# How To Build a Mnemonics Memory Palace

**Book one and two.**

Sjur Midttun

# How to Build a Mnemonic Memory Palace:

# The Forgotten Craft of Memorizing With Total Recall.

# Book One (of two)

By Sjur Midttun

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# Author's Preface

Most books on memory palaces start with a historic explanation for the phenomenon, and then evolves in a very literary style without a good focus on how one can learn how to make memory palaces.

This book is different.

It's a practical guide to how you anyone can create memory palaces, and how you can use them to memorize things. I have tried to cut down my writing so that it is more focused. I hope the book takes less time to read, and provides more information than other books on the topic. If you agree, I've achieved my goal.

This is the complete set of both books in the series volume of a two-volume set. If you like these books, please support my writing by leaving a review on Amazon. This helps others find the books.

Thanks!

Sjur Midttun, 5th of June, 2016


**To my father, Knut.**

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# Chapter one: Remembering is seeing

How good is your memory? If I asked you to take three to five minutes and memorize the following list of 20 objects, how many items would you be able to remember? Try it now, and see. Set aside three to five minutes, and memorize as many of these objects as possible, in sequence.

Fish, carpet, cigarette, pencil, hamburger, phone, football, umbrella, key, beard, typewriter, car tire, dinner plate, ear, pillow, boat, apple tree, toothbrush, necklace, a bottle of beer.

## How did you do?

If you're like most people, you are probably able to memorize six or seven of these objects in sequence over the course of a few minutes. Most people are not able to memorize much more than nine objects, and virtually nobody more than ten.

One of the reasons is probably that most people memorize lists by repetition. By repeating the list (again and again and again), they manage to remember. Give them long enough time, and most people would be able to remember the whole list of 20 objects if they didn't give up because of boredom.

But with a time constraint of five minutes, the majority will only be able to memorize up to max ten objects.

Let's experiment.

## Thinking differently about memorization

In the following five minutes you will learn how to memorize all these 20 objects in just five minutes or less, only looking over the list once. No repetition needed. The technique you will learn lies at the heart of traditional memory techniques, which are also called mnemonics.

But first - a word of caution. The system will involve absurdity. It will involve being silly. Memory techniques use "silliness" and absurdity for a reason. It gets results. So stay open-minded to the experiment. Follow these principles, the results will speak for themselves.

With this technique, you can memorize lists of 20, 50, 100 in fact as many objects as you want, in sequence, just by looking at each entry once. No limits, just like your natural memory has no practical limit. And imagine, if you can do

this kind of memory feat, memorizing any information is possible.

The thing about memory is that the trick isn't really to learn information, but to recall it. The human brain can store an enormous amount of information, but in most cases, this information is not at one's fingertips. Using memory techniques, information once learned will be at your fingertips, ready to use.

So what's the secret?

## Visualization

Well, the basis of memory techniques is visualization.

Some people are naturally good at this, but others need more practice. But everyone can do it. If I ask you to close your eyes and imagine the front door of the house you live in, you will have no problem doing that. Or your office building, or the interior of your car, or the second floor of your house, etc.

You can even visualize things you haven't seen, like a pink orange or a pin striped apple. Which brings creativity to the picture. A brain is a creative tool, and in many cases, it can be fooled into believing that it sees things that cannot be there.

Don't worry. I'm not asking you to start hallucinating, but if you can visualize things, you can memorize things. And this technique for memorization can, therefore, be called creative visualization. Because at the heart of mnemonics is coming up with images or scenes.

## Linking/association/chaining

To link objects together into a list, we also use something that can be called the linking technique, or chaining. A list is a simply a chain of objects. And a list, in mnemonics, is a chain of images or scenes.

So memorizing a list means making a chain of visual objects. And the way you must link the objects together is by using what I call "creative images."

Let me explain what I mean. Here's our list:

Fish, carpet, cigarette, pencil, hamburger, phone, football, umbrella, key, beard, typewriter, car tire, dinner plate, ear, pillow, boat, apple tree, toothbrush, necklace and a bottle of beer.

The first word of the list is fish. The second word is carpet. Come up with a creative image or a short, animated scene that links these two objects together, just make sure the image/scene is absurd, illogical, eye-catching and vivid.

## Trick #1: Make the image absurd!

The more absurd the scene is, the better. This is how you will remember. This is why you won't have to repeat over and over again. This is how it sticks to your brain.

You just have to see, really see, the image before your inner eye once, and you will not forget it.

It will stick to your mind for as long as you want. Which brings us to trick number two.

## Trick #2: Really see the image in your mind.

In a way, the method is not about memorizing but simply seeing. Visualizing. In the beginning, this may be difficult, and it may take time. Not everyone is used to thinking creatively and visualizing, but after a while, it will be easier. And most people quickly get to a point where this takes no time at all.

But no matter what your level of imagination or visualization skills, you need to see the images in your mind.

## Trick #3: Make the images as vivid as possible.

To remember images, you should make them vivid. Place them in a bright light, see them in full color, see the images up close. Use all your senses, not just sight, but hearing, feeling and smell, too. Make up a scene that is rich in these details.

And an animation is better than still-images. This way you are not making just one image, one snapshot, but rather a series of images just like a video-clip or an animation.

## Trick #4: Place yourself in the images.

The more active you make yourself in these images, the easier it will be to remember. Place yourself in the scenes whenever it feels natural. And see it from this "point of view" perspective.

When you place yourself in these scenes, you also have a unique possibility to add sensory details to them. Does your scene involve an apple? In your mind's eye, see that you're taking a bite of the apple. Be specific. What kind of apple is it? A dark red, sweet apple? A green, tart one? Take a bite and "feel" how it feels.

That's it.

These are the basic tips. Later we will expand on them to empower your memory even further and make it as fool-proof as possible. But for the moment: let's start memorizing the list of 20 objects. I will show you how to do it using creative mnemonic association but feel free to use your own images/scenes.

This will take probably 20 to 30 minutes, just because I'm taking my time here in explaining what's going on. Once you get started with mnemonics, however, you will be able to memorize such a list in a much shorter time, more like 5 to 10 minutes.

### Let's memorize the list object by object

FISH and CARPET. Make an absurd connection. For instance: see a carpet that is made of fish, sewn together into a whole carpet. Close your eyes and really see this absurd image. Work on the image, too. Imagine yourself stepping on the carpet with your bare feet, and feeling the oily fish under your feet. Perhaps the fish are still alive and kicking.

See this FISH-CARPET, and feel yourself walking on it. Once you've seen it before your inner eye, forget about the link and move to the next one.

CIGARETTE. This time you must link CARPET and CIGARETTE. Perhaps you're lighting up a big, rolled-up carpet instead of a cigarette. Work on the image. Expand it. Feel how heavy the carpet is. See yourself putting this carpet-cigarette into your mouth, and lighting it up. Perhaps you have to roll the carpet up yourself before putting it into your mouth and lighting it, and once you've done that, see yourself inhaling the CARPET-CIGARETTE.

