

CRS – You Probably Have It, And It's Getting Worse

I have always felt that my mind is as sharp as the next guy's, but the next guy seems to be getting smarter.

I don't know about you, but I'm 52 years old and my memory is full. If I'm expected to remember anything new, something old has got to go.

Unfortunately, memory cells are not like computer hard drives where you can delete the stuff you don't need to make room. I can't remember the name of the person I just met, but somehow I remember that the French word for brewery is brasserie – a piece of knowledge I gained in 1968 that I have never used and fear that I never will.

Examples of memory deficiency occur daily. If I'm driving in my car and listening to a cell phone message where a guy wants me to call him back and is reciting his phone number, I just roll my eyes. Unless his number is something like 333-3333, he is not getting a call back from me any time soon.

Every morning, I'll pull a carton of orange juice out of the refrigerator to wash down a vitamin pill. Sometimes I'll replace the juice in the refrigerator and be walking away from it, realizing the juice carton is still in my hand and the vitamins are now in the refrigerator. That's why I'm now careful not to be putting anything in the refrigerator while I'm holding the cat.

A lot of us have trouble with names. I was at a convention last week where I was meeting someone new every two minutes. People would tell me their names, and five seconds later I realized I had no idea what they had just said.

After it happened the first time, I resolved to do better. The next person I met introduced himself as Jim Smith. "Jim Smith," I said to myself, "Jim Smith, Jim Smith, Jim Smith."

“Where are you from, Jim?” I asked. Jim looked at me oddly, and I realized that while I had been repeating his name to myself, he had told me where he lived. I still don’t know where that is.

I may be more sensitive about perceived memory loss than most people – when you run a business, it’s always nice if your employees have some confidence in your abilities.

If co-workers ask me something I should know the answer to, I’m concerned if I can’t spit answers right out. It may be perfectly natural to have lapses, but I’m afraid people are walking away from me shaking their heads, wondering if it’s just a matter of time before I forget how to dress myself and show up to work one day wearing my underwear on my head.

I really dislike the term “senior moment.” Instead, whenever I have difficulty remembering something in front of others I tell them gravely that I’m sorry, but I have CRS.

“Omigosh!” they might say, “what’s that?”

“Can’t Remember S***,” I’ll tell them.

Losing one’s memory is not normally a joking matter. I was fortunate to have several family members live well into their 90’s, and they were all pretty sharp until the last few years. When they no longer remember that they can be forgetful, you know its past time for a neuro exam.

According to memory experts, your mind is as sharp as it will ever be at about age 20 and it’s all downhill from there. This is not a good thing for me to know, although how long I’ll continue to know it is now subject to speculation.

After considerable research (defined as 20 minutes of Googling on the Internet), I have formulated a theory about memory loss being caused by an accumulation of underperforming brain nerve cells.

I figure that frequent moderate doses of alcohol will “cull the herd,” so to speak, and the remaining cells will be more vigorous and have room to roam.

I’ll keep you updated on this experiment, if I think of it.