Shakuntala Devi

SUPER MEMORY

IT CAN BE YOURS

Ageless Memory in 12 Practical Lessons

BEGIN TODAY The change will be unforgettable

Myth Memory g

Memory grows dim as we age.

Truth

As we grow older, we actually add-on more mental abilities.

Myth

There is a 'best time' for learning.

Truth

The clock has nothing to do with remembering.

This is one of those rare books that can help

all of us with something that is both troublesome and worrisome – our memory. It does this with ease, not by attempting to teach some exhausting rote-memory techniques, but in 12 easy and effortlessly smooth steps.

Shakuntala Devi's down-to-earth writing and encouraging step-by-step approach puts super memory in reach of everyone. As she says, 'Take my word. You can start applying my memory-enhancing techniques immediately, right now. Before you will realize, applying my methods and strategies will become your second nature.'

Shakuntala Devi has been honing and teaching her memory improvement techniques for more than 40 years. Super Memory is the result of her life's work, specially tailored to our needs as we age, and encompassing all of the many ways we can use a better memory every day.

SUPER MEMORY IT CAN BE YOURS!

AGELESS MEMORY IN
12 PRACTICAL LESSONS

SHAKUNTALA DEVI

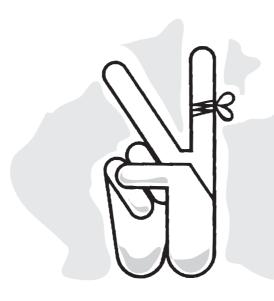




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YES, YOU CAN...

Unjam the mind blocks that cause you to forget

Double your powers of concentration

Learn to develop an open mind

Banish those myths about memory

TOOLS YOU'LL USE

Memory Foods

Sunshine 'n' Fresh Air

Fun 'n' Games

Sleeping 'n' Dream:

Exercise

Positive Thinking

AND YOU WILL...

Permanently shift gears from, 'I have a terrible memory ...' to, 'I can remember anything that I want to...'



How to prepare your mind for its most exciting and challenging adventure ever

friend of mine, whom I was expecting to drop in at 11 one morning, made it only by three in the afternoon. Her explanation: 'When I sat in the bus, my mind suddenly went blank. I couldn't tell the conductor where I wanted to get off because I couldn't remember it myself. So he punched a ticket to the last stop. I got off, but I felt disoriented. So fogged, in fact, that I even forgot my name.' She stood at the bus-stop till her memory returned. Then she caught the next bus to her destination and rang my door-bell, four hours late!

My friend's temporary bout of total amnesia is not explained in terms of ageing brain cells or a congenitally deficient memory. My friend was an unhappy woman, under severe mental and financial strain. Her husband was suffering from a progressive, incurable disease. Her emotional ordeal was compounded by the

sheer practical demands of caring for him. Yet, after a bracing cup of hot tea and a bowl of *upma*, there she was, sitting and laughing and joking with me. Nobody would have imagined that, just a few hours before, her hopelessness and turmoil had clouded her mind so oppressively that it had blanked out memory.

'Poor memory' has been blamed on all kinds of suspects ('I just wasn't born smart', 'Age is catching up with me'), but the fact is that the most common culprits are the least suspected ones. Unhappiness, for instance. It can usher in the dark, heavy clouds of fear, anger and resentment that overturn your mental equilibrium and blotch out memory. Most memory experts fail to give due importance to mental tranquility. Yet, in its absence, you might be able to train your brain to remember better temporarily, but you will not be able to make remembering a lifelong habit. It's when you possess inner calm that you are able to retain your sense of reason, your sense of balance, your sense of humour. In this state of rational tranquility, you operate from a basis of fact, not sentiment. And facts are what memory is all about.

A robust memory requires fertile ground on which to thrive. Not only a clear mind, but other pre-requisites go into its making. So, before we get down to the actual techniques for improving memory, let us make sure that we prepare well the soil in which it is to be nurtured. Start with these important preliminary strategies before you go on to the next chapter; without them you will not derive the full worth of this book.

Throw Out the Mental Clutter

Let's suppose that a month or so ago, you read the word, 'screever', looked up its meaning in the dictionary and filed away the information for future retrieval. Today you're trying to recall that word, but for some unfathomable reason, it eludes you. Why?