Close your eyes if you have to, and take your time. Once you made a strong, absurd link, and once you've seen the image before your inner eye, move on to the next link. Don't give the CARPET CIGARETTE link another thought. Just forget about it and move on.

The next object on our list is PENCIL. So link CIGARETTE and PENCIL. See yourself writing on a big piece of paper, only the pencil you're using is a long, smoking cigarette. As you write, ashes come off the tip of the cigarette. Make the cigarette a bit bigger than a normal cigarette. "Feel" the texture of it. It is a cigarette; only you're using it to write with. See the image and forget about it move on. You can use other creative images if you like.

Anything as long as it is absurd, illogical and vivid. My examples are just illustrations.

Perhaps you're sharpening a cigarette in a pencil sharpener. Anything, as long as you make the connection absurd and as long as you see it before your inner eye. Then move on. Once you've made the connection, forget about it.

The next object is HAMBURGER.

I'm sure you've understood the principle. Try and come up with a creative association between PENCIL and HAMBURGER.

Maybe you're eating a nice Big Mac; only there's a pencil inside the bun instead if the hamburger. You're taking a big bite, and you crack your teeth on the pencil.

As always...work on the image. "Feel" the taste of the led in your mouth, for example. And see the image before you. You're eating a hamburger, but it's full of pencils! Silly? Yes. Does it work? Wait and see.

Make the image more vivid: add a couple of pencils for good measure. See a hamburger, full of pencils, but on top of that, it's also got a huge pencil stuck through it. Make it vivid. See the image. And forget about it. Move on.

The next object is PHONE. Link hamburger and phone. The phone is ringing; you're answering it only it's got a hamburger strapped to each end of the receiver. Two really big burgers. Remember: make the image vivid – and making objects bigger will help, too.

You're answering the phone, and you've all of a sudden got a hamburger on your ear, and you're talking into another hamburger. Close your eyes, and really "see" the image. Then just forget it.

Next object is BALL. Link telephone and ball. Picture yourself on a football field kicking around a giant telephone. Remember to make the image vivid: which color is the telephone? How big is it? Which design? Be specific. See yourself in the situation, on the field, kicking a giant phone, scoring a goal. Maybe the phone is ringing, too, just to make it extra vivid. Close your eyes and "see" the image.

Next object. UMBRELLA. Link ball and umbrella. Make one up yourself, or use this image: It's raining footballs from the sky, and you have to open an umbrella to cover your head. Make the image vivid. "See" how the balls bounce as the hit the ground. "Look" up at the sky, and see all the footballs pouring down. See it, and then forget about it.

KEY. The link is between UMBRELLA and KEY. Try unlocking your front door lock

with a big umbrella. Really see yourself trying to insert the umbrella into the lock, thinking the umbrella is a KEY.

Make the image specific: it's your front door. What does it look like? Make the image vivid: add a few neighbors to the image. They're watching you trying to unlock your door with an umbrella. They're shaking their heads and thinking that you've finally lost it. Really see the image, then move on.

BEARD. See a person with a beard, only instead of a beard, he's got keys hanging from his face. Make the image vivid, introduce a violent element. Perhaps the key's are sewn onto his face.

Notice that if you make an image violent, it will stick more easily to your memory. So really see this image.

We're now halfway there. I'm elaborate because I want you to grasp a lot of elements, and because this is the first time you are using the method. After a short while, you will be making these links in no time at all.

Let's move on.

TYPEWRITER. Link BEARD and TYPEWRITER. See yourself typing on a typewriter (make it big- a giant typewriter), and the keys are bearded. The whole keyboard is covered by a beard. Make sure you really see the image, and that you see the typewriter. Make a little scene: feed paper into the typewriter, and start typing. Make the scene vivid: "feel" the bearded keys.

Next object: CAR TIRE. See a car with TYPEWRITERS instead of TIRES. Make it specific: how will a car with typewriters instead of tires behave? It's a bumpy ride. See it. Move on. PLATE. TIRE and PLATE. See yourself eating dinner; only the food is served on a big TYRE instead of a PLATE. The tire is the plate. Make it specific: what are you eating. Make it vivid: "feel" the texture of the tire. See the image and move on. EAR. The connection is PLATE and EAR. See a person with huge plates instead of ears. Make the image vivid by adding some action: see the plates, and then see someone breaking them. Make it specific: which color are the plates? Texture? An alternative image could be a person with big, heavy plate-earrings. Make it vivid by adding a lot of weight to the plates. See it. PLATE - EAR. Move on.

PILLOW. The link is EAR - PILLOW. See yourself sleeping in your bed, resting your head on a giant ear. "Feel" the ear. Make the image vivid: make the ear really big. See yourself resting your head on it. Make it even more vivid: slightly disgusting, actually., with pieces of ear wax on your head from resting your head

on it. The more vividly you can see this, the better.

BOAT. See someone sitting on a giant PILLOW in the middle of a river. See yourself sitting on the pillow, like you're sitting in a boat. Perhaps the pillow-boat has got sails: bed-sheets. See the sails, see yourself on the boat, steering the pillow. PILLOW - BOAT. Next link-pair is BOAT - APPLE TREE. See a big boat stuck in the ground, standing upright, like a tree. Apples hanging from it, like from an apple-tree. See yourself grabbing an apple from the upright boat-tree. Taste the apple. Perhaps it's really sour. See the image. An upright boat, like a tree, with apples hanging from it.

Next link is APPLE TREE - TOOTHBRUSH. See yourself in your bathroom brushing your teeth with a tree. See yourself putting toothpaste on the tree. Take your time to really see the image. Two more to go. NECKLACE. TOOTHBRUSH - NECKLACE. See someone you know wearing a necklace; only it's got toothbrushes hanging from it. Big toothbrushes. And all the brushes have got tooth paste on them, sticking to the person's neck. TOOTHBRUSH - NECKLACE.

The last image is a BOTTLE OF BEER. The link is NECKLACE - BOTTLE OF BEER. See yourself drinking a bottle of beer; only it's got a lob necklace in it. When you drink from the bottle of beer, the necklace drops into your mouth. Feel how cold the necklace is. See yourself spitting the necklace out. Really see it.

And that's it.

## You finished the 20 objects, now test yourself

That's all the 20 objects. If you've followed my instructions, and actually "seen" the images, they will now be stuck in your memory. If you can't recall one of the objects, it's because you didn't "see" the image, or because the picture wasn't absurd or vivid enough. In that case, go back and make that particular link better. Now, however, stop reading and recall the entire list, beginning with the first object which was FISH. Do it now.

How did you do? How many objects did you remember the first time you took this test today? And now you probably know them all. No endless repetition, you just went over the list one time.

The images are stuck in your memory just from making a single, creative, absurd association. Imagine what you can achieve if you apply these principles to other areas. Like learning languages, memorizing text books, geographical facts, individual chapters of a book or an article, etc.

## Testing it out

Now. Close your book and recite the list of 20 objects again. It's still there! Try it.

See? Now, is that amazing, or what? You haven't memorized the old fashioned/normal way, by repetition. You only looked at the list once.

