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FREUD was right about our ability to suppress memories. Michael Anderson and Collin Green of the University of Oregon in Eugene asked 32 people to memorise a list of word pairs. They then presented them with a word from the list and either asked them to recall its pair, or to banish it from their minds. The researchers found that people were much worse at recalling words they'd repressed many times—even when offered money to remember (Nature, vol 410, p 366). Anderson says although word pairs don't have the same emotional content as many suppressed memories, the result proves that we can influence what we remember.

From issue 2282 of New Scientist magazine, 17 March 2001, page 27

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