Flashbulb Memories

Your Name

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A flashbulb memory is a detailed, vivid snapshot in which a drastic event has occurred. Generally, the event is emotional, which increased the ability to remember the incident. Flashbulb memory is a type of autobiographical memory which depends on surprise, emotions, consequentiality, and personal importance (DC Rubin, 1984). In this discussion, the accuracy of flashbulb memory will be focused on. The term flashbulb memory was first brought up by Brown and Kulik in 1977 (Conway, 2013). In their research, they have concluded that when biological memory is triggered by an event which exceeds the normal level of surprise, creates a detailed long-lasting memory. Flashbulb memories are different from ordinary memories based on their characteristics. Those characteristics make flashcard vivid and prolonged. Although from research, it is observed that mostly flashbulb memory are not accurate, but they are experienced with great confidence and vividness.

There are six main characteristics of flashbulb memories; incident, place of action, present activity, aftermath, own effect, and informant. A positive and negative incident both can produce a flashbulb memory, depending on the intensity of the event. In case of a positive event, individual encode such memory deep inside their mind by repeatedly sharing their experience of the event. As compared to a positive memory, negative memories are generally more detailed. Negative memory stays inside an individual's brain but with toned down emotional effect.

# Accuracy

Generally, flashbulb memories are not accurate because it happens only once. Mostly such memories are rehearsed with wrong details. And the first wrong memory sticks rejecting new information about the incident (E Winograd, 2006). These repeated rehearsals of wrong memory make an individual confident that his recalling is accurate, but in reality, they are not (JM Talarico, 2003). The most important characteristic of flashbulb memory is the aftermath of an incident. What happens after hearing a piece of huge news, mostly sticks to the person's mind. Flashbulb memory also loses its credibility with time. Taking an example of a Challenger space shuttle, most individuals were confident about their memories. In reality, their details were not true, and this is due to loss of credibility of flashbulb memory with time.

The assassination of President J. F. Kennedy is an example of flashbulb memory; people from that era are all aware of the incident. The incident was shocking for most people as it involves the killing of the most powerful man in the world. A person from that era like our parents will claim that they remember what happened on that day so vividly as if they were present in the place of incident. Another example of flashbulb memory is the incident of September 11, 2001, in which the twin towers of New York were brought to ground. The incident left the whole world in shock, as it killed thousands and destroyed the monumental skyscrapers of the New York State. Also, there was live coverage of the incident, which was broadcasted throughout the globe. The memory of the twin towers attack is imprinted in the minds of many. Even anyone living in Asia and never to the states will explain the event as if it had happened in front of his eyes. The aftermath of twin towers disaster was so drastic that most people don’t remember that on the same a plane was also crashed into the Pentagon. The aftermath of the destruction of the pentagon was not as huge as of twin towers. Proper coverage of an event plays a great role in developing flashbulb. Continuing the example of September 11, what happened in Iraq and Afghanistan as a result of such incident is not known to majority. There was no coverage of the Afghan or Iraq war, which aids in no making flashbulb memories. But Afghans, Iraqis, and our military personals who were participating in the war must have developed so many flashbulb memories.

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