When was the last time you read ten pages of a book and learned something equally powerful? Do take some time and appreciate the potential of what you've just done. And just imagine what you can be able to memorize if you can commit a list of 20 meaningless objects in just 20 to 30 minutes. Forget about the objects in themselves; they're meaningless. The key here is that your brain can memorize much more than you think it can, and you can help it do this in a much shorter time than you thought possible.

If you are struggling with some of the images, it's either because you didn't make the scene absurd, violent or vivid enough. Or that you didn't see it in your mind. If you are having problems recalling the list, go back and work on your visualization for the link in question. Maybe you should make your own images, and not use my examples.

## You can't forget it once you just *see* it.

One of the major advantages of the technique is that once you've linked, you can simply ignore it and move on. This is how you are going to save a lot of time.

You have now understood the very basic foundation for any efficient memorization. Let's go on to see how we can use this to make memory palaces.

# Chapter two: Ancient knowledge forgotten

See before your inner eye a house or building. It could be the house or building where you currently live. In fact, choose exactly that.

Make this first memory palace about the place where you're currently living.

Be specific. You do not need to come up with anything that is not there. In fact, you now need only to try to see exactly what is there. What does your current house look like?

**Start at the beginning.**

What does the front door look like? What's its color? Texture? Is it made of wood or metal? I guess some of the readers could be living in a tent or an igloo, in that case, try to see the part where you enter the main room. I hope nobody is currently living on the street, but in case they are, which street is it?

But seriously…Really see the front door.

Enter the house through the front door, and imagine walking around the various rooms as they appear naturally going through the house. Your primary job is to note details like furniture, art, and any object like lamps, TV sets, vases, bookshelves, etc.

It's amazing how much you can remember, or simply see, by visiting your house in your mind.

Go through the whole of your house, room by room, object by object. Take a few minutes to do this, then return to the book.

What you have done now, by simply thinking about what your house looks like, is enter a mental construction that could become a memory palace, just like the palace of Hannibal Lector.

**Storing information**

A memory palace is a place you know well, that you can easily visualize. Typically a house with rooms that contain fixed objects that serve as pegs for information.

The information you are about to learn in this book will help you set up at least ten memory palaces, most likely more, giving you the possibility to memorize

potentially hundreds, even thousands of keywords. Keywords that will trigger the underlying information you are storing.

You can store/memorize any information or fact. Text books, lectures, articles, etc., in addition to pure facts, like the popular examples of the presidents of the USA, world capitals, illnesses, medicine, the periodic table, lists of Shakespeare's plays, etc. Don't worry about what you can store in your memory palaces because the truth is that you can store anything you like in them. You just need the right techniques.

The method of memory palaces is one of the best ways of memorizing "boring" facts that you normally would have to simply commit to memory by endless repetition. Particularly information that needs to be kept in a particular sequence.

You have already seen how creative mnemonic association will help you remember objects in a list. Now you will see how these lists can be stored inside mental images of houses.

Memory palaces.

## Mysterious knowledge from the past

The concept of memory palaces is a fascinating one. The word itself has a certain ring to it. It plays with our imagination. Maybe because this old knowledge is little known.

It's something mysterious.

The word "palace" suggests something extravagant, and "memory" itself is elusive for most people...something mysterious. Put together, well, the effect is quite astonishing.

Also, most people don't know what a memory palace is, so there is an element of secrecy. Secret knowledge that has been passed on to selected people only.

Maybe we find the idea of memory palaces appealing because memory itself is rather mysterious. We don't know how it works, and our society places great value in people who manage to memorize lots of information. A good memory is the trait of a genius, in a way.

But it's considered to be a type of genius that can't be learned.

The thing is that it can.

And in this book, you will.

Learning how to make memory palaces should be obligatory knowledge for any child. But unfortunately, most schools are ignorant about these fantastic techniques. And that's why most people have never heard about them. These days, where everybody has electronic devices that hook them up to the internet to remember most things, the use of human memory seems to be completely ignored. But at least in scholarly activity, memory is still the most important tool. Any student that is lucky enough to learn these methods during their school years can seriously improve their grades with them. But that doesn't mean that adults and elderly people will not have a use for them. Learning things should never go out of fashion, and the very act of memorization using memory palaces could improve your "true" memory. This could be good news for people who struggle with Alzheimer's and dementia. Have you ever wondered why many stage actors get to a ripe old age completely alert? One explanation could be the fact that they've spent their entire lives memorizing lines.

Memory is a muscle, so use it more.

### Famous from media and literature

It is certainly true that the concept of memory palaces is virtually unknown to most people. And those few who have heard about it don't understand the method.

How did you hear about memory palaces?

Few people know about memory palaces from the writings of Marco Tulio Cicero (writer, orator), Marcus Fabius Quintillian (rhetorician), Giordano Bruno (philosopher) and their likes. On the other hand, you might have heard about memory palaces from films, TV shows or read about them in contemporary books.

Particularly in recent years.

We mentioned Hannibal Lector. And the British TV series "Sherlock", which portrays a modern day Sherlock Holmes, spent a large part of one of the episodes showing us how Sherlock Holmes had constructed a large, impressive memory palace to store a huge number of information of the cases he was working on. He had even included memories from his childhood, for instance, memories about his dog.

Holmes, in the series, used the memory palace not just for retrieving information, but to control his mind and stay calm under pressure.

## Hannibal, the cannibal

The terrifying, yet popular, serial killer used the images of a huge, elaborate, virtual Italian palace, with many rooms and objects to memorize all kinds of facts, including art history, and, like Holmes, old cases from the time he worked as a analyst/psychiatrist. I say his memory palace was virtual because he never actually lived in this palace. It was made up from scratch, a truly visionary feat.

No matter how you have heard about memory palaces, I am sure that you are convinced that memory palaces are something that is too complicated for you to use in your day to day life.

But this is wrong. It is easier than you think. Forget about palaces, think about the house you live in.

You already have the tools needed to create and use memory palaces, and the basic principle is extremely easy to learn. If you started today, within a few short weeks, you could have improved your memory skills substantially. And memorized quite a bit of factual information just for fun and training.

And, as mentioned, you could be using memory palaces to memorize almost any type of information whether it's textbooks, lectures, languages, or any fact.

# Chapter three: What is a memory palace?

A memory palace is a technique used to store and memorize information. Mainly information that needs to be remembered in a certain sequence. And as the name suggests the main idea is to use rooms, houses, buildings, palaces or simply places that you know, as "storage rooms" for the information that you wish to memorize.

In theory, the larger the house, the better, that's why the idea of a "palace" has stuck. The Greeks also called the technique "memory theatre," which is interesting when thinking about the fact that you have to make creative mnemonic scenes, often dramatic scenes, to remember things.

The Greeks were genuinely interested in drama. And saw its potential, also for improving your memory.

**A simple technique**

The technique is simple, and memorizing information in this manner is a matter of visualization rather than anything else. Seeing things. And seeing does not involve any activity on the part of the observer. Seeing is simple.

But regarding memory palaces, and mnemonic visualization, you need to treat your content/the information you want to learn in a particular way for it to stick.