One reason could be the mental blocks that are jamming the highway of your mind. Negative emotions are one of the impediments that can impede clear traffic. As the *Bhagvad Gita* says, '... From anger results delusion, from delusion results confusion of memory ...' Not only anger, but a scroll of other unhappy emotions can fog your mind: fear, depression, selfpity, envy, grief, hatred, restlessness, anxiety. With this mist overhanging your mind, your senses can get dulled to the point where you are not registering even your immediate environment or experiences. Thus, you may:

- Pass a friend on the street, look at him, but do not see him.
- Listen to someone who's talking to you, but *do not hear* her or later recall a single word she said.
- Touch a snake in the wild undergrowth, but do not feel it.
- Eat a delicious meal served to you, but *do not taste* it, or later even remember what it was you ate!
- Inhale the gas leaking from your cylinder, but *do not register its smell* with potentially disastrous consequences.

Make a conscious effort to weed out negative thoughts from your mind, to send it positive, harmonious messages. The great sage, Paramahansa Yogananda, asks us to remind ourselves every day: 'I am a prince(ss) of peace, sitting on the throne of poise, directing my kingdom of activity.' Memorise this sentence. Say it to yourself when you awaken each morning. Repeat it to yourself whenever you find yourself in a situation that threatens to upturn your mental equilibrium. Until, gradually, you find that equilibrium is more and more easily acquired and that finally it gets embedded as a natural feature of your thoughtscape.

Once this happens, you won't find yourself turning into a mass of quivering jelly with a bad case of exam nerves or interview fright. The mental equilibrium you've instilled in yourself will still those butterflies in your stomach: All you'll need to do is take a deep breath and tell yourself with confidence, 'It will all come back to me in a minute.' And it will!

Keep an Open Mind

Let me illustrate the importance of this with a riddle which

I would like you to try and solve. It was set by the mind

wizard, Harry Lorayne: 'Here is the Roman numeral

IX. Can you add just one mark or symbol to this

Roman numeral, and change it into

the number 6?'

If you have a closed mind, you'll rack your brain and never come up with the answer. Or you will give up immediately from disinterest. In case

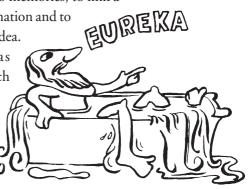
you haven't been able to solve Lorayne's riddle, here is the answer: 'Simply add an "S" in front of the letters IX and you've formed the word "SIX"!'

See what I mean? Your memory knows IX and S and SIX. But it's only if you're open-minded that you can bridge these separate memory strands, link them together and come up with a new concept.

When you allow yourself to get stuck in a mental groove, you put the brakes on your imagination and interest, limiting your ability to build bridges to memories, to link a

present problem to past information and to arrive at a solution or a new idea.

Open-mindedness was precisely the route by which Newton, watching an apple fall to the ground, arrived at the laws of gravity. And Archimedes, looking at the water overflow from



his bath-tub when he was immersed in it, gave the world Archimedes' principle. If these two men of science had not had that memory-link ticking in their brilliant brains, they might never have given the world those Eureka findings. Which is why I say: keep an open mind!

To do that, you'll need to force your brain out of its old, well-worn grooves by keeping yourself creatively challenged. Try things like designing a new wardrobe for yourself (even if you never actually go out and buy up all those clothes and accessories), reading a book on an unfamiliar subject or dreaming up 10 innovative uses for a paper clip. You've got to exercise your mind to make it more flexible.

Rev Up Your Powers of Concentration

If your attention is not focused, you will not fully absorb a piece of learning or other task on hand; and if you do not absorb, you cannot retain. But what most people do not realise is that concentration is really a matter of habit. You can learn a score of mental exercises to improve your concentration, but if you do not transfer these principles to your day-to-day functioning and give them the underpinnings of a habit, there will be no lasting impact on your powers of concentration.

Before I continue, let me explain the difference between being preoccupied and concentrating.

Preoccupation is a kind of mental teasing game, with worry nibbling at your thoughts and scattering them in several directions so that you are unable to think clearly.

Concentrating, on the other hand, means harnessing your mental forces and bringing a bull's-eye centering of attention to a particular task. Researchers have found that this state, which they call 'flow', seems to calm down the cerebral cortex (where the memory centre is located). This brings a feeling of relaxed alertness. There is a loss of self-consciousness. Aches

go unnoticed, background noises unheard. As distinct from preoccupation, concentration has such positive factors as willpower and commitment attached to it.

One of the chief things running interference with concentration are those internal pollutants we've talked about before: anger, fear, doubts and distractions. These can replace concentration with restless preoccupation and mental turmoil. I have already talked about the importance of cultivating the positive attitude that will help drive out defeatist thoughts. Optimism optimises memory.

Another concentration trip-up is the pressure of several tasks demanding your attention. My advice in such a situation is: Prioritise. Put the most urgent task on the front burner and have the other jobs queue up behind it in order of importance. Then tackle each task with verve, going from one to the next, with an occasional breather in between.

