

Your Memory and How It Works

By Gayle North

So many people complain about their inability to remember things. Here are some tips for developing a better memory:

In order for your memory to be really useful to you, and to be able to trust it you must have strategies for:

1. Knowing where you are going to put the information and,
2. Knowing how to retrieve the information when you want to retrieve it.

Often in school, we are asked to remember some important information. This may be spelling words, vocabulary words, math facts, dates, names, etc. The student may work very hard to memorize the information and still may not remember it when test time comes. The most common cause of this struggle is that the student does not know how the memory works or how to store and retrieve information in the brain. Many people have no way of knowing for sure that they know the information they wish to commit to memory or *that they have VERY inadequate strategies for storing and retrieving the information.*

Our choices of where to store the information are limited to our five senses—visual, auditory, kinesthetic (touch and feeling), smell, or taste. For learning new information, for all practical purposes, you are limited to auditory, kinesthetic, and/or visual.

The *auditory field's* major limitation is that it allows us to consciously process only one piece of information or word at a time and it has to be in a particular order. Absorbing information through an auditory strategy is slow. Many students try to learn auditorially by repeating information over and over. The disadvantage is twofold – it is boring and it is slow. The auditory field is most useful in singing, drama, speech and other subjects requiring auditory recall. It is most useful as an information retrieval system.

The *kinesthetic field* is very useful in sports, typing, auto mechanics and other "use the body" subjects. For most academic subjects it is difficult to store information in the kinesthetic field and it is very slow.

While the auditory, kinesthetic, and visual all play an important part in memory, your visual field has many advantages. *The visual field is the fastest.* It is also the most interesting for people of today who are used to TV, movies, computers, etc. We can store vast amounts of information in one picture and access any of it instantly.

So for remembering information and for academic subjects like spelling, vocabulary, history, math, etc, the best field to store the information in is the visual field. That is, make pictures in your mind's eye of whatever it is that you want to remember. It may be the actual word or date or a picture that conveys the meaning of a word or set of data.

Making good pictures in you mind is the key to learning and memory. Some people think they cannot see pictures in their mind. If you happen to be one of these people, be assured that you can be shown how to do it even if you are not able to do it on your own. Everyone sees pictures in their mind, and some just do not realize they have this ability.

Now, look at the retrieval system. Many requests for information in life and certainly many tests in school are given auditorially – that is, the teacher asks the question or the student reads the question and sounds out the words. Therefore, we want the sound of the words to hook or bring up the picture of the information so the student can answer the question off his internal picture. Say the word, the name, the date, WHILE looking at the picture in your mind. This logically connects the sound to the picture.

Long term memory usually comes from repetition of the thought of the picture in which the information is stored. So, if you have a picture of a word, for example, stored in your mind's eye, bring the picture of the word up several times OVER TIME. Pulling up the picture and describing it several times will it drop into long term memory.

In every situation in which you are memorizing data, visualize the contextual setting and embed the facts and data in the picture in logical places. By telling yourself what is in the picture, you will automatically retrieve the information when you need it.

Parts of this article are taken from an article written by Dr. Don Blackerby, Director of Success Skills and innovator of the Joy of Learning program. You may find more articles about memory, learning and dealing with ADD, ADHD, Dyslexia and other learning challenges as well as more information about Joy of Learning solutions to these problems at www.NLPOK.com

Gayle North offers Personal Coaching for Positive Change using recently developed empowerment technologies to clear mental and emotional blocks that keep people stuck in unhealthy habits and prevent them from performing at their highest potential in school, sports, relationships, work and finance. Call 406-837-1214 to learn how you can STOP SMOKING IN ONE HOUR and for coaching in person or by phone.

changeiseasy@montanasky.net

www.PositiveChangeInstitute.com