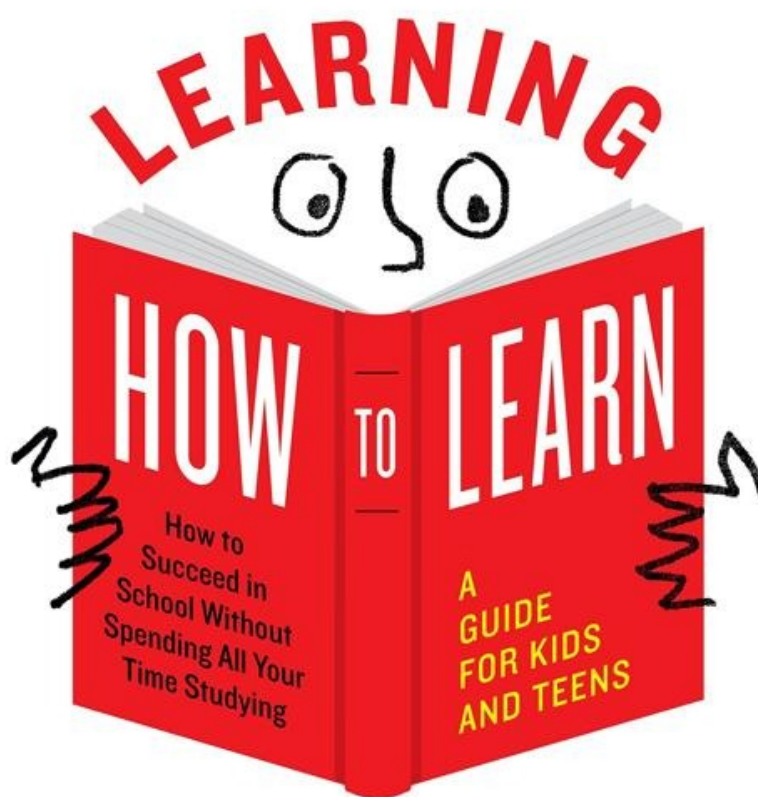


Learning How to Learn PDF

Barbara Oakley

From the bestselling author of *A Mind for Numbers* and
the creators of the popular online course Learning How to Learn



BARBARA OAKLEY, PhD, AND
TERRENCE SEJNOWSKI, PhD,
WITH VALENTIN MCCOYVILLE



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About the book

Many students navigate their academic journeys without ever discovering how to learn effectively. In "Learning How to Learn," bestselling author Dr. Barbara Oakley, alongside Terrence Sejnowski, addresses this crucial gap for kids and teens. Building on their popular online course, which has captivated over 1.8 million learners across 200 countries, this engaging guide equips young minds with essential skills during a pivotal stage of their education. Through insightful lessons on focused concentration, the power of creative thinking, the brain's ability to link ideas, and strategies to overcome procrastination, the authors make the learning process both enjoyable and practical. Enhanced with illustrations, interactive questions, and activities, this book is a vital resource for fostering effective learning habits.

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About the author

Barbara Oakley is an accomplished engineer, educator, and author, renowned for her innovative approaches to learning and cognitive science. With a background that spans diverse fields—including a degree in electrical engineering and experience in the military—Oakley has dedicated her career to understanding and teaching the principles of effective learning. Her work as a professor at Oakland University, coupled with her popular online course "Learning How to Learn," has made her insights accessible to a global audience. Oakley's unique blend of personal experience and academic rigor, coupled with her engaging communication style, has positioned her as a leading figure in the exploration of how we can harness our mental capabilities to learn more effectively.

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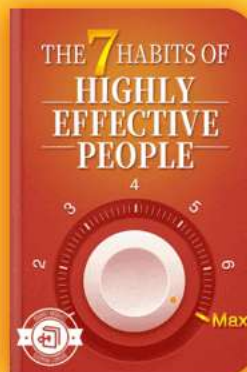


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Chapter 1 Summary : THE PROBLEM WITH PASSION



Chapter 1: The Problem with Passion

Introduction to Learning

Barb Oakley shares her journey from being a struggling student to becoming a professor of engineering. Despite early challenges with math and science, she discovered effective learning strategies that transformed her academic abilities.

The Power of Passion vs. Broadening Interests



Barb emphasizes that while it's good to follow your passion, it's also important to explore subjects outside your comfort zone. She encourages readers to embrace a variety of interests, which can lead to unexpected opportunities.

Insights from Experts

The book, co-authored with Professor Terry Sejnowski and educator Alistair McConville, combines insights from neuroscience, psychology, and education to improve learning skills. They aim to provide practical tools to make learning enjoyable and efficient.

What Readers Can Gain

The techniques in the book are designed to help everyone, regardless of their current academic standing, improve their memory and understanding of different subjects. Through these methods, readers can enhance their creativity and prepare for future challenges in a rapidly changing world.

Barb's Personal Story

Barb recounts her struggles with math and science during her



youth, leading to a military career focused on language. After realizing the need for technical skills, she returned to university to study engineering, proving that it's possible to change your learning trajectory.

Effective Learning Techniques

She introduces the “picture walk” method, encouraging readers to preview chapters in their textbooks to better prepare their minds for the material, similar to watching a movie preview. This technique is aimed at organizing thoughts and enhancing retention.

Conclusion

The first chapter sets the stage for exploring how learning works and the importance of not limiting oneself to only familiar topics. Barb's experiences serve as motivation for readers to unlock their learning potential.



Critical Thinking

Key Point: Balancing Passion with Diverse Interests

Critical Interpretation: Barb Oakley challenges the notion that one should solely pursue their passion, advocating instead for broadening interests. She posits that engaging with varied subjects can yield unexpected benefits, yet this perspective may oversimplify the complexity of individual motivations and learning paths. Critics might argue, as supported by the research of Deci and Ryan (2000) on intrinsic motivation, that passion is a vital component that fuels deep engagement and persistence in learning. Exploring beyond one's comfort zone is beneficial, but it must be balanced with personal passion, which should not be dismissed as secondary.



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CHAPTER 2: EASY DOES IT

Why Trying Too Hard Can Sometimes Be Part of the Problem

Distraction is common when learning, and it might not always be negative. The story of chess player Magnus Carlsen illustrates how occasional breaks from focus can actually enhance learning. Sometimes, losing concentration allows for clearer thinking, as demonstrated by Magnus' ability to tie a match despite appearing distracted.

You've Got Two Ways of Thinking!

Neuroscience reveals that the brain operates in two modes: focused and diffuse. Both are essential for effective learning.

Focused Mode

In focused mode, attention is concentrated on a specific task, activating relevant brain regions necessary for learning. This mode is crucial for initial understanding and practicing new



skills.

Diffuse Mode

Conversely, diffuse mode involves relaxed thinking, daydreaming, or casual doodling, allowing creative connections and broader thinking. Both modes complement each other, and shifting between them is essential for effective learning.

Let's Play Pinball

The mechanics of a pinball game serve as a metaphor for focused (tight bumpers) and diffuse modes (wider bumpers). Focused thinking has defined paths while diffuse thinking allows for broader exploration and creativity.

Switching Between Focused and Diffuse Modes

Transitioning from focused to diffuse mode can be challenging but is necessary. Engaging in activities like walking or daydreaming can facilitate this shift, allowing the brain to process information and connect ideas unconsciously.



Now You Try! Shifting Modes

An exercise is presented to demonstrate how moving from focused to diffuse mode can lead to problem-solving insights.

Getting Stuck

Two types of "stuck" moments exist: lack of understanding or being unable to apply knowledge even after preparation. It's vital to break from focus to engage diffuse thinking to overcome challenges.

Important Learning Tip

Don't dismiss the importance of alternating between focused and diffuse modes after only one attempt. Study for a set time before taking breaks to ensure effective learning and problem-solving.

Use These Diffuse Mode Tools as Rewards After Focused Mode Work

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Activities that stimulate diffuse mode, such as sports, walking, or artistic endeavors, can be utilized as rewards after focused study sessions. However, certain activities, like video games, should be used more sparingly to avoid distractions.

Summing It Up

Our brains need to alternate between focused and diffuse modes for effective learning. Proper focus lays the groundwork for learning, while breaks can allow for insights and creativity to emerge.

Check Your Understanding

To ensure comprehension, questions are posed regarding focused and diffuse modes, methods of getting "stuck," and potential study habits to change.

CHAPTER 3: I'LL DO IT LATER, HONEST!

The chapter hints at discussing procrastination and highlights contrasting concepts through a story of arsenic, leading into a metaphor involving tomatoes to illustrate learning strategies.



Example

Key Point:Emphasizing the importance of switching between focused and diffuse modes can significantly enhance your learning process.

Example:Imagine you're studying for an important exam, focusing intensely on your notes. After an hour, you feel stuck and can't absorb any more information. Instead of pushing through, you decide to take a break and go for a short walk outside. As you stroll, your mind wanders freely, and suddenly, you have a breakthrough regarding a complex concept you were struggling with. This shift from focused mode to diffuse mode allowed your brain to process the information unconsciously, leading to new insights. Thus, alternating between these modes can foster creativity and problem-solving, ultimately making your learning more effective.



Chapter 3 Summary : I'LL DO IT LATER, HONEST!: Using a Tomato to Beat Procrastination

Section	Summary
Introduction to Procrastination	Procrastination involves postponing tasks, negatively affecting learning and time management, and is often a natural response to difficult tasks.
Distraction and Procrastination	Distractions lead to unproductive activities, hindering students' focus on studies; the chapter discusses strategies to combat this.
Pain and Procrastination	Thinking about difficult tasks can trigger discomfort in the brain, but starting the task usually alleviates this sensation within about 20 minutes.
The Pomodoro Technique	Developed by Francesco Cirillo, this technique involves working in focused 25-minute intervals followed by short breaks to enhance productivity.
Steps of the Pomodoro Technique	1. Eliminate distractions.2. Set a timer for 25 minutes.3. Focus on the task.4. Reward yourself post-timer.5. Break before the next session.
Good Zombies vs. Bad Zombies	Zombies represent habits; bad habits (like multitasking) can be transformed into good habits (like focused studying) to improve learning efficiency.
Connection to the Arsenic Eaters	The story parallels harmful habits with procrastination, indicating that repeated procrastination can have long-term detrimental effects on learning.
Active Recall as a Study Technique	Active recall enhances understanding by retrieving information from memory, proving more beneficial than mere rereading for study purposes.
Summation	The chapter highlights strategies like the Pomodoro Technique and active recall to manage procrastination and build productive study habits for improved learning.

CHAPTER 3: I'LL DO IT LATER, HONEST! Using a Tomato to Beat Procrastination

Introduction to Procrastination



Procrastination is the act of postponing tasks, often leading to poor learning and time management. It is a natural response to avoid difficult tasks, but it can hinder one's ability to retain information.

Distraction and Procrastination

Many students face distractions, which can lead to wasted time on unproductive activities instead of focusing on their studies. This chapter addresses how to combat these tendencies.

Pain and Procrastination

Thinking about unwanted tasks can activate the brain's pain center, creating a feeling of discomfort. However, once you begin the task, this discomfort typically fades within about 20 minutes. The key tip is to just get started.

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Chapter 4 Summary : BRAIN-LINKS AND FUN WITH SPACE ALIENS

Chapter 4: Brain-Links and Fun with Space Aliens

Introduction to Santiago Ramón y Cajal

Santiago, once a troubled youth who had difficulties in school, grew to become a Nobel Prize-winning scientist and the father of modern neuroscience. His love for drawing and lack of strong memory hindered his early education in subjects like math. However, he eventually used his artistic and scientific skills to revolutionize our understanding of the brain.

Understanding Neurons

Neurons, the building blocks of the brain, can be imagined as tiny aliens. They consist of a nucleus (the "eye"), dendrites (the "legs"), and an axon (the "arm"). Neurons communicate by sending signals across synapses, the gaps between them.



Each neuron can excite another by sending a spark-like shock across this gap, forming the essential connections that make up our thoughts.

The Process of Learning

Learning creates new brain-links, where neurons that ‘fire together’ will form stronger connections. As you practice something new, the signals become more robust, changing the brain's structure through a process known as neuroplasticity. This means that the brain is malleable and capable of forming new connections.

Creating Your Own Neurons

A fun activity is to make models of neurons using construction paper or pipe cleaners to better understand their anatomy and how they communicate.

Historical Context of Neurons

Santiago faced skepticism regarding the individuality of neurons until advanced technology confirmed the presence of synapses. This revelation paved the way for understanding



how neurons operate in networks rather than a continuous filament.