The 'verve factor' is extremely important. It means giving each task your absolute attention, bringing to it what I call 'work meditation' — becoming one with your work. It also means that you should not care about the result. As the *Bhagvad Gita* says: 'He who does the prescribed work without caring for its fruit is a *sanyasi*.' If you don't allow your mind to be distracted by thoughts of what you're going to gain from this work, you'll be able to bring conviction and commitment to the work at hand. And that translates into powerful concentration.

Concentration can sometimes become difficult if an assignment appears overwhelming. In this case, try breaking down the assignment into more 'do-able' tasks. If you have to research a report, write it up and present it, make the researching a goal in itself. Once that's done, the second step, outlining it, becomes easier. Writing it up becomes your third goal; and then, finally, focus on the final step: presenting your findings.

Broken down into four manageable chunks, it becomes easier for each one to be pursued with effortless concentration.

Concentration dispels chaos and brings in order. And who can deny that from an organised mind emerges a powerful memory?

Take it Easy!

Many mnemonic experts have devised clever tricks involving a lot of mental acrobatics, some so complicated that it is more difficult to learn the tricks than just to remember what you wanted to in the first place! Thus, if you're struggling through a complex course and trying to apply one of these very convoluted methods to it, you might just decide to give up! Or, your mind will become so saturated and fatigued with the strain of learning that you may end up feeling like a zombie. Worse, you might even persuade yourself that you're dumb!

Rest assured, this book will not have you floundering in deep waters. Which is why my first bit of advice to you if you wish to power up your memory is to R-E-L-A-X! Don't be in a tearing hurry to become a human computer. The fact is: Relaxation will do your memory more good than frenzied

haste. When you're relaxed, your mind is far more receptive. When you're relaxed, you're sending silent, positive messages to your self. That

you trust yourself. That you're not questioning your potential, but giving it space to expand.

Remember, you're not using this book to prove anything to anybody — only to unleash your memory potential to its maximum. So there is no need to put yourself under any 'pressure to perform'.

Take a moment right now to check out how relaxed you are. Are your lips pursed, your temples drawn, your forehead

creased? Are your shoulders hunched and tense? Stop right there! Loosen those muscles, stretch those limbs, shrug your shoulders before you read on.

Practise relaxation techniques in the course of your day-to-day routine: they provide a natural antidote to the stress response. There are many routes to relaxation. One of the best is deep breathing. Breathing deeply creates an aura of relaxed awareness — the perfect mental ambience in which to give yourself positive suggestions: I *will* do better; I *can* remember anything I want.

Now and then, try some *lyming*. That's Caribbean for doing nothing — guilt-free. It gives your brain time to process information that it has received while you were in overload.

Music, playing with children, watching a movie... all these can help you shift gears from 'revved-up' to 'relaxed'. But watch it with that old tube. Relaxing occasionally before a TV programme is one thing; becoming a TV junkie is another. Too much television trains the attention to be passive and dull. Even a nuclear physicist, if he spends excessive hours watching *Baywatch*, could very well experience brain drain.

Check your Diet

The right diet is one of the essentials of good memory. If you don't eat properly, you don't nourish the brain. It's as simple as

that. Just as petrol fuels your car, glucose fuels your brain. When glucose is in deficient supply, the brain begins to perform poorly.

In providing the brain with its fuel, glucose, the body seems to have a special need for vitamins of the B-complex group. They act

GLUCOS E

Super Memory Use the vast, untapped power of your mind

Yes, You Can...

Unjam your mind

Remember things to do in the right sequence, and at the right time

Never forget names and faces

Deliver effective, polished oratory without notes

Auto recall telephone numbers, dates, passwords, equations...

Use memory-magic to perform amazing card tricks

Stop misplacing your house keys, spectacles, valuables, the remote control...

Develop confidence that comes from sharp, active mind

Tools You Will Use...

Absurd 'action pictures' and visualization exercises

The chain-association method

Facial cues, gestures, voice inflections and smile signals

The grouping and rhyming methods

Right — left brain synergy

The alphabet code

The number sound code

The power of mnemonics

Mental filing methods

And You Will...

Permanently shift gears from 'I have a terrible memory ...' to, 'I can remember anything I want to....'

Never again have to say, 'I'm sorry, I can't recall...'

Never say, 'I just had it in my hand...'

Forget 'tip-of-the-tongue' memory fade outs...

Develop a mind that is more focused, less wayward, less 'absent-minded', and more 'present-minded'



