

Week 4 Presentation: The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat & The Astonishing Hypothesis

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Introduction:

This presentation explores Oliver Sacks' classic tales of neurological deficits, highlighting the fragility and complexity of visual perception, alongside Francis Crick's search for the neural correlates of consciousness.

Brainstorming Questions:

1. **Hidden Figures & The Brain's Chef:** Describe a time you tried to find a specific object in a messy room or played "Where's Waldo?". Explain, as if you were talking to, your grandma how your brain's "receptive fields" act like sous-chefs chopping up the visual scene into lines and edges to help you find what you're looking for.
2. **The Spinning World:** Spin around until you're dizzy, then stop. The world keeps spinning! Use this dizzy experience to explain to a 6-year-old why, normally, our brain does a magic trick to keep the world stable and upright, even though the image in our eyes is actually upside-down and shaky.
3. **The Broken TV Analogy:** Close your eyes and try to identify an object (like a key) just by touch. Now, imagine seeing an object moving but having no color. Explain this "selective blindness" (like achromatopsia) to a child using an analogy of a broken TV that has sound but no picture, helping them understand how different brain parts do different jobs.

Recommended Readings:

- Sacks, O. (1985). *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat: And Other Clinical Tales*. Summit Books.
- Crick, F. (1994). *The Astonishing Hypothesis: The Scientific Search for the Soul*. Scribner.