There hasn't been much scientific study on memory palaces, although some researchers, journalists, and writers have written about it. In Russia, in the 1920's there was the particularly interesting case of a person just called "S" (Solomon Veniaminovich Shereshevsky). A neuro psychologist named Alexander Luria studied the memory abilities of "S" in great detail, over many years, and also wrote quite a few books n the subject, including "The Mind of a Mnemonist." One of the few, perhaps the only, books that scientifically studied the phenomenon of mnemonics.

One of the latest main stream books on the subject is "Moonwalking With Einstein," which is an interesting read, although not very valuable for those wanting to learn the method.

Even though scientists and researchers have been mostly arrogant about

studying the fantastic results of those who use memory palaces, and literature is sparse on the subject, the results from those using these techniques are crystal clear: our brains find it easy to remember spaces/rooms/locations, and objects in them. Attaching information to these objects using creative visualization can make anyone able to memorize volumes of information, without much work.

## It all begins with a room

The simplest form of a memory palace is a room.

You can either use rooms that are entirely made up by your imagination, or rooms that exist. The latter is the best in the beginning, even though we will explore virtual memory palaces as well.

To understand the technique better, let's do some more experimenting. I've asked you to think about your house. Now, reflect on a room that you know well, perhaps the living-room or bedroom of this house. Close your eyes right now, and really "see" this room as you remember it.

Do you see your living room? Perhaps you live in a one room apartment, in that case, visualize this room. Notice that you don't need to put a lot of effort into it, do you, like the room you want to remember simply pops up in your head. What does it look like?

## A mental walk through

Take a mental walk through of this one room, going from left to right. See particular places/locations in the room as well as furniture and objects that are placed within it.

Typical locations are corners, the floor, the center of the floor, the ceiling, the windowsill, etc. Typical objects/furniture are sofas, TV sets, sound systems, book shelves, coffee tables, chairs, lamps, paintings, cases with flowers, musical instruments, etc.

These objects, and also some pure locations like "the left-hand corner" or "the windowsill," will serve as "pegs" for you to hook information on later.

## Look for pegs

Pay attention to the word "peg." In normal life, a peg is, of course, something you can hang or place clothes and objects on. And pegs in a memory palace are there for us to hang information into it.

A peg, in our particular case, is a 1) location,2) object or 3) furniture that exists

in a room of your memory palace. Simple as that.

The concept of a "memory palace" sounds grandiose and complicated, but this one room that you have been visualizing now can be a simple memory palace in itself. Just like that. Simply your living room. Or your bedroom. Although a typical memory palace consists of several rooms of a house.

### The bigger, the better, but small is OK

If you live in a great, big house with hundreds of rooms, you have a very good basis for making a sensational memory palace. And when you start getting interested in memory palaces, you will actively seek out places that you can later use. Perhaps even a proper palace.

But any old house will do for now. So for now, think about the house where you currently live. The next thing you need to do is make a few decisions.

For each room of your house, you decide on which objects/furniture you will use as pegs. This is something you simply decide on at the beginning. These never change. Each peg is like a station/a bus stop, and as you mentally walk through the rooms of your house, you always walk around in the same sequence. This makes the journey through your house sequential.

Let me explain.

### A set journey through each room

If, when going through the room left to right, the sofa is placed before the lamp, and then you get to the TV set and then the bookshelf, then this is the route you will always "walk through" your memory palace.

Things are placed exactly as they are placed in the real life room, and when using the memory palace, you need to walk through these rooms in the same direction, left to right.

Clockwise.

By setting the direction, you will be able to memorize things in a sequence. Just as you know that the number five comes after four, and the number nine comes before ten, you know that going from left to right, your sofa comes before the lamp, and the bookshelf after the TV-set, as an example.

Naturally,  as you move through the rooms of your house, all objects/pegs will pop up where they belong, in a fixed order. An order that you know instantly.

So, how do I memorize?

When you want to memorize something, you find a keyword. This keyword will trigger the information you want to memorize. Obviously, you need a keyword that is easy to visualize, and then it's simply a matter of hanging this keyword on the peg of your room.

Let's say you want to memorize a shopping list (which is an annoying, but ideal example to start out with) you then start at the first room of the house and walk through it peg by peg/object by object, and associate each item from your shopping list with a peg from your memory palace.

You only need to do this once, but you need to see these scenes. And you need to make the scenes absurd, exaggerated in size, violent if at all possible, funny, etc.

### An example

Say you want to remember the keyword horse. You then need to "place" the image of a horse on a piece of furniture inside your memory palace. For example, your bed. How? Only close your eyes, imagine being in your bedroom, and imagine seeing your bed and that there is a great, big horse on top of it.

Simply see this image for a few seconds, and then let go. The fact that you placed a foreign object on your bed will help you remember the keyword.

And that's all there is.

Remembering lists of information with the help of a memory palace means placing objects along the route of a walk-through of a particular room or house, hooking objects onto pre-determined "pegs" in the rooms of the house.

In theory, merely placing the "foreign" objects on your pegs will help. But as we have seen with creative mnemonic visualization, the more absurd you can make the association between peg and object, the better.

### Your own house/home

From literature, there are a few examples of memory palaces. The famous, fictional figure Hannibal Lector had a great, interesting palace while living in Florence, Italy. And a particular interest for art objects and antique furniture. This helped him build a huge memory palace. The fantastic thing about Lector was that he built his palace from his imagination. In the beginning, we will only use hoses, rooms, and objects that we know from real life. Things we can easily visualize.

And when you start making your first memory palace in just a little while, you will simply use the house you currently live in, its rooms and objects, as they are.

No, you will not use all the objects that you find in the rooms of your house, but choose some of them. These objects will serve as pegs. And it is to these pegs you can attach information you want to remember.

## It's a matter of looking

To continue for a moment with Hannibal Lector, beforehand he had delegated all the rooms in his house to various subjects. Let's say he wanted to remember some fact about an Italian painter, for example, well then, he mentally went into one of the rooms of his house dedicated to Italian painters, and simply had a look around. He saw the pegs, and this triggered the information that he had memorized earlier.

Just as an example, let's say you wanted to memorize 20 prominent Italian painters, and stick some information to them. You could then decide to devote a certain room of your house to this task, let's say your living room. You would then associate 20 pegs of your living room with images or substitute images (we will get back to this) of the Italian painters in question, together with other types of information that you want to remember, like year of birth, main works, style, etc. Whenever you need to retrieve that information, you simply "visit" your living room in your mind's eye.

## Two aspects of the technique

As you can see, there are two aspects to these techniques. First, you need to come up with the memory palaces you wish to use and decide on which objects to use for each room.

Then there is the actual memorization, which we call creative mnemonic visualization. This is all about "filling" your memory palaces with information.

If you want to store some information permanently, you should devote one or more memory palaces to this, and keep other memory palaces free for "on the spot" memorization. My suggestion is that you come up with between ten to fifteen memory palaces. This will give you freedom both to store plenty of information long term and also being able to have "free" memory space available for on the spot memorization. Don't worry about this right now, because I will show you step by step what you need to do.