Metaphors and Learning

Metaphors help connect familiar concepts with new ideas, deepening understanding. Creating your own metaphors can aid in grasping complex subjects. If a metaphor no longer works, it's encouraged to discard it in favor of a new one.

Santiago's Journey to Success

Santiago's father encouraged him to pursue medicine, reigniting his passion for learning. Despite multiple failures, he persevered, eventually mastering the subjects he struggled with and producing significant contributions to science. His story exemplifies that anyone can improve their capabilities through sustained effort and learning.

Common Learning Excuses

Recognize and challenge common excuses such as lack of time, imagination, or the perception that material is useless. It's essential to take ownership of the learning process and



create personal connections to the material.

Pause and Recall Strategy

After reading, take time to reflect and write down the key ideas from the chapter. This method enhances memory retention by actively engaging the brain.

Create Your Own Metaphor

Readers are encouraged to develop personal metaphors relating to their learning challenges, linking new information with existing knowledge.

Key Neuroscience Terms

-

Axon

: The arm of a neuron that sends signals.

-

Brain-links

: Connections developed through neuron interaction.

-

Dendrite



: The leg of a neuron receiving signals.

-

Neuroplasticity

: The brain's ability to change and adapt through learning.

-

Synapse

: The gap between neurons where signals are transmitted.

Summary

Neurons send signals forming thoughts and ideas. Learning enhances brain-links and muscles the brain's memory, parallel to exercise for physical fitness. Anyone, regardless of their starting point, can become a successful learner by embracing the journey of continuous improvement.



Chapter 5 Summary : THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TEACHER'S DESK

Section	Summary
Introduction of Al	Al, a religion and philosophy teacher in England, shares his challenges with learning chemistry despite his academic background.
Desire to Learn Chemistry	Inspired by Barb's story, Al seeks to learn chemistry using resources from "A Mind for Numbers" and "Learning How to Learn."
Engaging Students in Learning	Al involves his students in his learning journey, creating a collaborative and supportive environment for both himself and his students.
Learning Strategies Implemented	He employs effective study strategies such as the Pomodoro Technique, interleaving topics, and self-testing to aid his learning process.
Exam Experience and Outcomes	Al felt nervous but performed well on his chemistry exam, achieving a good grade and sharing the success with his students.
Reflections on Teaching and Learning	Al emphasizes the importance of remembering the struggles of beginners to improve teaching and encourages adults to learn new skills.
Final Thoughts	Learning is possible at any age, and strategies like active recall and seeking help are vital for overcoming learning challenges.
Conclusion	Al advocates for adults to challenge themselves to learn alongside students for enhanced educational relationships.

Chapter 5: The Other Side of the Teacher's Desk

Introduction of Al

- Al, a teacher of religion and philosophy in England, shares his experience of learning chemistry.
- Despite his academic background, he initially struggled with science and avoided challenging subjects in school.



Desire to Learn Chemistry

- Feeling a gap in his education, Al was inspired by Barb's story about broadening passions and the ability to rewire the brain.
- He decided to learn chemistry using techniques from Barb and Terry's resources, including "A Mind for Numbers" and the online course "Learning How to Learn."

Engaging Students in Learning

- Al openly shared his learning journey with his students and encouraged them to assist him.
- Students helped him with study materials, quizzed him, and included him in lab experiments, fostering a supportive learning environment.

Learning Strategies Implemented

- Al utilized effective study methods such as the Pomodoro Technique, focused learning bursts, interleaving topics, and self-testing.
- He created memorable associations for difficult concepts



and kept engaged through physical activity and teaching.

Exam Experience and Outcomes

- After a year of hard work, Al took the chemistry exam with significant nervousness but ultimately felt he performed his best.
- Upon receiving his exam results, he was thrilled to have passed with a good grade, promoting a sense of shared success with his students.

Reflections on Teaching and Learning

- Al recognizes the value of remembering the struggles of being a beginner, which can enhance teaching effectiveness.
- He encourages adults, especially those working with youth, to learn something new and engage in conversations that promote mutual understanding.

Final Thoughts

- Learning new subjects is possible at any age and can be empowering.
- Techniques like Pomodoro, active recall, and seeking help



are essential for overcoming learning challenges.

Conclusion

- AI promotes the idea of adults challenging themselves to learn alongside students, enhancing educational connections and mutual growth.



Critical Thinking

Key Point: Emphasizing the importance of lifelong learning and the shared journey between teachers and students.

Critical Interpretation: While Al's journey in learning chemistry serves as an inspiring narrative about the potential for personal growth and knowledge acquisition at any age, it is essential to recognize that such success stories may not be universally applicable. Not all individuals possess the same access to resources, time, or support systems necessary for effective learning. Additionally, while the methods outlined in 'Learning How to Learn' have empirical backing, their effectiveness can vary significantly based on the individual learner's context and cognitive profile (Mayer, R. E. (2010). 'Constructing Knowledge: The Role of Self-Explanation in Learning'). Therefore, while the author's views present a hopeful narrative, one must critically assess their realism and the diverse experiences of learners.



Chapter 6 Summary : LEARNING WHILE YOU SLEEP: How to Wake Up Smarter

Chapter 6: Learning While You Sleep - How to Wake Up Smarter

Introduction to Brain Upgrades During Sleep

Research by Guang Yang highlights how sleep plays a crucial role in learning, functioning as a nightly brain upgrade that solidifies the links between neurons.

The Power of Sleep

Guang Yang's studies show that learning leads to physical changes in neurons, particularly dendrites, which grow new spines during sleep. These spines strengthen synapses, enhancing brain connectivity and making it easier to recall learned information.



Active Learning During the Day and Sleep

When we learn something new, focused effort during the day initiates the growth of dendritic spines, but significant growth occurs overnight as the brain repeats learned material. Sleep acts like “nighttime practice,” solidifying learning.

The Role of Focus in Learning

Dendritic spines can differentiate between genuine focus and distractions. If engagement is lacking, new connections may fade. Regular practice is necessary to maintain synaptic strength.

Synapses and Learning Retention

Learning is structured like a brick wall, where consistent practice over days—coupled with sleep—builds strong

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Chapter 7 Summary : SCHOOL BAGS, LOCKERS, AND YOUR ATTENTIONAL OCTOPUS

CHAPTER 7: SCHOOL BAGS, LOCKERS, AND YOUR ATTENTIONAL OCTOPUS

Metaphors for Memory Systems

This chapter uses the metaphor of school bags and lockers to explain how the brain stores information. A school bag represents working memory, which holds limited information and is always accessible. In contrast, a locker symbolizes long-term memory, which has a much larger capacity but is less immediately accessible.

Working Memory as Your Attentional Octopus

Working memory, likened to a friendly attentional octopus, can hold a small number of items (typically around four). It resides in the prefrontal cortex and allows you to manage



information actively. However, if not focused on, this octopus can let information slip away, requiring repetition or note-taking to help retain details.

Characteristics of the Attentional Octopus

The attentional octopus can be characterized by its number of arms, which can vary among individuals. While it can generally hold four pieces of information at a time, some may have more or fewer arms, affecting their ability to retain information. The octopus gets overwhelmed when attempting to hold more information than it can manage.

Long-Term Memory as Your Locker

Long-term memory functions as a locker, offering extensive storage capacity for information from your past. Unlike working memory, long-term memory is not localized; it consists of various interconnected brain links. Information that needs to be retained long-term requires processing and practice to establish these links effectively.

Summary of Key Concepts



- Two memory systems exist: working memory (school bag) and long-term memory (locker).
- Working memory is limited and requires active focus, similar to an attentional octopus.
- Long-term memory is expansive, scattered throughout the brain, and needs techniques for better assimilation.

Engagement Exercises

The chapter encourages readers to recall the main ideas and retain knowledge through active engagement, suggesting that acting out the concepts can further solidify understanding.

Next Steps

The next chapter promises to outline practical techniques to enhance memory retention and performance, tapping into the insights gained from this chapter about memory systems.



Example

Key Point: Visualize your attentional octopus managing information while studying.

Example: Imagine sitting at your desk, focused intently on a math problem, your attentional octopus juggling concepts and formulas. As you attempt to solve the equation, you realize your octopus struggles to keep track of multiple steps at once, leading you to write down key points on a notepad. This action helps your octopus manage fewer items, allowing you to successfully solve the problem and reinforce those concepts in your long-term memory.



Chapter 8 Summary : SLICK TRICKS TO BUILD YOUR MEMORY

SLICK TRICKS TO BUILD YOUR MEMORY

Nelson Dellis's Transformation

- Nelson Dellis transitioned from an ordinary memory to that of a memory champion, initially struggling with forgetfulness in his youth.
- His journey culminated in him setting records at the US Memory Championships, proving it's possible to improve memory skills significantly.

Long-Term Memory Simplified

- Long-term memory consists of two parts: 'facts' (hard to store like a toothpaste tube) and 'pictures' (easy to store like taped images).
- Converting facts into images makes them easier to remember, especially if the images are unusual or involve



movement.

Nelson's Five Memory Tips

1.

Focus

: Tell yourself that what you are about to memorize is important.

2.

Practice

: Regularly practicing memory techniques is crucial for improvement.

3.

Picture

: Turn information into visual images that can be easily recalled.

4.

Store

: Relate new information to what you already know to create mental anchors.

5.

Recall

: Actively bring information to mind repeatedly to solidify it in long-term memory.



Memory Palace Technique

- The memory palace technique involves visualizing a familiar location to store and recall information.
- By placing memorable items in various locations of this 'palace,' one can retrieve them easily.

Additional Memory Strategies

- Use songs or rhymes for recall.
- Create metaphors and associations to strengthen understanding.
- Handwrite notes for better retention.
- Teach others as a way to reinforce your own memory.
- Understand the importance of creativity; anyone can enhance their creative skills through practice.

The Rubber Ducky Method

- Explaining concepts to an inanimate object can clarify complex ideas, as used by programmers to debug code.

Conclusion



- By employing techniques such as visual imagery, mnemonics, and the memory palace method, anyone can improve their memory, just like Nelson Dellis did. Regular practice and engagement with the material solidifies learning and enhances recall.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The transformation from forgetfulness to memory champion highlights the potential for improvement in memory skills.

Critical Interpretation: While Nelson Dellis's journey suggests that anyone can dramatically enhance their memory, critics may argue that such results depend heavily on individual differences and factors beyond simple memorization techniques. Research from sources like the **Journal of Cognitive Psychology** (2010) raises questions about the effectiveness of mnemonic devices for all learners, emphasizing that varied learning styles and contexts can influence outcomes, thereby complicating universal claims of memory improvements.



Chapter 9 Summary : WHY BRAIN-LINKS ARE IMPORTANT: (and How Not to Back a Car into a Ditch)

Chapter 9: Why Brain-Links Are Important

Introduction to Brain-Links

The chapter begins with a personal anecdote about the author's daughter, Rachel, who faces challenges while learning to back up a car. This serves as a metaphor for the importance of building strong brain-links, which aid in handling complex information.

Understanding Brain-Links

Brain-links are formed by connections of dendritic spines and synapses in the long-term memory. The strength and coherence of these links allow the working memory, described as an "attentional octopus," to easily access and



manipulate them.

The Role of Working Memory

At first, when learning a new concept, the working memory is heavily engaged in integrating and practicing the information. As brain-links are established through practice, retrieval becomes more efficient, ultimately allowing for multitasking.

Expertise and Brain-Links

Experts have numerous well-connected brain-links, enabling them to process large amounts of information swiftly. Mastery and understanding must come together, as practice solidifies these connections.

Cognitive Load and Information Handling

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Chapter 10 Summary : LEARNING WITH CLUBS AND GROUPS, FINDING YOUR MISSION, AND HOW TERRY NEARLY BURNED DOWN THE SCHOOL

CHAPTER 10 SUMMARY: LEARNING WITH CLUBS AND GROUPS, FINDING YOUR MISSION, AND HOW TERRY NEARLY BURNED DOWN THE SCHOOL

Introduction to Terry Sejnowski

Terry Sejnowski, introduced as a science enthusiast, had a contrasting educational experience compared to Barb and Al. He enjoyed scientific experiments but struggled with languages, showcasing a passion for science early on.

Terry the Troublemaker



During high school, Terry found science classes boring since he was ahead of the curriculum, leading to him being labeled a "troublemaker" for asking questions. He highlights the importance of engaging with groups that foster interests, such as the Radio Club, which allowed him to pursue his passion for radio technology after school.

