revolves around them and that everyone shares their perspective. Although Piaget believed people grow out of this tendency as they age, more recent research suggests that this is not always the case. Rather than viewing themselves as one actor in an ensemble, people tend to believe they are the lead actor in a play written especially for them.

1. Self-Relevant Information Is Especially Noticeable and Memorable

Have you ever been at a party and heard your name mentioned from across a crowded room? This familiar experience, known as the cocktail-party effect, shows that people are highly attuned to self-relevant information. They are especially apt to notice such information and to process it efficiently and deeply (Markus, 1977). These effects were demonstrated in an investigation by T. B. Rogers, Kuiper, and Kirker (1977). In the first part of the experiment, participants were asked to answer one of four questions about a series of words. Some of the words were judged for their self-relevance (e.g., Does \textit{honest} describe you?); some were judged according to their semantic properties (e.g., Does \textit{kind} mean the same as \textit{nice}?); some were judged according to their phonemic features (e.g., Does \textit{shy} rhyme with \textit{sky}?); and some were judged according to their structural properties (e.g., Is the word \textit{rude} printed in lowercase letters?). After making these judgments, participants were unexpectedly asked to recall as many of the words as they could remember.

Figure 5.10 shows that words referenced to the self produced the highest rates of recall, indicating that people’s ideas about themselves function as a powerful memory aid. Numerous investigations have subsequently replicated this \textit{self-reference effect} (Greenwald & Banaji, 1989; S. B. Klein & Kihlstrom, 1986). You might want to keep this point in mind the next time you study for an exam. If you can relate the material to your own life, you will be able to remember it better. This will be particularly true if you also generate your own ideas and examples. In group settings, people show better memory for their own actions than for the actions of others (M. Ross & Sicoly, 1979), and better memory for statements they have uttered than for statements other people have voiced (Greenwald, 1981).