

Learning to live with forgetfulness

I was having lunch with a like-minded person in a Geneseo village restaurant when a trite overused phrase came tumbling out of my mouth as smooth as spun silk fabric unraveling from a bolt of cloth.

“Did I tell you this already?”

I kid you not. I can't describe how I felt other than upset with myself for not getting it together and my conversations sorted.

If I am at a time in life where I am covering up for loss of a specific word on the tip of my tongue, or forgetting all the people I have been in discussion with over the course of a week, then I am in for it.

Throughout our meal, one or the other of us reverberated a piece of information the other already knew. “You told me that last week,” or “you wrote that in an email.” It is like one step ahead and two steps backwards finishing each other's sentences.

I looked around the not-so-crowded room of mostly gray hairs and wondered if other tables were engaged in the exact same way. That foursome by the front window appeared to be well acquainted with one another, and I loved how they ended their meals sharing between them a birthday brownie topped with ice cream.

Occasionally there was a bright spot when a brand-new tidbit of information was revealed, and we gloated over it like two silly schoolgirls after passing a note with earth shattering news about the innocent boy sitting across the aisle one of us had our heart set on.

Oh, how patient we two tablemates were with each other and supportive, too. We propped each up and carried on calmly both of us polite by nature. We laughed, ate our salads and left the restaurant satisfied for an hour or two well spent.

Did I tell you that we are close friends?

An out-of-town former colleague at least a decade older than me warns to expect the symptoms to get worse, too. She's an ambitious writer and editor who exchanged one career hat for

another. I consider her a role model, and like myself, she moved from teaching into a writing lifestyle.

What's her best technique for covering the confusion up? She laughs, and simply owns up to it. That's her nature, too, and everyone loves her infectious spirit. They always have, and she proves that you are what you are, is the best way.

Our adult children don't put up with our fumbles too well waiting for us to search our brains for the light bulb to come on.

My daughter will tell me in no uncertain terms that I am repeating myself. In fact, she often interrupts me to hurry the discussion along. Life moves at a much faster pace for her thinking in the immediate. There is no time for repeats of anything unless it is cost-saving advice.

I am sure that my daughter is wondering if she will become like me when she advances in age, too, as this trait is annoying to her. When I hear her exaggerated, "Ma..." I realize I have pushed that button.

Often, I have to check and recheck to ensure that I haven't repeated a topic in this column. So far, so good. At least, I haven't heard from any of you.

To be on the safe side, I am going to blame the phenomena on having so much to carry in my brain from my busy, productive life and leave it at that. You come up with the answer you can live with for the present.