Examples of permanent storage could be geographical facts, relevant books and

text books, important facts for you to remember, etc. And examples of "on the spot" information would be an interesting book or an article that you just read, card games, memory tricks, speeches, certain books or textbooks, particular chapters for exams, etc.

The other aspect of the technique is that you need to translate keywords into easily imaginable images that you may attach to your pegs. Some keywords are easier to visualize than others, but even the difficult ones are most of the time fully manageable. The trick is simply to come up with substitute images. As we will see shortly.

As mentioned, in a few hours from now you will already have ten complete memory palaces to work on. Just be a little patient, and do pay attention...because we will take this step by step.

**Short Recap**

So...a memory palace is your mental image of a house you know, with rooms that contain furniture/objects/locations that serve as "pegs" for you to store information.

There is no limit to how many memory palaces you can have, as your brain loves these types of memories.

A good starting point is using the house you currently live in.

Sit down and have a go at visualizing what your house looks like. Then walk through the house and see what you got right, and what you missed.

# Chapter four: No need to be a genius, just make it absurd

We don't know why memory palaces work, but it most likely has to do with our genuinely needed ability to orient ourselves in our environment as a matter of urgency. Our ancestors from tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, even millions of years ago needed to hunt animals to survive.

And this had to do with orienting oneself in the terrain. Remembering places of interest. Judging distances. This relationship between our eyes and our brains/memory is certainly an important one.

### Our brain loves absurd, strange, funny things

And in addition to loving spaces/locations and objects placed in spaces/locations, our brains are particularly fond of things that are not logical. And this is an important piece of advice for making the association between pegs in your palace, and the objects representing your keywords.

Our brains, or rather our memory (as we do not know what memory is), loves absurd, surreal things. This could be a simple, misplaced object, like a horse on your bed, or it could be a absurd image that would never appear in real life.

In practical, mnemonic life, the more absurd you make the associations between peg and keyword, the better. This may seem strange, but if you stop for a minute and think about it, you will see that it makes sense not to make sense.

It could be all about getting noticed.

And things that are out of the ordinary are more noticeable.

Situations that are funny, extreme or absurd are easier to remember. As we have mentioned, violent and sexually explicit images are also great. As is exaggerating the size of objects, seeing animation rather than static images, and placing oneself in the scenes to get sensory impressions.

So, when you, in a short while, start placing information in your memory palaces, I will remind you to create small, elaborate scenes that are absurd, funny, exaggerated in size, violent or sexual, etc. This is what will make you remember.

## An example of creative visualization

Let's say that you are imagining standing in your living room looking at your sofa, which is part of your memory palace.

You want to remember the word "fish." The way to associate or link this information to that particular peg of your memory palace is to make an absurd or unusual connection/image that combines fish and sofa. Any absurd connection between that sofa and some image of a fish.

Perhaps you imagine that your sofa is made out of fish.

Now, this is something you most likely have never seen. Even so, your brain can "see" it if you let it. Just imagine the image. Your sofa, made out of fish.

See how you sit down on your sofa and feel the slimy fish as you do it. Maybe the fish are alive? See how they are wriggling and struggling. All of them sewn together on the surface of the sofa.

Absurd? Yes. That is why you will remember it.

Note, too, that you are introducing your sensory input to the scene. You are sitting down on the sofa, perhaps touching it with your hand, and then feeling a slimy fish. This will help you remember something. In fact, the more "real" you make the absurd image, the better it will stick.

Another trick is to exaggerate the size of the objects. So, with this image, make the fish big. Perhaps so big that they manage to chew off a part of your bum as you sit down on them.

See what I mean? Make it absurd, vivid, exaggerated, eye catching, place yourself in the scene and "feel" what it feels like.

## It only takes a few seconds

Most people, when they first learn the method, thinks that these types of visualization will necessarily take a long time.

But the truth is that they don't. Perhaps it will take a little extra effort in the beginning. But after a while...mere seconds. If that.

The world record of memorizing a deck of cards is around 43 seconds, and this exact method was used. So in other words, with training, these visualizations need not take a long time.

The image that your sofa is made of fish, and that you're sitting down on them, takes only a few seconds to make. With training, less. But you will remember it

for a very long time. It will be glued to your memory. This is the fundamental secret of memory palaces. Making your images vivid, absurd and eye catching.

Hannibal Lector used a completely imaginary memory palace, made from scratch, using his imagination only. You will base your first memory palace on the house you currently live in.

## You don't need to be a genius

In addition to Hannibal Lector, we have seen some examples from television and literature where memory palaces are shown to be fascinating, mental constructs, devised and used by eccentric geniuses. But in real life, however, the basic concept of a memory palace is much simpler. And even boring, middle-aged nobodies can make them!

The great thing about memory palaces is that you don't have to be a genius to use them. Although the results are equally fantastic.

## Recap

Your brain remembers your rooms and spaces quite easily. No effort needed. And the more absurd you make the connections, the more easily your brain will remember.

It helps, also, to add sensory data, like your reaction to how it feels to touch certain objects, for example, the sofa that was made out of fish.

Exaggerating the sizes of objects also helps to remember them.

# Chapter five: Your first memory palace

You may be living in a small, studio apartment with only one or two rooms. You may live in a bigger house with four, five or six rooms, or you may be living in a huge house with dozens of rooms.

But in any case, you are good to go forward with whatever size house you have.

Later in the book, you will see how to use other locations for your memory palace collection, so do not worry even if you feel that your first memory palace is too small.

### The walk through

As mentioned, an important thing about memory palaces is that we want to create a particular route for mentally walking through the house. This route is the sequence of pegs. The most natural thing to do is to start with the front door and then walk through each room of the house as it is laid out.

In fact, we will start on the outside of your front door. This may bring some additional details. If you live in an apartment building, you could start outside your apartment building to gain a few extra locations/pegs.

Without knowing what your house looks like, let's just assume that we begin this first memory palace outside the front door of a house. Let's, once more, do a simple walk through of your house, without deciding on any pegs...simply having a look.

### The front door

Close your eyes and imagine the front door of your home. See the details on it. The color, the texture, things hanging on it. See and feel the door handle. The front door is your first peg. If you have an object hanging on your door, this could be another peg.

Open the door.

What do you see? Do you enter an entry hall, or do you come straight into your living room? In case of a hall, what does it look like? Which objects are placed there? And which one could be used as pegs?

Let me give an example from one of my memory palaces.

My entrance hall has a small table with a drawer. On top of the table is a vase of

flowers. There's a large mirror on the wall. On the top of the mirror hangs a Catholic rosary of the saint "Santo Expedito."

So in my case, I have five pegs already, including the front door. Five pegs where I can later place information that I want to remember.

As you probably understand, the more objects/furniture/places…pegs…You have, the more information you can store. But be careful. Too much clutter is not good. The larger the objects are, in general, the better. And the more space the objects have around them, the better. '

Particularly in the beginning.

So don't try to fit too many objects into your memory palace even though the actual room you're in contains these things. Later on, you may "re-decorate" your memory palace, or add pegs, so there's no need to worry about storage issues right now.

