard to remember
- We need to remember number strings
  - Phones numbers
  - Access Codes (PINs)



# The Peg System – Peg Letter with Number

- 1=L
- 2=N
- 3=M
- 4=R
- 5=F or V
- 6=b or d
- 7=k or (hard c)
- 8=t
- 9=p or q
- 0=z, s (or soft c)

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# Remembering my CITI Bank PIN

- 0532

- 0=S:

- 5=V:

- 3=M:

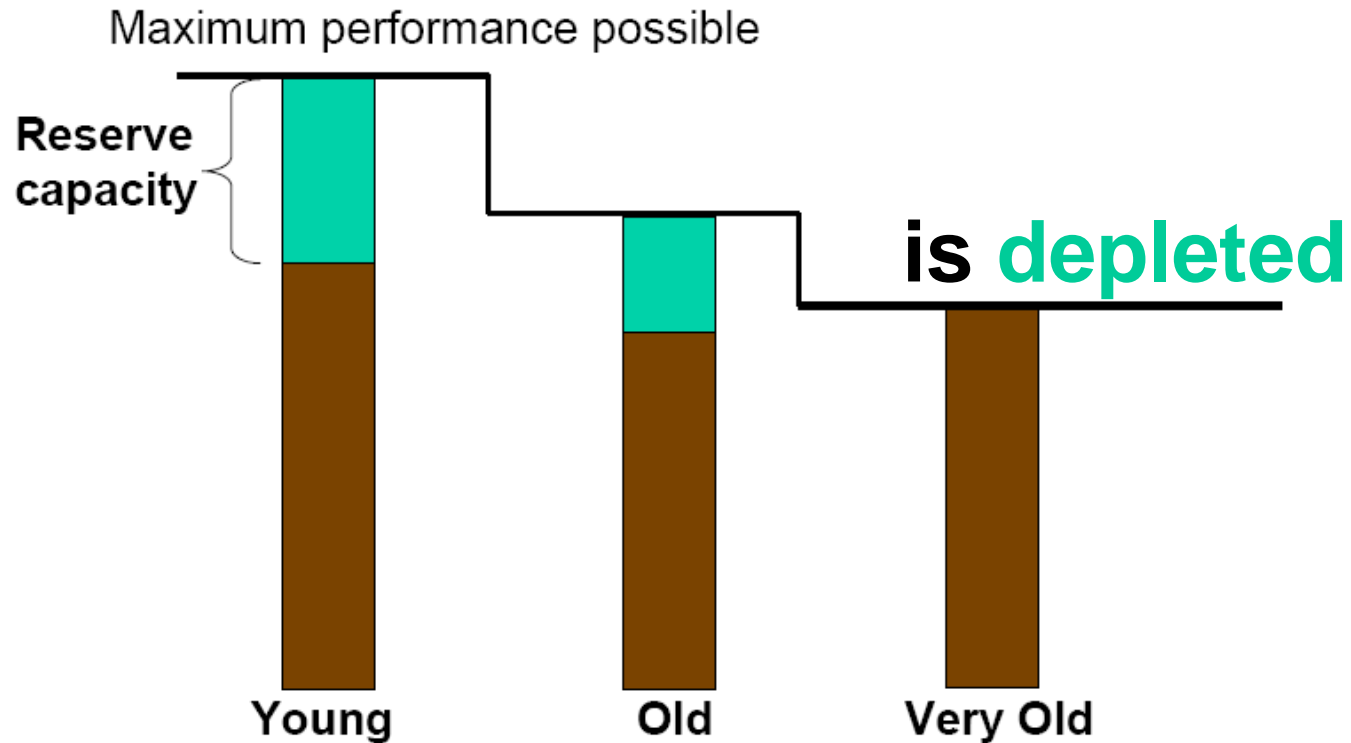
- 2=N:

**S**a**V**e **M**o**N**ey

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# Reserve Capacity diminishes with age

## Reserve Capacity



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# (C)ompensation Strategies: Examples

- Recall Devices
- Adjusting expectations
  - How to change an expectation



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# Positive Aging Principle #3

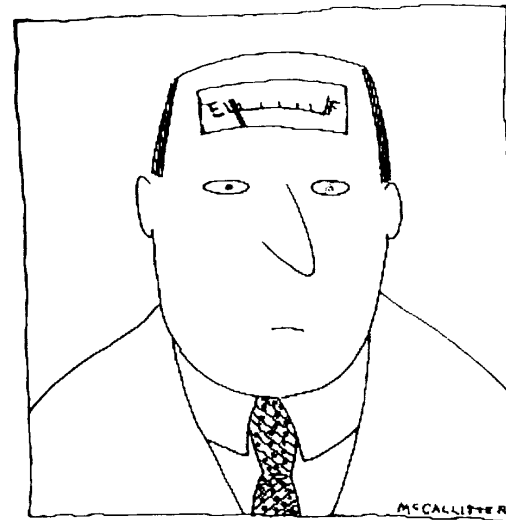
## Forgiveness

- Forgiveness strategies for changing expectations about your memory
    - Self-forgiveness
  - Accepting mistakes
  - Memory loss can be good and the bad
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# Exercise:

What good can come out of forgetting?



McCALLISTER

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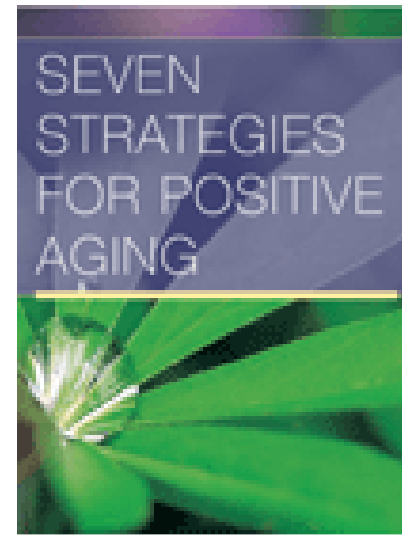
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# Building Positive Aging Learning and Memory Workshops

- Listening to Issues
  - Designing exercises
  - Encouraging practice
  - Measuring Improvement
  - Building confidence
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# Positive Aging

- **Is an optimistic mindset**
  - Developed individually
- **Based on skill development**
  - Activate Reserve Capacity
- **Through PA strategies**
  - SOC
    - Remediate memory deficits
  - Forgiveness
    - Accepting memory loss



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