

## Memory Is Not a Mirror

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Memory is not a mirror. It does not simply reflect what was. It reconstructs, reshapes, revises-sometimes with astonishing precision, other times with devastating distortion. As a psychologist who has spent over two decades studying trauma, childhood development, and neural recovery, I have come to understand memory not as a storage system, but as a survival mechanism.

This distinction matters. Especially now.

At the Linwood Institute, we are exploring possibilities once reserved for science fiction: the selective restoration of suppressed memories, the intentional vaulting of harmful content, and the architectural reshaping of subjective recall. These efforts, though still in early phases of clinical validation, raise both exciting opportunities and profound ethical concerns.

On the one hand, memory modification holds transformative potential for those suffering from chronic psychological injury. Veterans, abuse survivors, and children raised in conditions of extreme instability may one day benefit from the ability to reduce or silence destructive feedback loops. Imagine living without flashbacks, without panic attacks triggered by sound or scent. For some, this is not just a dream-it is a form of freedom.

But memory is not the enemy. Even painful memories can anchor identity, establish moral boundaries, and protect us from repetition of harm. What happens when we begin to edit too freely? Who decides what is harmful enough to remove-and at what cost to the self?

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I worry that in our rush to protect, we risk erasing the very scaffolding of personal truth.

Vaulting, as a technique, must be approached with care and humility. It is not a universal fix. It is a tool—one that can empower, but also distort. Already, we are seeing subtle consequences in closed-loop reinstatement models: subjects questioning whether certain events were real, describing vivid impressions of experiences they never lived, or expressing deep confusion when reintroduced to relationships they no longer emotionally register.

This is not failure, necessarily. It is complexity. But complexity requires responsibility.

There is no doubt that we will continue to refine our methods. We may soon reach a point where trauma can be softened without erasure, where vaults can protect without isolating. But as we do, we must remember: memory is not simply data. It is a story we tell ourselves, and live by.

To rewrite that story is to wield enormous power. And like any power, it demands restraint.

Let's not forget that.