Finding Your Mission

The pivotal moment in Terry's life occurred when he was asked about his mission, prompting him to reflect on his future. His curiosity about gravity and the brain guided him toward a career in science as he sought deeper knowledge and purpose.

What I Learned at Princeton

Studying physics at Princeton, Terry benefited from the guidance of respected mentors, illustrating the significance of surrounding oneself with bright minds. He emphasizes embracing both theoretical and experimental approaches and how collaboration can spark creativity.

Jumping into the Brain



Transitioning to biology, Terry faced challenges in understanding the complexities of the brain. His background in physics provided unique insights, revealing the interconnectedness of different subjects, and he learned hands-on about neurons, emphasizing the active application of knowledge.

Artificial Brains

Today, Terry applies his knowledge to compare brains and computers, recognizing their differences and efficiencies. He discusses advancements in neuroscience and the impact of lifestyle factors like exercise and sleep on learning and memory.

Summing It Up

Terry concludes with practical advice for readers: pursue interests in school, form or join clubs, collaborate with creative individuals, make learning active, and appreciate the brain's extraordinary capabilities. He encourages finding connections between diverse subjects for holistic learning.



Transition to Chapter 11

The chapter closes with a preview of the next topic on the link between exercise and learning, mentioning the inspiring story of Julius Yego, a self-made World Javelin Champion.

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Example

Key Point:Engaging with passionate peers enhances your learning experience.

Example:Imagine attending a study group where everyone shares a zeal for chemistry, sparking debates over molecular structures and laboratory techniques. As you discuss, an idea arises that unravels a complex problem you've been wrestling with alone. This collaborative energy not only clarifies your confusion but also ignites a deeper passion for the subject, illustrating the transformative power of connecting with like-minded individuals who share your interests.



Chapter 11 Summary : HOW TO PUMP UP YOUR BRAIN

Section	Summary
Introduction	Julius Yego's success as World Javelin Champion in 2015 exemplifies self-learning and determination despite limited resources.
Exercise and Brain Function	Exercise enhances learning and memory, notably affecting the hippocampus, which is vital for long-term memory formation.
The Role of BDNF	Exercise boosts BDNF production, promoting neuron growth and enhancing communication between neurons.
Nutrition's Impact on Learning	A healthy, balanced diet, particularly the Mediterranean-style diet, supports cognitive function and should avoid high sugar and processed foods.
Learning through Non-Traditional Methods	Self-education using online resources and consistent practice can lead to skill mastery, as showcased by Yego.
Benefits of Exercise for Mental Health	Exercise releases beneficial chemicals like serotonin and dopamine, aiding in cognition and mental health, often surpassing medications.
Practical Application	Staying active can enhance cognitive performance by clearing mental blocks and improving recall during study sessions.
Conclusion	Physical activity and a healthy diet are crucial for brain health and effective learning, highlighting self-directed learning as a path to success.
Check Your Understanding	Key insights include the importance of the hippocampus for memory, the promoting effects of BDNF, and the overall role of exercise in cognitive and emotional well-being.

CHAPTER 11: HOW TO PUMP UP YOUR BRAIN

Introduction: Julius Yego's Journey

In 2015, Julius Yego became the World Javelin Champion despite growing up in a poor area of Kenya without proper



coaching or equipment. His determination and self-learning methods, including extensive online research and practice, led him to success.

Exercise and Brain Function

Exercise plays a crucial role in enhancing learning and memory. Key brain regions involved include the hippocampus, which is essential for transferring information into long-term memory. New neurons are produced daily in the hippocampus, and they thrive through continuous learning and exercise.

The Role of BDNF

Exercise stimulates the production of BDNF (brain-derived neurotrophic factor), which supports new neuron growth and synaptic connections. BDNF acts like fertilizer for neurons, enhancing their ability to connect and communicate effectively.

Nutrition's Impact on Learning

Diet significantly affects cognitive function. A healthy diet



rich in fruits, vegetables, nuts, and whole grains enhances learning and memory, with a Mediterranean-style diet being highly recommended. Foods high in sugar and processed ingredients should be avoided.

Learning through Non-Traditional Methods

Similar to Yego, who learned javelin techniques from online resources, individuals can self-educate using the internet. Consistent practice and feedback are key to mastering new skills.

Benefits of Exercise for Mental Health

Exercise also releases chemicals like serotonin and dopamine that foster creativity and improve cognitive functions such as decision-making and task-switching. It can aid in mental health recovery, often proving more effective than medications.

Practical Application: Stay Active

Physical activity can help clear mental blocks and improve the ability to recall information. Engaging in exercise before



or during study sessions enhances cognitive performance.

Conclusion: The Power of Exercise in Learning

Combining exercise with a healthy diet is vital for optimal brain health and learning. This chapter emphasizes the importance of physical activity and self-directed learning as pathways to success.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- Key points include the significance of the hippocampus for memory and how BDNF promotes neuron health.
- Exercise supports cognitive processes and emotional well-being, making it an essential component of effective learning strategies.



Chapter 12 Summary : MAKING BRAIN-LINKS: How Not to Learn from a Comic Book

Chapter 12: Making Brain-Links

Introduction to Brain-Links

- The chapter starts with a personal anecdote about the author's childhood piano practice, highlighting the pitfalls of "lazy learning."
- Brain-links are defined as well-practiced thought-trails that help in becoming an expert in a subject.

Becoming an Expert

- A solid set of brain-links resembles completing a puzzle; the more links created, the clearer the picture of the subject becomes.
- Lack of practice can lead to fading links, making it difficult to grasp concepts.



Two Key Ideas Behind Linking

1.

Deliberate Practice

- Focuses on working through challenging material rather than easy, familiar content.
- Lazy learning can hinder the development of new neural connections.

2.

Interleaving

- Involves mixing different topics or problem types to enhance learning flexibility.
- Practicing various techniques helps in understanding when to apply each skill.

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Chapter 13 Summary : ASKING YOURSELF IMPORTANT QUESTIONS: Should You Listen to Music While You're Studying?

CHAPTER 13 SUMMARY: ASKING YOURSELF IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

Introduction to Self-Reflection

This chapter encourages readers to adopt a scientific approach to their learning by reflecting on their own study habits and preferences. The author urges students to visualize themselves from an external perspective to assess their effectiveness as learners.

Becoming a Learning Scientist

-

Observation

: Students should observe their study practices to determine



what works best for them, including whether music is a help or a distraction.

-

Self-Recording

: Keeping a notebook to jot down daily reflections and symbolizing the day's experience with drawings can aid in self-assessment.

-

Questions to Consider

: Reflect on aspects such as study location, music influence, sleep patterns, and physical activity, noting what impacts learning effectiveness.

Impact of Study Environment

-

Changing Study Locations

: Studying in varied environments can enhance recall, as each setting provides distinct associations that aid memory retrieval.

Learning Styles Myth

-



Multisensory Learning

: Relying solely on a preferred learning style can hinder the ability to learn effectively. Engaging multiple senses can significantly improve learning and retention.

Importance of Sleep

-

Brain Health

: Sleep is vital to clear toxins from the brain, support neuron growth, and enhance cognitive function. Aiming for at least eight hours of sleep can dramatically improve learning outcomes.

Study Strategies

-

Prioritize Hard Tasks

: Start with more challenging subjects ("eat your frogs first"), allowing easier tasks to follow, which can foster a break for diffuse mode thinking.

-

Set Quitting Times

: Establish a stopping point for daily studies to promote



focused work during study sessions and better manage time.

Music and Learning

-

Mixed Evidence on Music

: The research is inconclusive regarding the effects of music on studying. While some music can be distracting (especially loud or lyrical), quieter music without words may be beneficial. It is crucial for learners to test what works for them personally.

Conclusion and Practical Tips

Students are encouraged to think like a scientist about their learning habits, experiment with different methods, and record their findings. Understanding individual differences in learning and employing various strategies can lead to improved academic performance.

Reflection Exercises

The chapter wraps up with reflection exercises to consolidate learning, prompting students to consider their study habits, sleep, and the impact of their environment on learning.



Chapter 14 Summary : LEARNING SURPRISES: Pssst... Your Worst Traits Can Be Your Best Traits!

CHAPTER 14 LEARNING SURPRISES

Your Worst Traits Can Be Your Best Traits!

Many learners struggle to keep up in class, often feeling slower than their peers. However, slower learners can excel just as well, if not better, than fast thinkers.

Video Games

Video games often receive criticism from parents, but some can enhance learning. Action games improve focus and concentration while also enhancing vision, such as better detail recognition. Spatial games like Tetris boost spatial reasoning, crucial for subjects like math and science. It's important to balance gaming with other activities to prevent addiction.



Learn Something Completely Different

Engaging in different activities outside of one's passion can enhance skills in that passion. This concept, known as "transfer," enables creative connections between disparate ideas, leading to improved understanding and innovation.

How to Take Notes

Contrary to popular belief, handwritten notes are more effective than typed ones. Handwriting forces deeper processing, improving memory link creation. A suggested method involves dividing the page to differentiate between initial notes and key points for review.

Do You Have a Poor Working Memory?

A poor working memory can sometimes be an advantage, fostering creativity and elegant simplifications. While fast thinkers process information quickly, slow thinkers may develop deeper understanding through thorough exploration of concepts.



Hiker Brains Versus Race Car Brains

Individuals with different cognitive speeds can both succeed in learning. "Hiker brains" take their time to understand content deeply, while "race car brains" may process information rapidly but can miss details. Each type has its strengths that can be harnessed strategically.

SUMMING IT UP

- Action video games enhance focus and vision.
- Learning different skills promotes mental flexibility and prevents "rut think."
- Handwritten notes assist in forming deeper brain connections.
- Poor working memory can lead to greater creativity through simplified thinking.
- Slow thinkers can achieve understanding comparable to fast learners by taking their time.

Now You Try!

Questions encourage reflection on the chapter's key ideas and concepts, advocating for the practice of writing to better grasp difficult topics.



Chapter 15 Summary : HOW TO DO WELL ON TESTS

CHAPTER 15: HOW TO DO WELL ON TESTS

Importance of Tests

Tests are a significant part of education and personal evaluation. They demonstrate learning and can serve as crucial transitions in life. Despite their daunting reputation, tests can enhance learning more effectively than studying alone.

Recall as a Learning Tool

Recall is a powerful aspect of learning. It reinforces memory and understanding. Engaging in recall during preparation functions as a self-test and strengthens brain connections.

Test Preparation Checklist



A checklist based on Dr. Richard Felder's principles helps students prepare effectively:

1. Sleep well before the test.
2. Review notes actively and soon after classes.
3. Study consistently instead of cramming.
4. Minimize distractions during study sessions.
5. Utilize various study environments.
6. Read class materials thoroughly without excessive highlighting.
7. Solve problems independently and actively.
8. Collaborate with classmates on homework.
9. Tackle homework problems individually.
10. Seek help when struggling.
11. Focus study efforts on difficult topics.
12. Interleave different study techniques.
13. Utilize creative explanations to reinforce ideas.
14. Include physical breaks in study time.

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Chapter 16 Summary : GOING FROM “HAVE TO” TO “GET TO”

CHAPTER 16: GOING FROM “HAVE TO” TO “GET TO”

Overview of Santiago Ramón y Cajal

- Santiago Ramón y Cajal, a "bad boy" who became a neuroscientist, won a Nobel Prize despite feeling he was not a genius and struggling with memory.
- Cajal's perseverance allowed him to capitalize on advantages, ultimately leading to greater success than some geniuses.

The Importance of Learning

- Reflect on the purpose of learning: What motivates you?
- Distinction between “have to learn” and “get to learn.” The shift signifies learning as a privilege.
- Different perspectives on why learning matters: personal



growth, passion pursuit, understanding the universe, potential fulfillment, and aiding humanity.

Encouragement and Responsibility

- Learning is seen as a privilege, especially when children in some regions lack access to education.
- Emphasizing the need to appreciate and utilize educational opportunities.

Broaden Your Passions

- Engage in diverse subjects rather than narrowing focus to one passion; this enriches knowledge and adaptability in a rapidly changing world.

Key Lessons and Pitfalls in Learning

1.

Effective Learning Strategies

- Use focused and diffuse modes of thinking.
- Maintain space between study sessions to facilitate memory retention.



- Engage in active recall and practice.

2.

What Not to Do

- Avoid passive learning methods such as cramming and mindless highlighting.
- Don't rely solely on the materials; ensure you understand concepts rather than superficially reviewing them.
- Reduce distractions that inhibit your ability to focus and engage with material.

