

YOUR MEMORY WILL BE GOOD IF YOU MANAGE IT PROPERLY

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A young college freshman came to see me to ask my advice about his poor memory. His memory was so poor, he said, that he simply could not learn his lessons no matter how much he worked over them. I put him through some memory tests and found that his memory was perfectly normal. Then I asked him now he went to work to learn his lessons, and I found that he had carried over into college his high school habit of simply reading his lessons through and through in a blind passive way. A long college lesson in history he would read through once, then read it through a second time, then a third and sometimes a fourth time, and yet when next day questions were asked upon this lesson he had forgotten the answers. Now the fact was that he had not forgotten the answers but had never known them, for he had not analyzed the reading, understood it or picked out the important points. It was a lack of good management rather than of power of memory. I advised him to read the lesson through once, then to review and analyze it mentally, and finally to consult the book again to check up his analysis. This procedure he found to save him much time and give much better results.

If you ask us what memory is, you see that it amounts to this: You do something all by yourself, which you originally needed assistance to do. If you remember a person's name you can call him by name on sight without any assistance. When you first met this person you had assistance. Someone told you his name, Good management demands that when you have the assistance at hand you should so use it as to do, right then and there, the very thing that you wish to do later without assistance. When someone has just told you the stranger's name you should look at the stranger and call him by name, either aloud or silently, and so prepare to do this very thing at some later time without assistance. This is the principle of all sound memory training.

Psychologists, after testing the memories of many people, are able to announce two very encouraging results. First, that nearly every one has more power of memory than he imagines, and second, that intensive training produces great improvement in memory. But it should be added as a very important qualification that training does not develop the general faculty of memory, but simply increases the power of doing the particular kind of memory job that is practiced.

The first step towards effective memory training is to decide exactly what sort of memory work you need to improve, so as to devote your effort to this particular job. If you wish to improve your memory for poetry, you must practice memorizing poetry. If you wish to improve your memory for names and faces, you must practice connecting the name with the face. If you wish to improve your memory for telephone numbers, you must practice connecting telephone numbers with the names of subscribers. If you wish to improve your musical memory you must practice memorizing music. If your wife complains because you cannot remember much of interest from the day's experiences to enliven the supper table, what you need to practice is the taking note of interesting items as they occur and then recalling these when the time comes. Great improvement can be made in any of these memory jobs, by devoting time and effort to that particular job. No doubt an expert psychologist adviser could assist any one to improve his memory work, but an intelligent person can do much for himself, once he knows that he needs to train himself for specific memory jobs, and that the problem is one of management rather than of inherent memory power.

The first step is to see exactly what memory job needs to be perfected. The second step would naturally be to proceed to practice this particular job. But just here a very curious state of affairs often comes to light. The man who says he very much desires to improve his memory yet finds it very irksome to work at the details of this particular job. In a way he is indifferent or even unwilling to do this job well. He experiences an inner resistance that interferes with his progress.

If this seems almost an impossibility, consider once more the sad case of the man whose wife finds him very unsatisfactory as a provider of interesting news. Is this the sort of man who snaps up eagerly every bit of interesting gossip or happening, and who anticipates the pleasure of recounting his news at the supper table? Does he relish the job of gathering news items for feminine consumption? Possibly not. Quite possibly he is the kind of man who thinks this beneath his dignity. He doesn't regard this as his job in any big sense. When it comes down to the actual working of this job, he rebels against it. This inner resistance is going to interfere considerably with the improvement which he might make. The chances are that he never will enter into this new game heartily, and will never become a shining example of success in this sort of memory work; but if he can overcome his own resistance it is in his power to improve. It has been done.

Poor memory is due to poor management rather than to an inferior faculty of memory. Any sort of memory can be improved if one discovers exactly what needs to be improved, and if one can play the game heartily.

OCEAN SURVEY SHIP SELECTED BY NAVY

The U. S. S. Rainbow, former mother-ship for submarines, is to be fitted out as a floating laboratory and itself sent in search of underwater secrets. The Hydrographic Office of the Navy Department has announced the selection of this vessel for the first of a series of cruises in which the ocean will be surveyed from top to bottom.

The Rainbow is on her way home from China and the Philippines. On her arrival she will be fitted out with a sonic depth finder for surveying the sea bottom and with tanks and laboratories for the collection and examination of living specimens of the denizens of the deep. When fitted out for her scientific work, the Rainbow is expected to take up a program of investigation in the region of the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico which will later include more extensive surveys in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, which the Conference on Oceanography has recommended should form a permanent part of naval activities.

Captain F. B. Bassett, chief of the Hydrographic Office and president of the Conference, stated that the Rainbow is especially well adapted to scientific exploration. She is 350 feet long, has a draft of 17 feet and displaces 4350 tons and is amply provided with comfortable cabins and quarters to take care of the extra personnel for scientific work.

During the World War this ship did duty as convoy vessel, as transport, and as mother-ship for submarines. She was originally built as a merchant vessel, but purchased by the Navy at the time of the Spanish-American War. At one time she was assigned as water distilling vessel for the fleet and was fitted with lab apparatus for distilling water.
