

# My “Forgetter” Is Getting Better

*It's okay if I forget things as I get older because everything I learn will rise with me in the Resurrection, so I just keep learning.*

By K. LeRoi Nelson

**A**s a youth I read extensively. I learned that I could understand a broad variety of concepts and discovered a special interest in science. The gift I was given for my life's work as a science teacher at Brigham Young University (BYU) was the ability to put complex thoughts together and present them to others so that the thought could be readily understood. Although I have now been retired for over 20 years, I can still read and understand a complex science article or listen to a serious lecture on such subjects.

I have noticed, however, that I now have many episodes of forgetfulness. It is not unusual for me to pick up a past issue of the *Ensign* or a book and start reading before I realize I have already read it.

## Why Keep Learning?

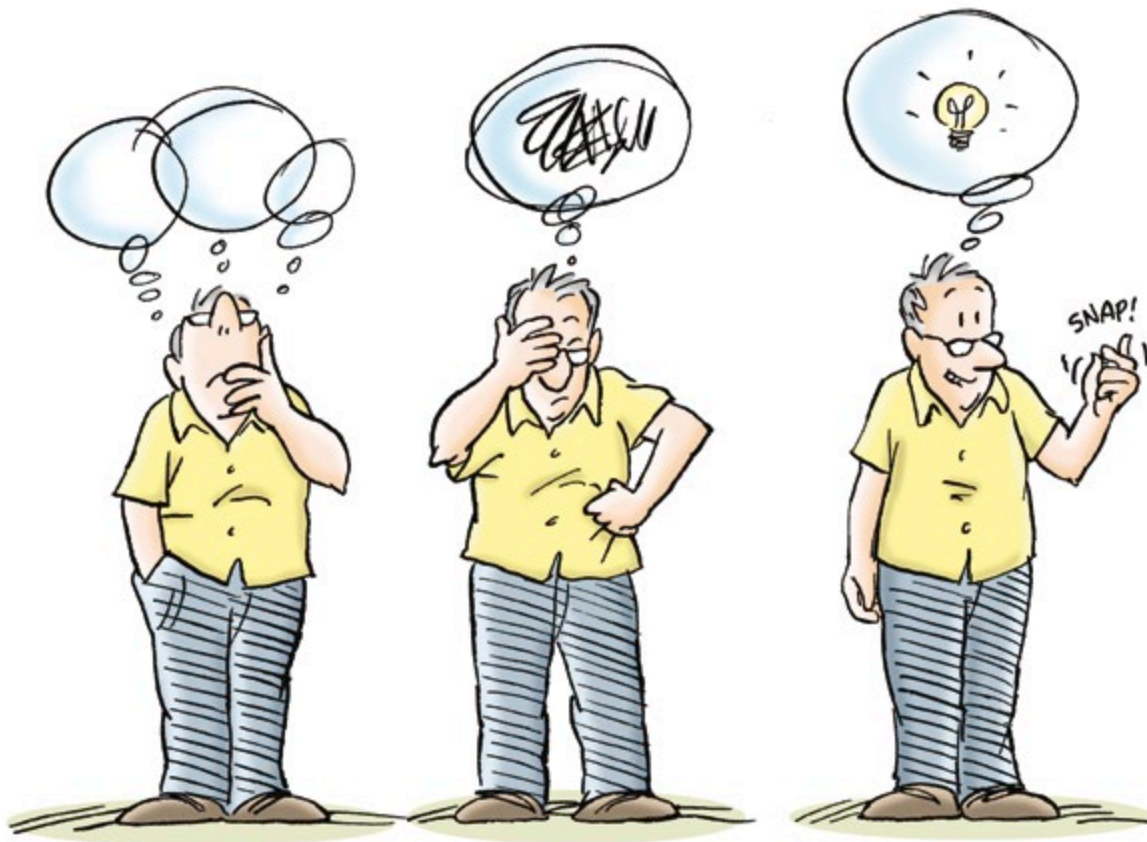
In his April 2013 general conference message, President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, recited a poem he wrote that includes the

following lines about his experience growing older:

*The signs of aging can be seen.  
Those things will not get better.  
The only thing that grows in strength  
With me is my forgetter.<sup>1</sup>*

The message from President Packer, who turned 90 in September, reminded me of something as I also approach my 90th year—I still should keep learning, even though I forget some things. Why? Because I know that “whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection” (D&C 130:18).

Yes, our mortal bodies get old. Our brains can lose the capacity to function efficiently. Our spirits, however, don't ever wear out. I know that when we die, our spirits will carry with them perfect knowledge of everything we ever knew. I recognize at this stage of my life that my spirit can still learn. The challenge is to keep learning—even though our “forgetter” may be getting better.



### Bringing Things to Our Remembrance

I am now writing my personal history, and I find that the Holy Ghost helps me by bringing “things to [my] remembrance” (John 14:26). I have sometimes been surprised by a special memory I had forgotten that suddenly comes into my mind as clear as if it were yesterday. I have also discovered that some things are really still in my brain but just don’t always come out when I want them to. A memory I might have been puzzling over might come to me in the wee hours of the morning.

### Gaining Knowledge in This Life

In Doctrine and Covenants 130:19 we learn that “if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come.” I believe this revelation is teaching us that we are better off continuing to learn throughout our lives.

But what if I cannot remember what I heard or what I studied so intently years ago? Do I have cause for great alarm? I feel the answer is found in a quote I often used as a teacher at BYU: “Education is what remains when we have forgotten all that we have been taught.”<sup>2</sup>

### Being Grateful

Though my “forgetter,” like President Packer’s, is getting better, my testimony continues to grow and deepen. I love the gospel. I am grateful that my Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, know who I am, and I feel a deep and special love for Them. I believe these words of Nephi: “If ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life” (2 Nephi 31:20). ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

#### NOTES

1. Boyd K. Packer, “These Things I Know,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 6.
2. George Savile, Lord Halifax, in *The Concise Columbia Dictionary of Quotations*, ed. Robert Andrews (1990), 89.



### CONSTANTLY IMPROVING

“Enduring to the end means that we have planted our lives firmly on gospel soil. . . . Those who endure are balanced, consistent, humble, constantly improving, and without guile. Their testimony is not based on worldly reasons—it is based on truth, knowledge, experience, and the Spirit.”

**Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008)** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Press On,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 101.