Become the Teacher

- Encourage sharing knowledge gained from the book with others to reinforce learning.
- Teaching is a powerful method for solidifying understanding and concepts learned.

Reflection on Santiago Ramón y Cajal's Journey

- Cajal exemplified persistence, flexibility, and the importance of keeping options open.
- His success underscored the idea that anyone can contribute significantly to their fields through the right strategies and



mindset.

Final Thoughts

- Learning encompasses more than intelligence; commitment, flexibility, and a broad approach to interests lead to success.
- Emphasizes that luck favors efforts and each individual's journey in learning is supported by foundational strategies and concepts explored in this book.

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Best Quotes from Learning How to Learn by Barbara Oakley with Page Numbers

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Chapter 1 | Quotes From Pages 38-61

1. Your brain is more powerful than you think. You just need to know how to turn on that power.
2. Pretty much anyone can do well in any subject if they know more about learning.
3. The techniques and lessons we're going to teach you won't necessarily make learning super easy. But they will leave you with more time to do the things you like.
4. It's easy to believe that you should only concentrate on subjects that come easily for you. But my story reveals that you can do well in subjects you don't even like.
5. Your job is to learn when, and how, to use those tools.

Chapter 2 | Quotes From Pages 62-89

1. Sometimes we need to lose concentration so we can think more clearly.

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- 2.The message of this chapter is that sometimes you need to be less focused in order to become a better learner.
- 3.In diffuse mode, you're not thinking about anything in particular.
- 4.Your brain can be in only one mode at a time.
- 5.When you take a break, how long should it be? This depends on you and how much material you need to cover that day.
- 6.Going back and forth between focused and diffuse modes will help you to master virtually anything.

Chapter 3 | Quotes From Pages 90-124

- 1.Just get going. Don't put work off until later.
- 2.Think about opening that book, or cleaning up, it actually hurts—researchers can see an area of the brain that experiences pain begin to light up.
- 3.Just as the Pomodoro timer can be useful for your studies, it can also be useful for relaxing.
- 4.Your habits are like zombies—you can have bad ones or good ones.



5. You can build an army of helpful zombies up there, working hard for you if you make short periods of focused concentration into a habit.
6. A little bit of arsenic won't kill you right away. But it's very unhealthy.
7. The reward is the most important part of the whole Pomodoro process.





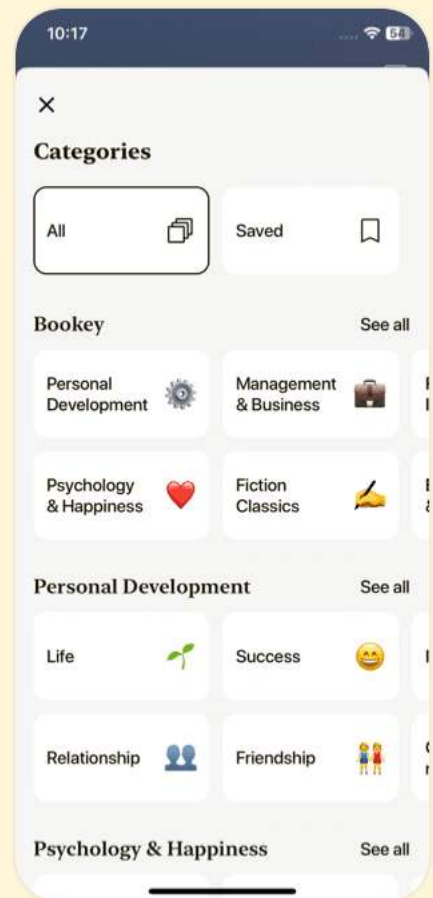
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Chapter 4 | Quotes From Pages 125-176

1. The best time to plant a tree is twenty years ago.

The second best time is now.

2. Neurons that fire together, wire together.

3. Learning makes us smarter. And learning how to learn is one of the best things you can do to get the ball rolling and make learning more successful.

4. Your neurons are like plastic clay you can mold. You can change your brain through learning!

5. Students make great teachers.

Chapter 5 | Quotes From Pages 177-196

1. The best time to plant a tree is twenty years ago.

The second best time is now.

2. Students make great teachers.

3. I thought it would make me a better teacher because I would remember what it was like to be a student.

4. I enjoyed getting rid of my ignorance. And I loved having a method that worked.

5. It reminded me what it was like to be a student and to have



to struggle with difficult material.

6. Why don't you challenge one of your teachers to learn something new?

Chapter 6 | Quotes From Pages 197-221

1. A neuron can even link to another neuron through several synapses, making even stronger brain-links.
2. During sleep, the brain rehearses what it has learned during the day.
3. The more you learn, practice, and sleep, the more you grow new dendritic spines and synaptic links.
4. Space your practice and you will remember it longer.
5. If you try for several days in a row, you'll soon notice how much easier it is to think about the new ideas.
6. Active recall is one of the most effective ways to boost your learning.
7. The synaptic janitor soon cleans away the weak pattern.





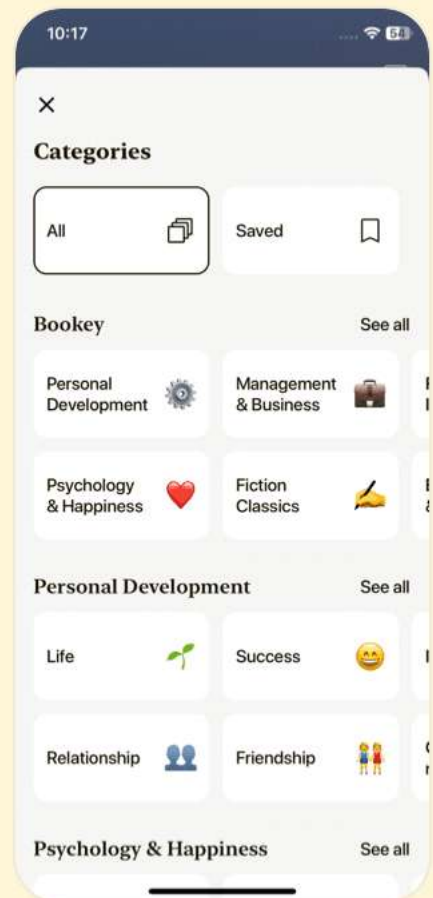
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Chapter 7 | Quotes From Pages 222-239

1. Your working memory is like your school bag. It's small. It can't hold much.
2. Lockers are often bigger than school bags. They can hold a lot more stuff.
3. Your attentional octopus helps you to hold information in working memory.
4. If you're not focusing on something, the octopus drops the information and dozes off.
5. You have two memory systems: working memory and long-term memory.

Chapter 8 | Quotes From Pages 240-281

1. Could Nelson really become US Memory Champion? Is it possible to change from an ordinary forgetful person into a memory athlete?
2. Focus—pay attention! Sounds obvious, but tell yourself to focus.
3. Your memory is a lot better for pictures than it is for abstract facts.



4. When you try to remember random things, you need to link them to things you know well.
5. Practice. Nelson says, 'You don't get good at something unless you practice. That's for anything in the world.'
6. Memory palaces are useful, because they use your amazing visuospatial powers.
7. Don't forget how important sleep is in anchoring these new ideas you are learning!

Chapter 9 | Quotes From Pages 282-311

1. Creating sets of brain-links helps you think complicated thoughts.
2. Your attentional octopus gets tired if it has to keep switching its focus from one set of brain-links to a completely different one.
3. The earliest steps of learning something new are often the hardest.
4. Just understanding a concept does not create a set of brain-links. You must practice a new concept to create the set of brain-links.



5.What was hard has now become easy!

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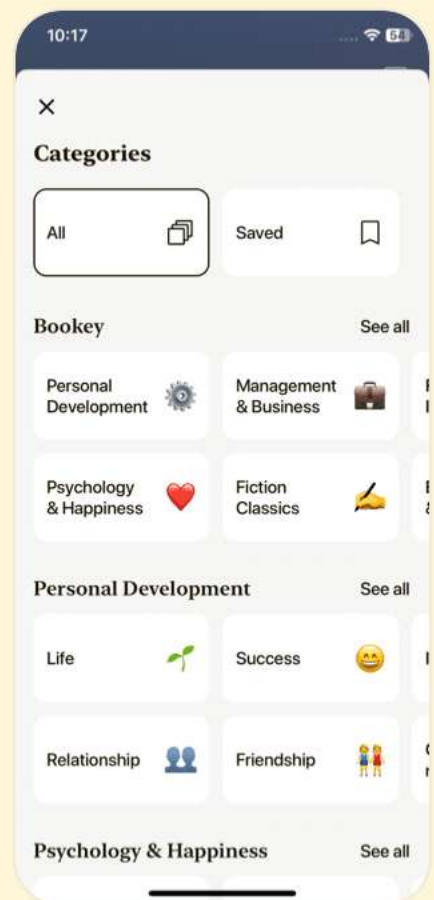
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Chapter 10 | Quotes From Pages 312-331

1. One of the best ways to have satisfying experiences at school is to join clubs and groups at your school that do activities you enjoy.
2. Getting advice from someone you respect can have a big impact on your life.
3. Learning comes to life when you do something with information. Make it active. Don't just read it.
4. It's amazing how subjects connect in ways that you don't expect!
5. Be amazed by your brain! It's as if you have billions of tiny computers all working together for you.

Chapter 11 | Quotes From Pages 332-354

1. Exercise helps new neurons grow.
2. Exercise is really good for your neurons, especially the new ones.
3. Exercise isn't just good for every organ in your body. It's good for your brain, too.
4. All those little thought-mice running about are sure to find



new perspectives on the forest.

5.You can learn from the internet, as well as from teachers and books.

6.Exercise releases chemicals that generate new ideas.

Chapter 12 | Quotes From Pages 355-391

1.Lady Luck favors the one who tries.

2.Deliberate practice is how you become an expert more quickly in whatever you are studying.

3.If you spend too much time on material you already know, you won't have time to learn new material.

4.The key is to actively practice or bring to life whatever you are learning yourself.

5.Your neurons will eventually link up and you'll have completed a whole 'puzzle.'





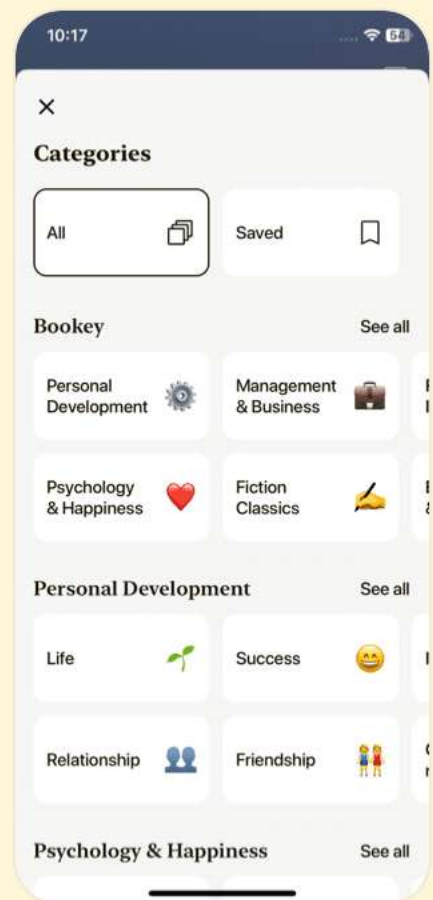
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Chapter 13 | Quotes From Pages 392-424

1. You need to watch yourself learning, and think about what works and what doesn't.
2. If you can, it's better to study in a variety of places!
3. We learn best when we use several different senses—hearing, seeing, and, perhaps especially, being able to feel with our hands.
4. Sleep is the ultimate diffuse mode.
5. Eat your frogs first!
6. Becoming a learning scientist means observing your learning as if you were a scientist.
7. One Pomodoro with a fresh brain is worth three with a tired one!

Chapter 14 | Quotes From Pages 425-451

1. If you're slower than others, you can do just as well. Sometimes even better than fast learners.
2. Some types of video games can actually be helpful for your learning.
3. You can get stuck in what we call 'rut think.'



4. Writing notes by hand is better. Even if you have lousy handwriting.
5. A poor working memory can be a good thing. It can allow you to see elegant simplifications that others miss, and also be more creative.
6. Slow thinkers can understand a subject or problem just as well as fast thinkers.