In which direction are you walking?

After the entry hall, you enter where? The living room? Which objects are there? Start having a walk around the room, but remember to always walk around rooms in the same direction. It could be left to right, which is clockwise, or right to left. I would suggest left to right, but you decide. Whatever you decide, just stick to it.

Always walk around rooms of your memory palaces in the same direction.

What does your living room look like? See which furniture you have there. Don't invent anything, But use the furniture and objects that are already there.

As mentioned, focus on big objects like sofas, chairs, tables, lamps, bookshelves, television sets, etc.

Objects that are permanently placed in the room.

Right now, as we just mentally walk through the rooms of your house, you can note all objects that you remember/see. But going forward, to make permanent pegs, choose just a selection of objects that are permanently placed in the room.

At the moment, we are simply walking mentally through rooms, but still, keep this in mind.

## Other rooms

Which other rooms do you have in connection to your living room? Perhaps a

bathroom? A kitchen. Keep "walking" through your house. When entering a new room, always walk around the room in your set direction, left to right.

In the kitchen, there are typically many good potential pegs. The sink, an oven, a microwave oven, a refrigerator, shelves, a table, a lamp hanging from ceiling, etc.

Walk around all the rooms of your house like this.

In the bathroom, there are also many potential pegs. The sink, the shower box, the bath tub, etc. In the shower, you have several possible pegs. The shower head itself. The floor. Maybe a shelf where you have shampoos and soaps? Continue like this throughout your house.

### A sample house walk-through

In a little while you will decide on all the pegs in your room, and note them down. But to help you understand better, I will show you a sample walk through of a house that is "configured" as a memory palace with appropriate objects. This is just an example so that you can understand the method.

Here's my example:

The front door of the house I'm visualizing now, has a sign with a cartoon character on it. This can be used as a peg, as well as the door handle. The door itself can be used to make images/scenes, so right at the entrance, we have three pegs.

Entrance hall: Table, mirror, on the top of the mirror hangs a catholic rosary (necklace), painting, shelf for clothes on top, wardrobe underneath for hanging coats and jackets. Space for shoes underneath. Right here in the entrance hall, there are in this case, seven pegs. So the front door and entrance hall alone offer ten pegs.

Once inside, there is a living room. There I find a sofa, rug underneath sofa, table with vase, television shelf with a book/DVD-shelf below, television on top. Chair, painting, bookshelf, on top of bookshelf an African figure, the ceiling has a lamp hanging from it. On the sofa, I like to put the image of one of my dogs relaxing, a peg that works well.

The bookshelf is divided into three pegs. The top of the bookshelf, the bookshelf itself and the lower part of the bookshelf, which has some larger books. The top of the bookshelf is divided into two parts: the top of the bookshelf on the left, which is empty, and the right, which has an African, carved wooden figure. So

right there in this small living room, I have 14 pegs. And this is a small living room.

Then there's a bedroom, with a door, a chair, a hi fi system, a wardrobe, a bed table, a lamp, a bed, painting, a rosary of Saint George, some photos. The wardrobe is big, and I have two pegs there – one inside the wardrobe, the other on top. Oh, and the ceiling has a fan. Twelve pegs in total.

There's a bathroom, with a door, a toilet, a small rug, a shelf for storing toilet paper rolls, a sink, a mirror, a medicine cabinet, a lamp, a shower box and a shelf for cosmetics like soap and shampoo. In the bathroom, I divide the shower into three pegs, the shower head, the floor space and the shelf for cosmetics. The toilet I divide into two pegs: toilet seat, and the actual tank that contains the water. So, the bathroom offers 12 pegs.

Until now I already have 45 pegs. Almost a deck of cards. And remember, this is a very small memory palace, based on a small apartment.

Finally, there's a kitchen with (no door) painting (a still life of a table with fruits, bread, cheeses and wine), sink, shelves above the sink, workbench with toaster, espresso machine and juicer, refrigerator, oven, micro oven, window, ceiling with fan. All in all eleven pegs. Just outside the kitchen, in a hallway, there is a window.

Note, too, that I could use locations in the room as pegs, as well. In the living room, I could use two corners, in the bedroom one corner, and in the kitchen another corner. Sometimes using corners or other spots that are not marked by an object can be challenging. Try for yourself and see if it works for you.

All in all, 57 pegs in one, small, 40 square meter apartment.

**Have a go**

Have a mental walk through of the house/apartment where you currently live. Note that you may also use outdoor spaces in connection to your house, like a garage, a garden, backyard, verandas, etc. You may also use the top of your house as a peg; perhaps you have a chimney there. If you have a cellar, of course, this is completely workable, too.

Take your time and decide which objects and furniture you would like to use as pegs. Do not use all objects that are in the room, but try to use objects that are somewhat separate in distance, or at least, clearly different objects. Write all the pegs down in a notebook, numbered, as they appear going through your house,

like this:

1. Front door
2. Poster with character
3. Door handle
4. Table
5. Mirror
6. Rosary
7. Painting
8. Shelf
9. Wardrobe
10. Shoes
11. Sofa
12. Rug
13. Table
14. Vase
15. TV
16. DVD
17. Chair
18. Painting
19. Bookshelf
20. Top part of bookshelf
21. African figure
22. Bedroom door
23. Chair
24. Hi Fi system
25. Wardrobe upper
26. Wardrobe center

27. Bed table

28. Lamp

29. Bed

30. Painting

31. Rosary St. George

32. Photos

33. Ceiling fan

34. Bathroom door

35. Toilet seat

36. Toilet back

37. Rug

38. Shelf

39. Sink

40. Mirror

41. Medicine cabinet

42. Lamp

43. Shower box

44. Shower floor

45. Shelf

46. Painting

47. Sink

48. Shelves

49. Toaster

50. Espresso machine

51. Juicer

52. Refrigerator

53. Oven

54. Micro wave

55. Window

56. Ceiling fan

57. Window

You do not need to memorize the pegs to the numbers, but just write down the layout of your own house in this manner, to use as a reference later. Then move on to the next chapter.

# Chapter six: Memory areas, memory walks, and memory journeys

You have now had a good, mental look at the house/apartment where you currently live and decided on which pegs to use. So this house will serve as your first memory palace.

Be sure to have a notebook dedicated to your memory palaces

If you haven't already done so, be sure to write down in a notebook all the pegs of your house, and in which order they are. You now have one memory palace. Congratulations! When you start practicing you will get more and more familiar with this method. Later on in these two books, I will help you find and construct nine more memory palaces, but for now, let's move on.

And let's begin to see how this method can be easily expanded. For although you probably know many houses and buildings that can serve as memory palaces, we could do with some alternatives.

**Let's go for a walk**

Another name for the "memory palace method" is "the journey method." In Latin, locations are called "loci," so the method is also called "method of loci."

In the previous lessons, we have been talking about the simplest forms of memory palaces. The absolute simplest form of a memory palace is a room, and if you work with the actual house/apartment/space you live in, you will then have a somewhat more complex memory palace that can typically room from 20 to 50 pegs up to hundreds of pegs if you live in a larger house.

