

# The Art of Forgetting

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You've heard the claims that many people, usually men, have short-term memory loss or selective memory. It's just part of a natural human process. Here's some proof ...

You've entered a big event, let's say an Ironman or a double-century, or a 50-mile ultra-run, or maybe something longer.

**Stage 1:** You're in the first part of the event, the adrenaline is high, you're feeling great, everything is going according to plan. You wonder what the next event could be.

**Stage 2:** Several hours later, your body is hurting, the sun is beating on you, the wind always seems to be in your face, there's no relief anywhere. At this point you are seriously questioning your sanity. Why did I ever enter this event? Did I accept a dare somewhere along the way? Why don't I just stop? Perhaps you even make a pledge that you'll never do another event, just get me through this one.

**Stage 3:** The suffering isn't going away, but you're not a quitter so you keep going. Besides, if you quit then what? How do you get back to your car? You still have to ride or run there anyway. Might as well keep going. If you quit everyone will know and you'll have to explain. A little pain now is better than the disappointment of a DNF. You grind it out, willing your body forward.

**Stage 4:** You're way more than halfway through. You're finally warmed up and you've hit your groove. You're still a long way from the finish but things are much better. Your body still hurts. Any day out here is better than a day at the office. You might still be questioning your sanity, though this time it's with a smile.

**Stage 5:** You're just about there. You know it will be over soon. You know you can get through this. You remind yourself, pain is temporary anyway.

**Stage 6:** You've crossed the finish line. Your racing buddy or your wife is there to congratulate you. The first question is about the race and how you feel. The second question is 'Would you ever do it again?' Without any hesitation, 'no way' blurts forth. They are laughing and taking note of your answer so they can repeat it later to you because they know what's coming.

**Stage 7:** A few days later. You've told the story of the race a dozen times. How bad the first leg was, how you kept going. The pain is less, perhaps there wasn't even any pain. You've been reviewing the event in your head and all the little things you could do better 'next time'. There's those magic words – next time. Someone asks you if you'd do it again. You hem and haw and shake your head and eventually out comes 'maybe'. Selective memory begins.

**Stage 8:** It's a week later. Your wife or girlfriend catches you on the computer or the latest magazine researching another event. They ask what you're doing and you say 'nothing'. They know and you know, you're planning the next one, despite the promise of never again at the end of the last one.

This is perhaps more applicable to men versus women though I have heard women compare this to childbirth though. During labor, women swear up and down they will never, ever have another kid. But a month later as they cuddle their newborn, they are already dreaming of the possibility of another. The intense memory of labor long gone and replaced with the love of the newborn.

Does this sound familiar? Have you been here before? I certainly have. I've participated in dozens of events longer than 12 hours. If I'm well prepared or it's an intermediate event, the stages may not happen as completely as they are here. Nonetheless I've been through all the stages numerous times. I have many friends who were with me at the moments of quitting in the early part of an event, swearing never to ride again, never to do another event. They remind me of those moments occasionally.

Hello, my name is Terry, I suffer from selective short-term memory, I am an event-addict, an adrenaline junkie. Come on – say it with me!