Chapter 15 | Quotes From Pages 452-481

1. Research shows that tests are one of the best ways to help you learn. You can learn more in one hour of taking a test than in one hour of studying.
2. Doing the 'hard-start' technique allows you to use your brain as a sort of double processor.
3. If you shift your thinking from 'This test has made me afraid' to 'This test has got me excited to do my best!' it can improve your performance.
4. Learning is a privilege. In some parts of the world, children have no access at all to books or computers or teachers.
5. You get to learn so you can help humanity solve some of



the world's problems.

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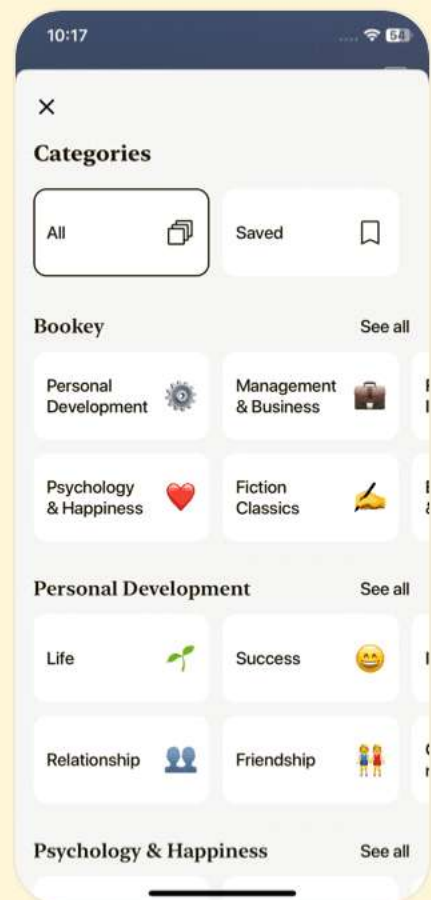
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Chapter 16 | Quotes From Pages 482-534

1. Did you notice what I did halfway through the list?

I switched from 'you have to learn' to 'you get to learn.'

2. Learning is a privilege.

3. You never know when your learning is going to come in handy.

4. Don't narrow your options too much.

5. Persistence is one of the most important parts of learning.





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Chapter 1 | THE PROBLEM WITH PASSION| Q&A

1.Question

What does Barb Oakley suggest about following your passion when it comes to learning?

Answer: While following your passion can be beneficial, Barb emphasizes the importance of broadening your interests. This means that even if you find certain subjects difficult or unappealing, like math and science, you can still learn and excel in them. Initially, Barb struggled with these subjects but later became passionate about them, ultimately achieving success in engineering.

2.Question

How did Barb Oakley overcome her initial dislike for math and science?

Answer: Barb discovered effective learning techniques and strategies that enabled her to change her approach to these

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subjects. By embracing the challenge and applying the right methods, she turned her weaknesses into strengths, ultimately becoming proficient and fond of math and science.

3.Question

What does Barb mean when she says, 'Your brain is more powerful than you think'?

Answer: This statement highlights the brain's capacity for growth and change. Barb explains that anyone can improve their learning abilities and develop skills in areas they previously found difficult, as long as they know how to activate their brain's potential.

4.Question

Why does Barb encourage students to engage with subjects they may not initially enjoy?

Answer: Engagement with a variety of subjects can open up new opportunities and help develop a wide array of skills. Barb's own journey showed her that by stepping outside of her comfort zone, she could uncover hidden talents and interests, ultimately leading to a fulfilling career.



5.Question

What is a 'picture walk' and why is it important in learning?

Answer:A 'picture walk' is a technique where you skim a chapter by looking at images, headings, and summaries before reading in detail. This approach allows your brain to organize information and prepare for deeper understanding, much like previewing a movie helps you anticipate and better engage with the story.

6.Question

What key message does Barb Oakley want to convey with her personal story?

Answer:Barb's story illustrates that it's possible to transform your learning experience, no matter your starting point. She wants readers to understand that hard work, the right strategies, and a willingness to learn can lead to extraordinary outcomes and newfound passions.

7.Question

How does Barb relate her learning journey to the future workforce needs?



Answer: Barb points out that the future will require creative individuals with diverse skills. By learning how to learn and broadening one's talents, students can prepare themselves for success in a world that values adaptability and problem-solving across various fields.

8.Question

What does Barb hope readers will achieve by the end of this book?

Answer: Barb hopes readers will gain powerful tools and techniques that make learning not only more efficient but also enjoyable, leading to enhanced creativity and success in all areas of study and eventually in their careers.

9.Question

How can learning how to learn impact your life beyond academic settings?

Answer: Learning how to learn can enhance various aspects of life, such as hobbies, personal interests, and future jobs. The strategies developed can make learning new skills easier and more gratifying, thus enriching overall life experiences.



Chapter 2 | EASY DOES IT: Why Trying Too Hard Can Sometimes Be Part of the Problem| Q&A

1.Question

What is the main message of Chapter 2 in 'Learning How to Learn' by Barbara Oakley?

Answer:The main message of Chapter 2 is that sometimes it's beneficial to reduce your focus in order to learn and solve problems more effectively. The chapter illustrates how both focused and diffuse modes of thinking are essential for effective learning and creativity.

2.Question

How can distractions be beneficial to learning, according to the chapter?

Answer:Distractions can be beneficial because stepping away from a task and zoning out, even momentarily, allows the brain to shift into diffuse mode. This relaxed state can help form creative connections, leading to breakthroughs that focused thinking alone might not achieve.

3.Question



What are the two modes of thinking mentioned in the chapter?

Answer: The two modes of thinking are the 'focused mode,' where you concentrate intently on a specific task, and the 'diffuse mode,' where your mind is free and relaxed, allowing for creative and big-picture thinking.

4.Question

Can you describe how focusing and diffuse thinking work together?

Answer: Focused thinking helps to lay down specific 'trails' in the brain when you concentrate on a task, while diffuse thinking allows your mind to wander and make connections between ideas. Switching between these modes is crucial for mastering new concepts and solving problems.

5.Question

What metaphor does the author use to explain how our brain works between focused and diffuse modes?

Answer: The author uses the metaphor of a pinball machine, where focused mode is compared to tightly packed bumpers



(where ideas bounce closely together), while diffuse mode is likened to bumpers that are set farther apart, allowing broader and freer movement of thoughts.

6.Question

What practical tip does the chapter provide for entering diffuse mode?

Answer: Taking breaks and engaging in activities like walking, showering, or simply allowing your mind to relax can help you enter diffuse mode, giving your brain the opportunity to process information creatively and make connections.

7.Question

What can happen if you focus too hard on a problem?

Answer: Focusing too hard on a problem can lead to frustration and 'getting stuck.' At such times, it may be necessary to take a break or shift focus to another subject to allow your brain's diffuse mode to work on the problem subconsciously.

8.Question

How does the chapter suggest dealing with a challenging



subject or problem?

Answer: The chapter suggests that when dealing with a challenging subject, you should start with focused study to build a strong foundation. If you get stuck, take a break or switch subjects, allowing time for the diffuse mode to provide fresh insights.

9.Question

What role does rest play in learning, as discussed in Chapter 2?

Answer: Rest plays a crucial role in learning by allowing the brain to process and consolidate information during periods of inactivity. Activities like sleep or even short breaks can enhance the effectiveness of both focused and diffuse modes.

10.Question

How can someone with ADHD benefit from the concepts in Chapter 2?

Answer: A person with ADHD might find that while they need to work harder to maintain focus (working their mental flippers), they may also have unique creative insights during



diffuse mode. The strategies suggested in the chapter can help them harness both modes effectively to enhance learning.

Chapter 3 | I'LL DO IT LATER, HONEST!: Using a Tomato to Beat Procrastination| Q&A

1.Question

What is procrastination, and why is it considered a problem for learners?

Answer:Procrastination is the act of delaying or putting off tasks until later. It is problematic for learners because it can lead to a lack of sufficient time to absorb knowledge, increased stress, and ultimately a decline in learning effectiveness. By procrastinating, one runs the risk of not being able to properly manage their study time, which can hinder the ability to internalize concepts.

2.Question

How does the insular cortex respond when we think about tasks we don't want to do?

Answer:When we think about unpleasant tasks, the insular



cortex in our brain activates, which is associated with feelings of pain or discomfort. This activation is part of why we feel a reluctance to start these tasks, leading to procrastination.

3.Question

Introduce the Pomodoro Technique and explain how it helps with procrastination.

Answer:The Pomodoro Technique is a time management method that involves working for short bursts of 25 minutes (a 'Pomodoro'), followed by a 5-minute break. This technique helps mitigate procrastination by promoting focused work sessions, reducing distractions, and giving oneself the reward of a break after a period of effort. The structured nature makes tackling tasks seem less daunting.

4.Question

What is the most important part of the Pomodoro Technique?

Answer:The most important part is the reward that follows the focused work period. This creates a positive



reinforcement loop in the brain, which encourages better focus and motivation to continue working.

5.Question

What should you do during your breaks between Pomodoros?

Answer:During breaks, it is essential to engage in activities that allow your mind to rest, such as taking a walk, listening to music, or doing something different from studying. This helps your brain transition into 'diffuse mode' and recharge.

6.Question

Should you plan to finish a task during a Pomodoro?

Why or why not?

Answer:No, you should not plan to finish a task during a Pomodoro. The focus should be solely on working for 25 minutes, doing your best without the pressure of completing the entire task. This reduces anxiety and allows for better concentration.

7.Question

What can be beneficial about going into 'zombie mode'?

Answer:Going into 'zombie mode' can be beneficial as it



allows you to perform certain habitual tasks automatically without overthinking them. This mode can help you focus on studies if you train your good habits, but you must also identify and counter any bad zombie habits that lead to procrastination.

8.Question

What is the connection between procrastination and the story of the arsenic eaters?

Answer:The arsenic eaters gradually poisoned themselves without realizing the harm they were doing because their bodies became accustomed to the poison. Similarly, procrastination can seem harmless at first, but over time it creates detrimental habits that can hinder effective learning and cause significant stress.

9.Question

Explain the concept of active recall and its significance in learning.

Answer:Active recall refers to the practice of bringing information to mind without looking it up, such as trying to



remember key ideas after reading. This method enhances retention and understanding because it engages the brain actively rather than passively reviewing text. Utilizing active recall leads to better memory performance, especially under test conditions.

10.Question

Outline the three key steps in the powerful reading strategy mentioned in the chapter.

Answer:The three key steps are: 1) Perform a picture walk to preview the material, 2) Read the text carefully and take notes or highlight key ideas, 3) Use active recall to pull information from memory after learning.



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Chapter 4 | BRAIN-LINKS AND FUN WITH SPACE ALIENS| Q&A

1.Question

What does Santiago Ramón y Cajal's story teach us about the impact of unconventional learning paths?

Answer:Santiago's journey illustrates that traditional education systems may not suit everyone, and alternative methods can lead to extraordinary success. His transformation from a troubled student to the father of modern neuroscience emphasizes that personal passion and uniqueness in learning can lead to significant achievements.

2.Question

How does the metaphor of 'neuron-aliens' help us understand neural connections?

Answer:The 'neuron-aliens' metaphor visually represents neurons and their connections, making it easier to grasp how they communicate. Just as these aliens send tiny shocks to one another to transmit signals, real neurons pass electrical impulses across synapses. This vivid imagery can simplify



complex brain processes into something relatable.

3.Question

What is neuroplasticity, and why is it important for learning?

Answer:Neuroplasticity refers to the brain's ability to adapt and reorganize itself by forming new neural connections throughout life. This concept is crucial because it means that through practice and learning, we can enhance our cognitive abilities, effectively 'rewiring' our brains to improve memory, skills, and intelligence.

4.Question

How do 'brain-links' form and strengthen during the learning process?

Answer:'Brain-links' are formed when neurons communicate frequently through synapses. As we practice new skills or knowledge, these connections strengthen—much like paths in a forest that become clearer the more they are traveled. This reinforcement enables deeper understanding and retention of information.



5.Question

What role do metaphors play in enhancing learning and memory?

Answer:Metaphors serve as cognitive tools that connect new concepts with familiar ones. They activate neural pathways associated with the familiar idea, providing a framework to understand and remember new information more easily. This strategy can accelerate learning and solidify understanding.

6.Question

Why is it beneficial for teachers to experience learning as a student?

Answer:When teachers immerse themselves in learning as students, they reconnect with the challenges that beginners face. This experience fosters empathy and understanding, allowing teachers to better address their students' needs and adapt their teaching methods to support diverse learning styles.

7.Question

What can we learn from Santiago's struggles with traditional education and his eventual success?