So in terms of memory palaces, you now have the tools to construct a memory palace of your own house (in addition to any other house, for that matter). The objects and furniture that occupy your house will be pegs. Together with locations in the room.

We will get back to memory palaces in the form of houses and buildings, but let's just have a look at another valuable aspect of memory palaces.

The walk, or the journey.

**Journeys/memory walks**

Do you walk to your job? In that case, you may use the journey from your house to your job as a "memory journey," or, memory palace. Memory palace does not need to be a building.

In case you drive to work, you can also use the drive to work as a memory palace if you have a clear image of this road and possible pegs along the route.

Let's begin with walks.

If you do not normally walk to your job, try remembering other walks that you do. Do you have a dog? You can use the route that you walk as a memory journey. In case you don't have a dog, use any walking route that you know well. And if you do not know any route well, start taking a few walks in your neighborhood and get some references.

Also, if you do not walk a lot, have a walk around your neighborhood and start thinking about how you can construct a memory walk or two, or three, around your neighborhood.

## Example

I have several memory walks that I can access easily. One of them is simply walking along the street I live and doing a general tour of my neighborhood. Just walking from one end of my street and to the end of it, I have managed to cram in around 70 pegs.

Once you start thinking about these things, and once you start walking a little bit, you soon realize that just in the area where you live there are probably several routes that you can easily use.

By placing your house in the center, you can probably think of at least think two distinct routes. And if your house lies in a dead end, only look for routes a little further away.

## Using neighbors

One of the great things about using your neighborhood is that many of us can add our neighbors to the route, making it both easier, richer and more potent. In addition to spaces and places, our brains particularly like people. And we remember them well.

I know that many people live in neighborhoods where they do not even know their next door neighbor, let alone the rest of the building or street. And many also live in large cities, where the "neighborhood" is mostly shops and

commercial buildings. We will talk about streets with shops in a while, as this works equally well, so in case you do not live on a street with neighbors, don't worry. Although you might be able to recall the street where you grew up...maybe that could give you some ideas?

Memory palaces can be from the past, too, if only you have a clear memory it.

## Memory areas

In a way, thinking about memory palaces, it can be useful now to think of memory areas. Let me explain.

I have two main, memory areas.

The first one is the house I grew up in, and memory walks around that area. The second one is the house where I currently live, and walks/journeys around this area.

Thinking about memory palaces in this way can boost the number of palaces you can think of. Make it easier to both come up with ideas for palaces, as well as remembering them later.

## Two or more pegs per house

In the memory area where I currently live, I do not know that many of my neighbors. In the memory area of the house I grew up in, though, I can add faces to just about every house on the street.

So, note that when I visualize the houses of my old neighbors, I have two pegs for each house. One for the entrance to the house, and one for the house itself. To help things I place people associated with that house on different pegs. With some training and effort, I would be able to even distinguish more pegs for each house, maybe adding certain elements from the garden, etc.

## Sequences

The great thing about memory walks and journeys is that they are particularly optimized for sequences. Any memory palace should be configured sequentially so that you know exactly where you start the walk through, and exactly the order of the pegs. Which way you mentally walk through the rooms, and exactly which order the pegs are in. But with a walk, this sequence is somewhat self-evident.

There is a natural element of a sequence that is undeniable.

The great thing about using walks/journeys as well as houses/buildings is that you can quite easily make a pretty big compilation of memory palaces. Let's face it; there is a limit to how many houses you know well. And even how many houses you could access to get better acquainted with.

But walks? Limitless.

Not many books on memory palaces talk about walks and journeys, but I suggest you make them the main focus.

### Easy to find new memory palaces

In case you need a new memory palace one time, simply start walking a new route for fun. Just a few real-life walk throughs where you make a note of possible pegs, and you will pretty quickly be able to visualize the walk with your eyes closed.

A good idea is to use a camera to take snaps of the route you use. This makes it easier to remember a new walk. After a short while, it should be perfectly committed to memory, even if the walk is new for you.

These days most of us have great cameras on our mobile phones. A great tool for anyone working with memory palaces.

### A collection of walks

To give you an idea of the memorizing potential here, I currently work actively with 18 walks. Half of them are from the town where I used to live fifteen years ago. The place I grew up, and that I know well.

I also have many walks are from where I currently live, including one that I take every day walking my dogs in the morning, another that I take in the evening, a third one of the neighborhood as such, plus two other walks going to the city centre, and within the city where I live.

Altogether, these walks give me around 1000 memory pegs. And if I combine the walks (which I sometimes do), I can stitch all these walks together to one long walk in one unbroken sequence.

Imagine the possibility.

### Imagination

It doesn't matter that one walk is in one town in on continent and that the other walk is 13000 kilometers away. Distance is no problem for our memory.

Combined with other techniques, I can memorize up to about 3000 items on these routes, for example, 3000 playing cards in sequence. About 57 decks of card. I never yet tried to memorize 57 decks of cards in practice, so I do not yet know if this is practically possible without any interference, but I am planning to do it just to test it out.

## Journeys

You can also make memory palaces of journeys done in cars or buses. You just need to make sure that you remember the sequence of the pegs.

The pegs, in this case, are places of interest along the route. Houses, buildings, cities, etc. I have a memory palace of the road between Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. A journey of about 500 km that I know well. The journey could be short or long; the important thing is that the pegs you choose appear clearly to you, and in the right sequence.

Using memory palaces based on journeys are interesting, but make sure you keep your pegs big and memorable (like a city, a gas station, a particular house, a particular forest that suddenly pops up, a lake, etc.), and make sure you only use journeys that you know well.

## Recap

In this chapter, we have seen that you can use walks/journeys as well as houses and buildings to create memory palaces. Most people can almost immediately recall at least one or two walks. And with a little work, you can easily find three to five walks/journeys in your neighborhood. If you drive a lot, you can probably think of a journey, as well. The goal is to end up with a certain amount of houses/buildings in addition to walks/journeys, and then expand as you need.

You probably already have several ideas of what can serve as specific inspiration for memory palaces and memory routes/walks. The house/apartment where you currently live is your starting point. The house where you grew up (if different from where you live now), another.

Right there, you have two specific memory areas. From the houses in these two memory areas, explore different walks. Walks from your house to your workplace, for example, or any other destination – a walk you know well, another.

Same with car or bus journeys.

If you cannot easily remember any walks, have a look in your neighborhood and

simply decide on one or two walks. Take snapshots with your camera to more easily memorize the route.

If you drive or take the bus a lot, think of at least one memory palace based on journeys as well.

Walk through these routes, and pay attention to objects/locations you may use as pegs along the route. Next time you pass, take photos. Note everything down in your memory palace notebook.

# Chapter seven: Basic tips and tricks

We mentioned the area where you work, let's just also mention streets that do not have homes, but rather shops or commercial buildings.

Streets with shops are great.

And if you just start thinking, right now, about a particular area where there are some shops, businesses, restaurants, cafes, etc., I am sure you get several ideas.

