

I can be a little absent-minded at times. Maybe even forgetful on occasion. Sometimes I will be thinking of one thing while doing something else which leads to disastrous results, such as putting the milk carton in the pantry. Yes, forgetfulness, absentmindedness, lack of memory: call it what you will, we all have experienced it one time or another.

In my family, my mother is usually the one who remembers everything. She takes on the responsibility of organizing activities and events, and almost NEVER forgets anything. That is, until that very unforgettable day, March 24, 2008. As Joan Didion, an American screenwriter and author, once said, “We forget all too soon the things we thought we could never forget.” Now that is something we could all relate to on March 24.

Well, by now, you are probably wondering: “What happened on March 24th ?” The day started off very hectic. It was the day of my brother’s very important medical school interview: the one that would make him or break him. The University of Oklahoma had 5 seats that they reserved for their Medical Humanities program. These 5 lucky high school students would have a seat in medical school waiting for them when they finished their undergraduate degree. As you can imagine, the competition was very tough.

It was highly essential to arrive on time, so since we had to drive all the way out to the University of Oklahoma, everyone in the family (including the reluctant me – who wants to sit in the hot car for the long, boring drive??) had to wake up early. My mom packed

my brother's suit in the back seat for him to change into once we got there so that he wouldn't get it all dirty since we had a long wait before the interview. So, rolling out of bed in just an undershirt and shorts, my brother, still half asleep crawled into the car. He was very nervous about the upcoming interview and did not even want to talk.

I can't tell you how many times my dad said "Double check everything!" to us. My dad had an important meeting at work, so unfortunately, he had to miss coming along and being my brother's "support crew." My dad wanted to make sure we had everything and that the interview would go perfectly. For his interview, my brother had to dress professionally; he must wear his suit jacket, suit pants, shirt, shoes, black socks, and tie. My dad even tied an extra tie "just in case". After the five hundredth time or so that my dad reminded us, we began to get a little irritated. I mean, we did double check! Besides, my mom was handling it all, and she absolutely never forgets anything.

So on that note, we all piled into the car. My family and I had never been to the University of Oklahoma before, even though we lived in Tulsa which is only 2 hours away. We didn't know how much traffic there would be or how long the drive would take, so we decided to leave early to make sure we arrived on schedule. But as the interview was only at one o'clock, we were sure that we would have enough time to get lunch. It turned out that we did and – just our luck (or bad luck) – we were *very* early. Way *too* early!! We stopped at a fast food restaurant on the campus, ate our lunch, and mingled there for a while since we had SO much time to spare.

Finally, half an hour before my brother's interview, he decided to change into his suit and get ready for the interview. And *that's* when disaster struck. As you can probably guess, the disaster was that... we FORGOT something!

Alas, we had forgotten to pack a shirt! All our checking and double-checking and we overlooked something as important as the shirt! My brother couldn't just wear a suit jacket and tie over his undershirt for a college interview! It would look very unprofessional and the people conducting the interview would be very unimpressed by his lack of effort to dress appropriately.

For a moment, my family and I froze. The brand new white oxford shirt we had packed (or rather, the shirt we *thought* we had packed) was nowhere to be seen. But what to do? Where to go? How to get there? All these questions raced through our heads. Of all the days we had forgotten things in the past, this was by far the worst day to forget something!! Meanwhile my brother was getting more tense by the minute and just wanted to go home and cancel the interview, which of course my mom would not even consider. She decided that we would just race out and buy another shirt.

We scrambled into the car, with our faces literally pressed against the window, trying to find the first clothing store we saw. And, since we had never been there before, we barely knew where we were going! I tried to remain optimistic. Maybe the interview would be rescheduled at a later time or maybe the person who had the interview before my brother would be late and everyone in line after that person would have their

interviews pushed back. Ha, what wishful thinking. We never expected this and my brother was getting more and more worried, and my mother was getting extremely flustered. After all, she was the one who had put the suit in the car.

Suddenly I shouted and directed everyone's attention to a mall across from the highway. From then on, problems kept popping up like those moles on that very annoying "Whack-A-Mole" game. First we couldn't find the highway exit to get to the road that would take us to the mall; then when we turned the car around, we missed the exit! By now, my brother was extremely nervous that he wouldn't make it on time!

Finally we managed to get to the mall. We parked the car and holding hands raced across the parking lot and into the first store which was Dillard's. When we got to the men's section, we ripped shirts off hangers, trying to find the right size and color and type of shirt! We grabbed the first oxford shirt we saw that matched all of our specifications and rushed to the check-out line.

Like I said before, problems kept popping up everywhere. A lady had *just* beat us to the cash register with her arms piled high with clothes. At this rate, my brother could probably kiss that medical school offer good-bye – an option that was looking more and more appealing to him by the minute. But then, things took a turn for the better! We explained our big dilemma to the lady who very kindly stepped aside, giving us her position in line. With the help of the cashier, we paid for the shirt and my brother put it on right there at the register, ripping off the pins and hastily shrugging into it. We retied

the tie and put on the suit jacket, while the cashier and kind lady wished us luck. We would definitely need it!

Once in the car, we drove back to the university (getting almost lost again) as fast as we could. We sprinted to the university's library, where the interview would be taking place, just in time to hear the administrative director call out his name. My family, especially my brother, let out a sigh of relief. We made it!!

There are two morals of this story (and yes, you should have seen this coming!). The first is to always double check. No matter how many times you say that you "will get to it," it always helps to run through your list of things over and over again, until you are sure you are prepared! The second moral of this story is that everyone forgets every once in a while. As William Shakespeare said, "But men are men; the best sometimes forget." The main thing is to stay calm and try to work out the problem.

In the end it all worked out; the interview went well, my brother got offered a spot in the medical program, and we all lived happily ever after. That crazy event is now something we look back on and smile at, even though that day when it actually happened, we were far from smiling! As for Joan Didion and William Shakespeare, I just have one thing to say: You were right!