

Memory: How to Develop, Train & Use It

Practice Guide

Important Points to Remember:

- The subconscious region of the mind is the great record-file of everything we have ever experienced, thought, or known. Everything is recorded there.
- It is held that everything is to be found in that subconscious index-file, if we can only manage to find its place.
- The records record only what we have impressed upon them by the attention, the degree of depth and clearness depending entirely upon the degree of attention which we bestowed upon the original impression.
- All the leading authorities on the subject of memory recognize and teach the value of attention in the cultivation and development of the memory.
- Attention, then, is to consciousness what the contraction of the pupil is to sight, or to the eye of the mind what the microscope or telescope is to the bodily eye. It constitutes the better half of all intellectual power.

Cultivating Attention

Begin by turning your attention upon some uninteresting thing and studying its details until you are able to describe them. This will prove very tiresome at first but you must stick to it. Do not practice too long at a time at first; take a rest and try it again later.

There are three general rules that may be given in this matter of bestowing the voluntary attention in the direction of actually *seeing* things, instead of merely looking at them.

Make yourself take an interest in the thing.

See it as if you were taking note of it in order to repeat its details to a friend—this will force you to "take notice."

Give to your subconsciousness a mental command to take note of what you are looking at—say to it; "Here, you take note of this and remember it for me!" This last consists of a peculiar "knack" that can be attained by a little practice—it will "come to you" suddenly after a few trials.

Cultivating Association

Association plays a part analogous to the indexing and cross-indexing of a book; a library; or another system in which the aim is to readily find something that has been filed away, or contained in some way in a collection of similar things.

The association of ideas connects our various thoughts with each other, so as to present them to the mind in a certain order; but it presupposes the existence of those thoughts in the mind, in other words it presupposes a faculty of retaining the knowledge which we acquire.

It will be seen that it is of great importance that we correlate our impressions with those preceding and following.

The more closely knitted together our impressions are, the more closely will they cohere, and the greater will be the facility of remembering or recollecting them.

Main Points

“Give to the thing that you wish to memorize, as great a degree of concentrated attention as possible.”

- Concentrated attention creates a clear depth of impression on the subconscious. The deeper the impression, the easier recollection will be.

“In considering an object to be memorized, endeavor to obtain the impressions through as many faculties and senses as possible.”

- When you receive an impression through multiple senses, it strengthens the memory. Try to know a thing from as many sense impressions as you can – see it from as many angles as possible.

“Sense impressions may be strengthened by exercising the particular faculty through which the weak impressions are received.”

- If your ear memory is stronger than your eye memory, work on the eye memory first to bring it up to the level of the ear memory. This takes training and exercise. Practice, and over time, your weak faculties will improve dramatically.

“Make your first impression strong and firm enough to serve as a basis for subsequent ones.”

- First impressions are very important in memory training. Getting a clear, strong impression from the start will allow you to remember more and retain longer.

“Revive your impressions frequently and thus deepen them.”

- By recalling an impression, a number of times, you fix it in your mind so you can retrieve it later. Use your imagination to go over a thing you want to remember. The more you see or hear a thing, the more engrained in your memory it will become. Small doses over time work better than a large dose all at once.

“Use your memory and place confidence in it.”

- The phrase “Use it or lose it” applies here. Technology has allowed us to put our memory skills on the back burner because we all have the ability to just look something up. One trick you can try is to memorize the phone numbers of friends and colleagues. Pick something you can use every day to practice.

“Establish as many associations for an impression, as possible.”

- Association is memory’s method of indexing and cross-indexing. Each association makes it easier to remember or recollect the thing. Think of associations as strings branching off from a memory to other memories. I find it’s easy to experiment with when remembering people’s birthdays you’ve just met. Associate the new birthday with someone you already know; pick someone you know that is born the same month. Better yet, someone born a few days before or after the new birthday. Tap into other senses as well to strengthen the association. It doesn’t take much practice to get very good at this, and it will strengthen your memory training in other areas at the same time.

“Group your impressions.”

- If you arrange your bits of knowledge and facts into logical groups, it makes it easier to retain. By associating your knowledge with other knowledge along the same general lines, both by resemblances and by opposites, you will be able to find what you need just when you need it.

“Practice, practice, practice.”

- To get good at developing your memory, you have to use these techniques and strategies every day. Make a game of it; make it fun. Just as elite athletes practice their craft to develop muscle memory, you must use the strategies in this book to develop a muscle memory for your brain. You’ll have good days, and not so good days – keep at it. If you follow the instructions in this book, you will see great improvement in a short amount of time.

I wish you all the best!!