Answer:Santiago's challenges highlight the importance of perseverance and finding the right learning approach. Despite early struggles, his determination to explore new interests and methods led him to become a pioneering scientist. This teaches us that challenges can be overcome with the right mindset and resources.

8.Question

How does the story illustrate the concept of making learning personal?

Answer:Santiago's father introduced him to medicine through hands-on experiences, demonstrating that personal engagement can spark interest. This suggests that tailoring learning experiences to individual passions or needs can significantly enhance motivation and comprehension.

9.Question

What does 'neurons that fire together, wire together' imply about learning habits?

Answer:This phrase underscores the idea that consistent practice strengthens the synaptic connections between



neurons. The more frequently we engage with a concept or skill, the more robust our understanding becomes, leading to easier recall and application.

10.Question

What challenges do students often face in traditional educational settings, and how can these be addressed?

Answer:Students frequently struggle with boredom, lack of relevance in subjects, and rigid teaching methods.

Addressing these challenges can involve incorporating interactive, hands-on learning, personalizing education, and encouraging creativity through diverse teaching strategies.

Chapter 5 | THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TEACHER'S DESK| Q&A

1.Question

What inspired Al to learn chemistry despite his initial dislike for the subject?

Answer:Al was inspired by Barb's story, which showed him that people can broaden their passions and learn new things, regardless of their prior experiences or preferences. Her message about



rewiring the brain resonated with him and motivated him to challenge himself.

2.Question

How did Al approach learning chemistry, and what strategies did he employ?

Answer:Al approached learning chemistry by following the techniques he learned from Barb and Terry. He studied in 25-minute bursts (Pomodors), took breaks to refresh his mind, tested himself frequently, and even used active recall by explaining concepts to his dog, Violet. He also employed strategies like interleaving topics and creating vivid mental images to remember difficult material.

3.Question

What role did Al's students play in his learning journey?

Answer:Al's students were crucial to his learning process.

They supported and encouraged him, helped him study, and even quizzed him. Al invited them to teach him, creating a supportive learning environment where both he and his students benefited from the experience.



4.Question

What did Al learn about the challenges students face in learning?

Answer:Al learned that teachers often forget the struggles of being a student because they are now experts. By going back to studying chemistry, he was reminded that beginners face significant challenges and that it's important for educators to empathize with their students' difficulties.

5.Question

What message does Al convey about adult learning?

Answer:Al conveys that it is never too late for adults to learn new subjects, and that doing so can enhance their understanding and effectiveness as educators. He encourages adults, especially those who work with young people, to challenge themselves to learn something new, fostering better communication and relationships.

6.Question

Reflecting on Al's experience, what could be a potential benefit of challenging a teacher to learn something new?

Answer:Challenging a teacher to learn something new can



lead to shared experiences between students and teachers, enhancing understanding and empathy. It can also stimulate meaningful conversations about learning and create a collaborative environment where both parties can share insights and strategies.

7.Question

What personal sacrifices did Al make in his pursuit of chemistry knowledge?

Answer:Al made personal sacrifices such as dedicating school vacations and weekends to study chemistry, despite having a busy job. His commitment to learning was so strong that his family thought he was crazy, showing his dedication to overcoming his ignorance and thriving in a challenging subject.

8.Question

What did Al's successful chemistry exam outcome teach him about learning?

Answer:Passing the chemistry exam taught Al that hard work and perseverance pay off, and that even those who start late



can succeed with the right mindset and strategies. It reinforced the idea that learning is a continuous process that can lead to personal fulfillment and expanded knowledge.

9.Question

How did Al use humor in his learning process, and what impact did it have?

Answer:Al used humor by creating zany mental images to help remember complex concepts, such as imagining crying over a melting white Porsche to recall specific chemistry terms. This approach not only made learning more enjoyable but also facilitated memory retention by associating humor with content.

10.Question

What advice does Al give for effective learning based on his experience?

Answer:Al advises using techniques like active recall, interleaving topics, and taking structured breaks to enhance learning. He emphasizes the importance of seeking help when stuck, being open to learning at any age, and



understanding that struggle is a natural part of the learning process.

Chapter 6 | LEARNING WHILE YOU SLEEP: How to Wake Up Smarter| Q&A

1.Question

What happens to neurons while we sleep that enhances learning?

Answer:Neurons grow new dendritic spines during sleep, which strengthen the synaptic links formed while learning. This process solidifies the brain connections, making it easier to remember and access learned information.

2.Question

Why is active recall more effective than just reviewing information?

Answer:Active recall forces you to retrieve information from memory, which strengthens synaptic links and helps develop new dendritic spines, as opposed to passive review, which does not promote the same level of neural growth.

3.Question

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How does sleep act as 'mortar' for learning?

Answer: Sleep provides the critical time needed for the brain to process and solidify the new connections created during learning, thereby creating a sturdy neural framework for memories.

4.Question

What role does focused attention play in the formation of dendritic spines?

Answer: Focused attention is essential as dendritic spines act as 'lie detectors', only forming when genuine concentration is present. If you're distracted, they fail to develop properly.

5.Question

What is the metaphor of the 'brick wall' in relation to learning?

Answer: The 'brick wall' metaphor illustrates how learning builds up over time through consistent practice and retention. Each new bit of knowledge adds a 'brick' that strengthens the wall of understanding, resulting in a solid foundation for future learning.



6.Question

Why is cramming considered a poor study strategy?

Answer:Cramming provides insufficient time for sleep and practice, limiting the growth of new dendritic spines and preventing solid synaptic connections from forming, which ultimately leads to poor retention.

7.Question

How can spaced retrieval practice enhance memory retention?

Answer:Spacing out practice sessions allows for multiple sleep cycles to occur, which aids in the formation and strengthening of new synaptic connections, resulting in better long-term memory retention.

8.Question

What should you do to reinforce learning after a study session?

Answer:Engage in active recall, revisit the material within a few days, and practice retrieving the information without looking, to ensure those dendritic spines remain strong and interconnected.



9.Question

Why might some individuals need more time or repetition to learn concepts?

Answer:Each person's neuroplasticity varies; some learn quickly while others may require more time or repeated exposure to the material due to differences in how their brains encode and reinforce new information.

10.Question

What is 'reverse procrastination,' and why is it beneficial?

Answer:Reverse procrastination is when students tackle assignments early, allowing them time to review and reinforce learning. This practice enhances retention by giving the brain more opportunities to form lasting connections.

11.Question

How can teaching concepts to others improve your own understanding?

Answer:Teaching forces you to process the information thoroughly and simplify complex ideas, which strengthens your own grasp of the material and enhances your memory



connections.

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Chapter 7 | SCHOOL BAGS, LOCKERS, AND YOUR ATTENTIONAL OCTOPUS| Q&A

1.Question

How do school bags and lockers serve as metaphors for working memory and long-term memory?

Answer: School bags represent your working memory, which is limited in capacity and holds only a small amount of information at a time—akin to how a school bag is portable but cannot contain much. Lockers symbolize long-term memory, offering vast storage capabilities but being less accessible since they are located farther away. Just as you need to go to your locker to retrieve larger amounts of information, you must reach into your long-term memory to access more complex thoughts and memories.

2.Question

What is the role of the attentional octopus in relation to working memory?

Answer: The attentional octopus is a metaphor for your



working memory, residing in the prefrontal cortex. It has four 'arms' that can hold onto about four pieces of information at once, allowing you to focus on and manipulate ideas in real-time. If your octopus is not activated—meaning you're not focused—information falls away easily.

3.Question

What can you do to enhance the ability of your attentional octopus to hold information?

Answer: To enhance your attentional octopus's performance, you can use strategies such as repeating information, writing things down, and practicing focused attention on the material you are trying to retain. This helps prevent information from slipping away and aids in strengthening memory.

4.Question

What are the differences between working memory and long-term memory in terms of capacity and function?

Answer: Working memory has a limited capacity—generally holding around four items—and is used for immediate, conscious tasks. Long-term memory, however, has an almost



limitless storage capability, where complex information is held in a broad network of brain links, allowing for retrieval over time.

5.Question

Why is it important to shift information from working memory to long-term memory?

Answer:Shifting information to long-term memory is crucial because working memory can only hold information for a short duration (about 10-15 seconds) before it begins to fade. To retain knowledge and skills for the long term, it must be encoded into long-term memory where it can be stored more securely and accessed later.

6.Question

How can learning complex materials engage your attentional octopus more intensely?

Answer:Learning complex materials, such as difficult math problems or new languages, requires more focus and mental engagement, which results in a burst of electrical activity in your working memory. This keeps your attentional octopus



active as it simultaneously grapples with multiple ideas and connections.

7.Question

What strategies will the next chapter introduce to help with memorization?

Answer:The next chapter will introduce practical techniques and 'slick tricks' designed to enhance memory retention and make the process of moving information into long-term memory more efficient and effective.

8.Question

What analogy does the chapter use to describe how complicated information is stored in the brain?

Answer:The chapter uses the analogy of 'brain-links' to describe how information is stored in long-term memory.

Simple pieces of information form small sets of links, while more complex information involves larger, more intricate sets of links, illustrating the interconnected nature of knowledge in the brain.

9.Question

How does forgetting relate to the attentional octopus and



working memory?

Answer: Forgetting occurs when the attentional octopus is not focused or engaged. In moments of distraction or low engagement, the octopus drops information it was holding, highlighting the need for active attention to maintain memory.

10.Question

What is the overall importance of understanding the functioning of working memory and long-term memory?

Answer: Understanding how working memory and long-term memory function empowers learners to develop better study strategies, enhance their retention abilities, and utilize their cognitive resources more effectively in both academic and personal pursuits.

Chapter 8 | SLICK TRICKS TO BUILD YOUR MEMORY| Q&A

1.Question

Can someone with a poor memory improve to have a great memory, just like Nelson Dellis did?

Answer: Yes! Nelson Dellis transformed from a



forgetful child into a memory champion through dedicated practice and memory techniques. Key strategies include: focusing on memorization, creating vivid images, and using mnemonic devices. With consistent effort, anyone can enhance their memory skills.

2.Question

What is the memory palace technique and how does it work?

Answer:The memory palace technique involves visualizing a familiar location (like your home) and placing items you wish to remember in specific spots within it. As you mentally walk through this 'palace', you visualize the items, creating strong mental associations. This leverages your brain's natural ability to remember places, making it easier to recall the information later.

3.Question

What are the two ways we store information in long-term memory?



Answer:1. Facts, which are more abstract and harder to remember (like dates or definitions). 2. Pictures, which are easier to remember due to their visual nature. Converting facts into memorable images enhances recall.

4.Question

How can adding movement to a mental image improve memory retention?

Answer:Incorporating movement into a mental image creates a dynamic and engaging representation, making it more vivid and easier to recall. For example, imagining a gorilla dancing can be more memorable than just picturing a static gorilla.

5.Question

What are Nelson Dellis's five tips for better memory?

Answer:1. Pay attention and focus on the information. 2. Practice remembering the information. 3. Turn information into visual pictures. 4. Store those pictures by linking to familiar concepts. 5. Use active recall to reinforce memory storage.

6.Question

Can you provide an example of creating a mnemonic



device?

Answer: Sure! To remember the reactivity series of metals:

Potassium, Sodium, Lithium, Calcium, Magnesium,

Aluminum, Zinc, Iron, Copper, Silver, Gold, you might

create a sentence where each word starts with the same letter:

"People Sometimes Like Cats Making A Zigzag In Cool
Silver Golfing."

7.Question

How does explaining concepts to a rubber ducky (or any object) help in understanding?

Answer: Explaining concepts out loud forces you to articulate your understanding clearly. It can reveal gaps in your knowledge and reinforce your learning, as if you're teaching someone else, which enhances retention and comprehension.

8.Question

Why is it important to create multiple sets of brain-links when learning new information?

Answer: Creating multiple sets of brain-links helps you connect concepts, making retrieval easier and allowing for



deeper understanding. This interconnected web of knowledge enables you to draw from various related ideas when solving problems or recalling information.

9.Question

What role does practice play in memory enhancement according to Nelson?

Answer:Practice is crucial! Nelson emphasizes that memory improvement does not happen without practice. Regularly using memory techniques reinforces neural connections, making retrieval easier and more efficient over time.

10.Question

How can sleep impact memory retention?

Answer:Sleep plays a vital role in consolidating memories. It helps transfer information from short-term to long-term memory and enhances recall, making it an essential component of effective learning.

Chapter 9 | WHY BRAIN-LINKS ARE IMPORTANT: (and How Not to Back a Car into a Ditch)| Q&A



1.Question

Why are strong brain-links important for learning?

Answer:Strong brain-links are essential because they help your working memory process complex information quickly and efficiently. When you have well-formed brain-links, your attentional octopus can easily reach them, allowing you to concentrate on multiple tasks without being overwhelmed.

2.Question

What is the role of the attentional octopus in learning?

Answer:The attentional octopus represents our working memory, which has limited resources (or 'arms'). It helps us juggle and connect information as we learn new concepts. When well-practiced brain-links exist, it can pull on these connections easily, freeing up mental capacity to tackle other tasks.

3.Question

How does distraction affect learning?

Answer:Distraction takes away one of the attentional



octopus's arms, making it harder to focus and hold onto important information. This results in cognitive overload and confusion, as switching attention between tasks requires mental effort and depletes focus.

4.Question

Can you give an example of a linked concept from your experience?

Answer:One example is riding a bicycle. Initially, it requires intense focus to maintain balance and navigate, but after practice, it becomes an automatic action that can be performed easily while engaging in conversation or listening to music.

5.Question

Why should we avoid task switching while studying?

Answer:Task switching should be avoided because it causes our attentional octopus significant strain, requiring it to unload and reload different sets of brain-links. This not only wastes cognitive energy but can lead to confusion and decreased efficiency in learning.



6.Question

What should you do with your smartphone when working on homework? Why?

Answer: You should leave your smartphone in another room when doing homework to prevent the temptation of checking it. This way, you can maintain focus and allow your attentional octopus to work without distractions, optimizing your learning process.

7.Question

Does merely understanding a concept create strong brain-links? How do you become an expert?

Answer: No, merely understanding a concept does not create strong brain-links. Expertise comes from consistent practice that reinforces those concepts, allowing you to form interconnected brain-links that make retrieving information intuitive and automatic.

8.Question

Which would you choose: a firefighter who learned about rescues through observation or one who practiced it? Why?



Answer: You would choose the firefighter who practiced rescues because hands-on experience builds strong brain-links, ensuring that the firefighter can perform effectively under pressure. Observation alone does not prepare one for the complexities of real situations.

9.Question

What is mastery learning and why is it beneficial?

Answer: Mastery learning is an approach where students master each component of a subject before moving on to the next. This process ensures that strong brain-links are created, leading to better understanding and retention of knowledge.

10.Question

What happens to learning if you focus too much on understanding concepts without practice?

Answer: Focusing too much on understanding without practice can lead to confusion and a lack of solid brain-links. It may result in cognitive overload and hinder the ability to apply concepts, making it harder to solve problems effectively.





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Chapter 10 | LEARNING WITH CLUBS AND GROUPS, FINDING YOUR MISSION, AND HOW TERRY NEARLY BURNED DOWN THE SCHOOL| Q&A

1.Question

What can joining clubs and groups do for your learning experience?

Answer:Joining clubs allows you to connect with others who share your interests, fostering friendships and enhancing creativity. It provides opportunities to engage in hands-on activities that make learning more active and enjoyable.

2.Question

Why is it important to find your mission in learning?

Answer:Identifying your mission helps clarify your interests and goals, guiding your educational journey and motivating you to pursue subjects that truly engage you. It encourages deeper curiosity and exploration.

3.Question

How can good mentorship impact your career path?



Answer:Receiving guidance from respected mentors can open doors and provide valuable insights, shaping your approach to learning and helping you make informed decisions about your academic and professional journey.

4.Question

What lesson did the author learn about making knowledge active?

Answer:The author emphasized that learning becomes more impactful when you apply what you read or learn through practical experiences, such as seeing neurons under a microscope, which brings concepts to life.

5.Question

How do different subjects connect in unexpected ways?

Answer:The author discovered that skills from one field, like physics, can be applied to another, such as biology. This highlights the interconnectedness of knowledge, showing how interdisciplinary learning can enhance understanding and creativity.

6.Question

What are the benefits of teamwork in learning?



Answer:Collaborating with others allows you to tackle challenging problems more effectively and sparks new ideas. Engaging with creative individuals can boost your own creativity and facilitate a richer learning experience.

7.Question

What role does exercise play in learning, according to the author?

Answer:Exercise is crucial for enhancing cognitive functions, improving memory, and facilitating better overall brain health, making it an essential component of effective learning.

8.Question

How did the author's early experiences influence his approach to learning?

Answer:Early experiences in his radio club taught the author the importance of curiosity and active engagement in learning. This foundation led him to pursue challenging problems and explore diverse scientific interests throughout his career.



Chapter 11 | HOW TO PUMP UP YOUR BRAIN|

Q&A

1.Question

What is the story of Julius Yego, and what can we learn from it?

Answer: Julius Yego, who grew up in a poor part of Kenya, became the World Javelin Champion in 2015 despite having no javelin coach or proper training facilities. His determination to learn how to throw the javelin led him to watch YouTube videos for coaching, and he practiced extensively on his own. This illustrates that self-teaching and practice, even without formal guidance, can lead to great success, and that resources such as the internet can serve as powerful tools for learning.

2.Question

How does exercise benefit our brain?

Answer: Exercise significantly enhances brain function by promoting the production of BDNF (Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor), which supports the growth and health



of new neurons. It improves memory, understanding, decision-making, and even creativity by releasing essential chemicals such as serotonin and dopamine. Furthermore, physical activity can prevent cognitive decline and assist with mental health issues.

3.Question

What role does the hippocampus play in learning and memory?

Answer:The hippocampus is crucial for remembering facts and experiences. It acts as a temporary storage area for new information before it is transferred to the cerebral cortex during sleep. New neurons are generated in the hippocampus regularly, but they need to be engaged through learning activities to survive, emphasizing the importance of continuous learning.

4.Question

What tips would you give for leading a healthy diet to enhance learning?

Answer:A healthy diet rich in fruits and vegetables is



essential for brain health. Incorporate a variety of colorful fruits, vegetables like those from the onion or cabbage families, and whole grains into meals. Healthy fats from fish and nuts are beneficial, while processed 'fake foods' should be minimized. A Mediterranean-style diet is often recommended for its mental and physical health benefits.

5.Question

How can you utilize exercise as a learning tool when struggling to recall information?

Answer: When faced with difficulty understanding or recalling information, engaging in physical activities like push-ups or jumping jacks can refresh your mind and improve cognitive function. This is because exercise increases blood flow, enhances brain chemicals, and can create a more conducive environment for re-engaging with learning material.

Chapter 12 | MAKING BRAIN-LINKS: How Not to Learn from a Comic Book| Q&A

1.Question

What are brain-links and why are they important for



learning?

Answer: Brain-links are well-practiced thought-trails in your brain, akin to pathways in a forest, that help you connect different concepts. They are crucial for learning because they allow you to draw on related knowledge when tackling new problems, ultimately helping you become an expert in a subject.

2.Question

How does deliberate practice differ from lazy learning?

Answer: Deliberate practice involves focusing on and working through challenging new material to build solid brain-links, while lazy learning revolves around repetitively practicing what you already know, which does not stimulate the same level of cognitive development or connection building.

3.Question

Can you explain the concept of interleaving in a simple way?

Answer: Interleaving is like mixing up different types of



problems or skills you are learning. Instead of just practicing one style or subject, you alternate between different types, like switching between math problems and science questions, which helps you better understand the distinctions and applications of each.

4.Question

What strategies can improve my abilities in math and science as suggested in the chapter?

Answer:To improve in math and science, you should actively work through problems yourself without looking at the solutions initially. Use active recall to test your knowledge, analyze where you might be struggling, and repeatedly practice those areas until they become clearer.

5.Question

What would be Superman's perspective on practicing piano while reading comic books?

Answer:Superman would likely advise against the distraction, emphasizing that effective learning requires full attention and effort on the task at hand—in this case,



focusing solely on practicing the new piano song instead of indulging in comic books.

6.Question

What is the significance of the Law of Serendipity discussed in the chapter?

Answer:The Law of Serendipity means that success often favors those who put in the effort to learn. By actively trying to create brain-links and focusing on key concepts, you can actually make learning easier and more effective over time, leading to unexpected successes.

7.Question

How does focusing help in creating brain-links?

Answer:Focusing helps you to engage your attentional resources fully, necessary for forming new neural connections. When you eliminate distractions, your brain can concentrate on integrating and linking new information, leading to stronger and more effective brain-links.

8.Question

What is an example of how to actively practice and make brain-links in writing, similar to what Benjamin Franklin



did?

Answer: You can enhance your writing skills by taking excerpts of excellent writing and jotting down key words or ideas. Then attempt to recreate those sentences or pieces from memory, comparing your results to the originals, thus building links that improve your writing style and vocabulary.

9.Question

What is the overall message about learning effectively from this chapter?

Answer: The chapter emphasizes that effective learning is active rather than passive. By practicing difficult material deliberately, interleaving different topics, and actively engaging with the content, you can build strong brain-links that enhance your understanding and retention of knowledge.



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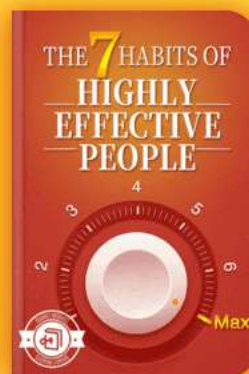
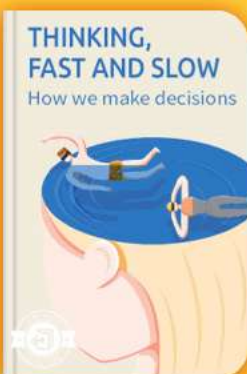


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Chapter 13 | ASKING YOURSELF IMPORTANT QUESTIONS: Should You Listen to Music While You're Studying?| Q&A

1.Question

What should you ask yourself about your learning style when it comes to studying with music?

Answer: You should be observant and ask if music enhances or distracts you during your study sessions. It's important to reflect honestly on how different types of music, like loud music with lyrics or soft instrumental, affect your ability to concentrate.

2.Question

Why is it beneficial to study in different places?

Answer: Studying in various locations helps your attentional octopus pick up different contextual cues related to the material. This way, when you are tested in a different environment, your brain can find the information more easily since it won't be tied to just one study location.

3.Question



What does it mean to 'eat your frogs first'?

Answer: It means to tackle the most challenging or least enjoyable tasks at the beginning of your study session. This approach allows you to get through the hardest parts while your focus is fresh, making it possible to later engage in easier or more enjoyable tasks.

4.Question

How are auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learning styles perceived differently from effective learning practices?

Answer: Relying on a single learning style is misleading; effective learning happens when you engage multiple senses. By identifying as a specific learner, you might neglect using other methods that could improve understanding and retention.

5.Question

What role does sleep play in your learning capabilities according to the chapter?

Answer: Sleep is crucial as it helps clear toxins from your brain, supports the formation of new synapses, and allows



your brain to consolidate and integrate knowledge, enhancing your overall cognitive function.

6.Question

How can keeping a learning journal help with studying?

Answer:A learning journal encourages reflection on your daily learning experiences, helps identify patterns in your study habits, and allows you to track how various factors, like sleep and location changes, affect your performance and focus.

7.Question

What research conclusions are drawn about listening to music while studying?

Answer:Research indicates that while music can sometimes aid concentration, it can also distract, especially if it's loud or has lyrics. It's essential to experiment personally to determine what works for you.

8.Question

How does the metaphor of the attentional octopus help explain learning?

Answer:The attentional octopus symbolizes how your focus



can pick up various context clues during learning that help retain information. If it gets used to studying in one context, it might struggle to retrieve that information in another.

Chapter 14 | LEARNING SURPRISES: Pssst... Your Worst Traits Can Be Your Best Traits!| Q&A

1.Question

Why do you think slower learners can sometimes excel over faster learners?

Answer:Slower learners, often called 'hiker brains', can take the time to understand concepts deeply and see details that fast thinkers might miss. Their slower pace allows for creative connections and rich understanding, leading to potentially better learning outcomes despite taking longer to arrive at answers.

2.Question

How can playing action video games be beneficial for learning?

Answer:Action video games can enhance focus and concentration by stimulating key brain pathways. Players improve their ability to pick out details and respond quickly,



which translates to better visual acuity and attention in real-world scenarios.

3.Question

What is 'rut think' and how can it hinder creativity?

Answer:'Rut think' refers to mental rigidity resulting from heavily relying on familiar neural pathways. It can lead to a lack of flexibility in thinking, making it difficult to develop new ideas or solutions.

4.Question

What strategies can enhance creativity according to the chapter?

Answer:To boost creativity, engage in learning activities that are completely different from your passion. This 'transfer' of knowledge allows you to make unexpected connections and generate innovative ideas.

5.Question

Why is note-taking by hand recommended over typing?

Answer:Writing notes by hand encourages deeper cognitive processing as it requires you to think critically about what to write, facilitating the formation of neural links that enhance



memory retention.

6.Question

Can you explain how a poor working memory might actually be an advantage?

Answer:A poor working memory forces individuals to simplify and effectively link ideas together, leading to elegant simplifications and heightened creativity. They may also be better at generating new thoughts when one idea slips away.

7.Question

What is the significance of 'transfer' in learning?

Answer:Transfer refers to the ability to apply knowledge or skills learned in one context to different contexts. This promotes creativity and deeper understanding, as concepts from one discipline can illuminate ideas in another.

8.Question

In what way can writing help you grasp difficult concepts?

Answer:By physically writing down challenging material, you engage more of your brain's processes, which aids in



understanding and can help overcome mental barriers in comprehending complex information.

9.Question

How can a slow learner understand a subject just as well as a fast learner, despite taking longer?

Answer:A slow learner often engages with the material more thoroughly, allowing for comprehensive understanding and retention. This depth of engagement can reveal insights and connections that fast learners might overlook.

Chapter 15 | HOW TO DO WELL ON TESTS| Q&A

1.Question

What is the most important preparation step for taking a test?

Answer:Getting a reasonable night's sleep before the test. Without proper rest, other preparation efforts may not matter.

2.Question

How would you know when to leave a difficult problem on a test when you are using the hard-start technique?



Answer: If you find yourself stuck for more than a minute or two, it's time to move on to an easier problem to boost your confidence.

3.Question

Describe two techniques to calm yourself if you begin to feel panicked before a test.

Answer: 1. Practice deep breathing to increase oxygen flow and reduce anxiety. 2. Shift your perspective from seeing the test as a source of fear to viewing it as an opportunity to perform your best.

4.Question

What kind of mental tricks can you use to help yourself catch wrong answers on a test?

Answer: Blink and look away to shift into diffuse mode, then check your answers with fresh eyes, reviewing problems in a different order.

5.Question

How does practicing active recall in the weeks before a test help with stress during the test?

Answer: It reduces stress during the test, as familiarity with



recall techniques helps you feel more prepared and confident.

6.Question

What does the switch from 'you have to learn' to 'you get to learn' signify?

Answer:It signifies a shift from viewing learning as an obligation to seeing it as a privilege and an opportunity for personal growth and discovery.

7.Question

Why is it important to prepare well for tests according to the chapter?

Answer:Well-prepared students are more likely to perform better on tests, which can be stepping stones to future academic and professional opportunities.

8.Question

What strategy does the hard-start technique resemble in problem-solving?

Answer:It resembles the approach of tackling the hardest problems first to engage your brain's diffuse mode and allow for background processing.

9.Question



What impact can learning how to learn effectively have on your future?

Answer: Mastering effective learning techniques can open doors to new opportunities, making you adaptable in a rapidly changing world and better equipped to follow various passions.

10.Question

What should you do if you have three or more 'No' responses on the test preparation checklist?

Answer: It indicates that serious changes might be needed in your test preparation strategies.





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Chapter 16 | GOING FROM “HAVE TO” TO “GET TO”| Q&A

1.Question

What is the significance of changing the phrase from 'you have to learn' to 'you get to learn'?

Answer: Changing from 'have to' to 'get to' transforms learning from an obligation into a privilege. This perspective shift emphasizes the opportunity to grow, explore passions, and make meaningful contributions, rather than simply fulfilling requirements.

2.Question

How can one find motivation in learning when feeling overwhelmed?

Answer: Finding motivation can be achieved by recognizing the potential impacts of learning on personal development and societal contributions. Acknowledging that learning can lead to following passions or solving world problems can inspire you to approach challenges with enthusiasm instead of dread.



3.Question

What three qualities enabled Santiago Ramón y Cajal to succeed despite not being a genius?

Answer:1. ****Persistence:**** Cajal exemplified sticking with difficult subjects and continually returning to them. 2.

****Flexibility:**** He was open to adjusting his viewpoints and admitted mistakes. 3. ****Diverse Interests:**** He kept his passion for art while exploring science, which enriched his thinking and creativity.

4.Question

Why is it important to broaden one's passions in learning?

Answer:Broader interests can open unexpected doors, providing a richer educational experience. In today's fast-changing world, combining knowledge from different fields fosters creativity and adaptability, preparing individuals for unforeseen challenges and opportunities.

5.Question

What is one key strategy suggested for effective learning?

Answer:Interleaving, which involves switching between



different topics or techniques during practice, promotes deeper understanding and prepares learners for a variety of situations, making it easier to adapt skills to new challenges.

6.Question

How does persistence in learning manifest in practice?

Answer: Persistence in learning means honing in on difficult topics consistently, practicing deliberately, and allowing for breaks to let the mind process information. It's about returning to concepts after gaining new insights rather than forcing through frustration.

7.Question

What is a critical mistake in study habits that must be avoided?

Answer: Cramming is a significant pitfall in studying because it fails to build lasting knowledge connections. Instead, learning should be spaced out over time, allowing for deeper understanding and stronger retention of material.

8.Question

How can one effectively utilize the Pomodoro Technique in studying?



Answer: The Pomodoro Technique involves studying intensely for 25 minutes, followed by a short break. This method enhances focus and productivity while allowing the mind to recharge, promoting better retention and understanding.

9. Question

What role does sleep play in the learning process?

Answer: Sleep is crucial as it consolidates learning, allowing dendritic spines in the brain to grow and strengthen.

Adequate sleep improves recall and overall cognitive function, making it essential for effective learning.



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Learning How to Learn Quiz and Test

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Chapter 1 | THE PROBLEM WITH PASSION| Quiz and Test

- 1.Barb Oakley recommends only following your passion to become successful in learning.
- 2.The techniques in the book are aimed at helping everyone improve their learning skills regardless of their current academic standing.
- 3.Barb used the personal story of her struggles to motivate readers to explore diverse interests in learning.

Chapter 2 | EASY DOES IT: Why Trying Too Hard Can Sometimes Be Part of the Problem| Quiz and Test

- 1.Distraction is always detrimental to learning and should be eliminated as much as possible.
- 2.The brain functions in only one mode at a time, either focused or diffuse.
- 3.Taking breaks to engage in diffuse thinking can lead to improved problem-solving and creativity.

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Chapter 3 | I'LL DO IT LATER, HONEST!: Using a Tomato to Beat Procrastination| Quiz and Test

1. Procrastination is often a natural response to avoid difficult tasks, but it can help improve time management skills.
2. The Pomodoro Technique suggests setting a timer for 25 minutes to work on a task followed by a break.
3. Active recall is ineffective for studying because it focuses on rereading rather than retrieving information from memory.





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Chapter 4 | BRAIN-LINKS AND FUN WITH SPACE ALIENS| Quiz and Test

- 1.Santiago Ramón y Cajal was known for his contributions to the field of modern physics.
- 2.Neuroplasticity refers to the brain's ability to change and adapt through learning.
- 3.Dendrites are the parts of neurons responsible for sending signals to other neurons.

Chapter 5 | THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TEACHER’S DESK| Quiz and Test

- 1.Al was successful in learning chemistry despite initially struggling with science.
- 2.Al's teaching methods included avoiding interactions with his students during his learning process.
- 3.The Pomodoro Technique is one of the learning strategies that Al implemented to improve his study habits.

Chapter 6 | LEARNING WHILE YOU SLEEP: How to Wake Up Smarter| Quiz and Test

- 1.Sleep does not play a significant role in learning and memory retention.



2.Dendritic spines grow during sleep and aid in enhancing brain connectivity.

3.Cramming is a more effective study technique than spaced learning for retaining information.





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Chapter 7 | SCHOOL BAGS, LOCKERS, AND YOUR ATTENTIONAL OCTOPUS| Quiz and Test

1. Working memory is symbolized by a school bag and represents a limited storage capacity.
2. Long-term memory is fully localized in one area of the brain and does not require practice to retain information effectively.
3. The attentional octopus can hold a variable number of items, with an average capacity of around four pieces of information.

Chapter 8 | SLICK TRICKS TO BUILD YOUR MEMORY| Quiz and Test

1. Nelson Dellis originally struggled with forgetfulness before becoming a memory champion.
2. Long-term memory only consists of facts and does not include images.
3. The Memory Palace Technique involves using a familiar location to store and recall information.



Chapter 9 | WHY BRAIN-LINKS ARE IMPORTANT: (and How Not to Back a Car into a Ditch)| Quiz and Test

1. Brain-links are formed only during the initial stages of learning.
2. Experts possess numerous well-connected brain-links that allow for swift information processing.
3. Distractions can enhance working memory and facilitate learning.





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Chapter 10 | LEARNING WITH CLUBS AND GROUPS, FINDING YOUR MISSION, AND HOW TERRY NEARLY BURNED DOWN THE SCHOOL| Quiz and Test

1. Terry Sejnowski was labeled a 'troublemaker' because he enjoyed asking questions in class. True or False?
2. Terry's pivotal moment in identifying his mission involved his interest in languages and literature. True or False?
3. Terry learned that collaboration with bright minds and mentors significantly enhanced his educational experience at Princeton. True or False?

Chapter 11 | HOW TO PUMP UP YOUR BRAIN| Quiz and Test

1. Exercise has no impact on enhancing learning and memory.
2. BDNF helps in supporting the growth of new neurons and enhancing neuronal communication.
3. A diet high in sugar and processed ingredients is beneficial for cognitive function and memory.



Chapter 12 | MAKING BRAIN-LINKS: How Not to Learn from a Comic Book| Quiz and Test

1. Brain-links are defined as well-practiced thought-trails that hinder becoming an expert in a subject.
2. Deliberate practice focuses on working through challenging material rather than easy, familiar content.
3. Interleaving involves practicing the same topic repeatedly to enhance learning flexibility.



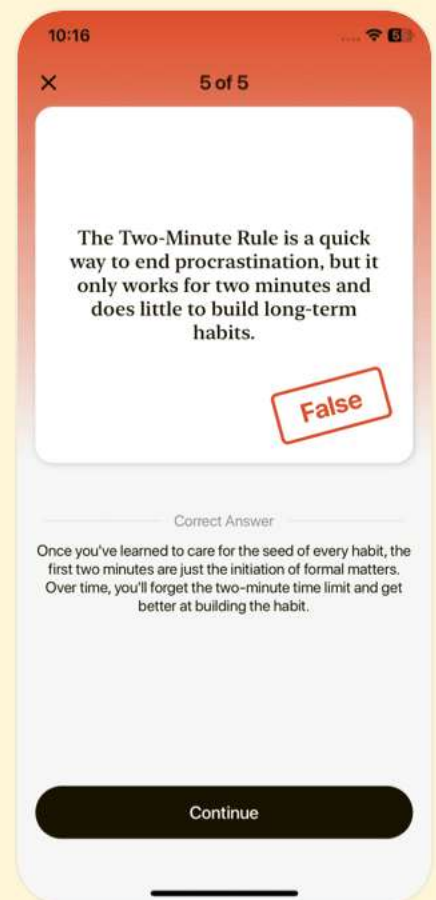


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Chapter 13 | ASKING YOURSELF IMPORTANT QUESTIONS: Should You Listen to Music While You're Studying?| Quiz and Test

1. Reflecting on study habits can help identify effective learning strategies.
2. Relying solely on a preferred learning style improves learning retention.
3. Aiming for at least eight hours of sleep can dramatically improve learning outcomes.

Chapter 14 | LEARNING SURPRISES: Pssst... Your Worst Traits Can Be Your Best Traits!| Quiz and Test

1. Slower learners can excel just as well, if not better, than fast thinkers.
2. Handwritten notes are less effective than typed notes for memory retention.
3. Engaging in different activities outside of one's passion has no effect on skill enhancement in that passion.

Chapter 15 | HOW TO DO WELL ON TESTS| Quiz and Test

1. Tests enhance learning more effectively than



studying alone.

2.Cramming is the most effective way to prepare for tests according to the chapter.

3.Deep breathing techniques can help to reduce panic during tests.





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Chapter 16 | GOING FROM “HAVE TO” TO “GET TO”| Quiz and Test

1. Santiago Ramón y Cajal won a Nobel Prize despite being a self-proclaimed genius.
2. Learning should be viewed as a privilege rather than a chore.
3. Focusing solely on one passion is the most effective way to learn.





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