A building in itself is not necessarily easy to remember, unless there is something extra about it, or that you know it well. But using streets with shops helps your memory, as shops have logos, often bright colors, particular associations according to what shops they are (bakery, butcher, coffee shop, book store, electronics store, etc.).

So choose a street in your town/city, and decide to use it. If you don't know it well, have a walk through it next time you're there and take photos with your mobile phone or any other camera.

Even a small, short street may have a significant number of shops. Most of them quite distinguishable from the other.

### The next few steps

The thing you should do now is deciding on your first few memory palaces. We have already more than suggested that you should choose the house where you currently live, and perhaps also the house you grew up in.

1. The house you currently live in

2. The house you grew up in

This would be a perfect start, as you then have two distinct memory areas.

If you currently live in the house you also grew up in, or if you cannot remember well the house you grew up in, think about a second house that you know particularly well, and then one or two walks that you could use, even if they are not connected to the neighborhood that second house is located in.

As mentioned, if you normally do not walk a lot, try to find a walk close to where you live, or anywhere that you can access easily, and start walking around, snapping a few photos with your mobile phone or any camera for reference.

Two houses and two walks would be ideal for now. But before you start thinking

about this, let's just move a little on and have a look at pegs.

## Choosing objects in rooms

Regarding memory palaces based on your home, pay particular attention to objects and furniture. You need to decide on which ones to use.

Keep in mind that you do not choose too many objects for each room when using houses as models for memory palaces, and always choose objects that are differentiated from one another. This last point often translates into distance. Use objects that are clearly distanced apart. This is all very individual and depends on your view on things, but be aware of the potential problem of using small objects, or object that are too close together.

When it comes to sequence, decide on a route through the house, and every time you mentally walk through your memory palace, walk in the same direction. The objects/pegs should always show up in the same sequences.

It may be obvious, but I repeat, that you need to choose only objects that are permanently placed in your rooms. Avoid things like ashtrays, cups, books unless they are permanently placed in one spot.

Normally, larger objects are easier to visualize, but not necessarily. Remember the catholic rosaries I mentioned in my own, personal example? Well, they are based on particular saints that are well known in the country where I live, so even though the items themselves are small, I simply use images of the saints themselves to link the peg to the keyword. Each saint is a perfect mnemonic in itself, clearly distinguished from others.

## Paintings and photos are great

When it comes to paintings and photos, the same thing applies. If you have a painting or a photo of a location; a cabin placed near a river, for example. You could perfectly well "jump" into the painting itself and use both a location near the cabin, in the river, etc. as pegs. This is not necessarily something you would do straight away being a beginner, but it is possible and workable.

In this way, you may build small "virtual" memory palaces inside your memory palaces. If your painting is a portrait, you could simply visualize this person as well as visualizing the painting itself.

Let me give an example.

Let's say you have a reproduction of the "Mona Lisa" on your wall. All framed

into a nice golden frame. OK, you are going to make an association between your keyword and the peg (which is the painting). Let's say your keyword is "car." You could make a link where you see a car coming out of the painting on your wall, or a car placed under the painting and someone smashing the painting over the car. But...you could also use the image of Mona Lisa and combine it with a car. You could see Mona Lisa step out of the painting and into the car, for instance.

These things also depend on the keyword you need to remember. If in doubt, just stick to the first idea that pops into your head, which is often the best one.

## Special objects

Some objects are better than others. A bathtub, for instance, is perfect for making links. Just imagine all sorts of things you can soak in the tub, for instance. Ovens are good, fireplaces, too. A piano or a musical instrument. Refrigerators and freezers. As mentioned, if you have pets, you could include them in case they have a particular place they normally hang out. So, you see, not everything needs to be 100% correct 100% of the time.

You can, and should, use your creative license. Rest assured that most objects work, and remember that it is the way you associate object and keyword that ultimately matters. Making the image absurd, exaggerated in size, violent, etc.

## Specific examples for memory walks

When it comes to what we call memory walks or memory routes, note that you may be a bit more creative. Let's say you are passing a house where you very often see a certain person outside, well, place this person there permanently in your mind and simply interact with him when memorizing.

As an example, let's say that you have placed one of your neighbors outside the house where he lives. OK, you then want to place the keyword "Henry the eighth" (ex-king of England) in that position of your memory walk. All you need to do is make an association between an image you have of Henry the eighth, and your neighbor. Maybe the ex-king is bashing your neighbor with his crown, or stabbing him with a sword. Or maybe your neighbor is reversely beating the king. Violence is always great for remembering.

You may also use people you don't know, of course, in fact just thinking about a particular location inside your walk should give you some suggestions of what you associate with the place. Just make sure you make all pegs inside the walk set once and for all.

For this reason, you need to write down each, and every location/peg that you have in your memory palaces and memory walks.

**Here's what you need to do**

Take an hour or so. If you haven't already done so, decide on two memory palaces based on houses, and two based on walks/journeys.

Write down all pegs of these memory palaces in your notebook.

# Chapter eight: Managing your different memory palaces

For what may you use memory palaces?

The short answer is any information you want. Both information that you want to store short-time only, like keywords from an article, notes for a certain exam, a book you're reading, or things that you want to store long-term, like chapters of a textbook on a topic that you're studying.

## Short term and long term palaces

What I recommend, and what we will work on later, is that you construct/decide on at least around two to five memory palaces based on houses, and six to eight memory palaces based on walks or journeys you know. Which will give you a total of ten to thirteen memory palaces?

Some of these you can use for long-term information, the rest you can keep free for things that you need to memorize "on the spur of the moment."

## Tips for memory palaces

Let's have a look at which other places other than your current home you may use as a basis for your memory palaces.

After your current home, the best house to base a memory palace on is the house you grew up in as a child and teenager. For most people: our parent's house.

Most people have a very clear idea of the layout of their childhood home even though they may not have set foot there for years, or even decades. The brain works well for remembering spaces and places, so do think of the house you grew up in, and see if how many details you manage to come up with in each room.

You should be very successful in remembering your childhood home, so by this stage; you already have two houses to make memory palaces of.

Which other houses may serve as candidates? Well, any house you know pretty well, any house that you currently spend time in or have in your childhood spent time in.

Houses from the past: Grandparents house, the houses of aunts, uncles or other family members or childhood friends. Once you start thinking just a little about these things you will be amazed how many details appear.

Also, public buildings may be used, of course. Schools you have gone to, or other public buildings you remember well. Places you used to work. Parks etc., shopping centers.

Houses from the present: Friends houses, houses of family and relatives. Public buildings you know well, schools, universities, train stations, hospitals, airports, concert halls, etc. Your workplace. Public parks or gardens that you visit often. Shopping malls/shopping centers.

After brainstorming houses for a minute or two, you will certainly be able to come up with at least three houses to use in addition to the two you already have (which are your current home and your childhood home). So by the end of this lesson, you could have at least five houses in total. Whether you want to go ahead and "configure" them straight away, by deciding on pegs, is up to you.

## More ideas for walks

When it comes to walks, you should be able to get two or three walks in the area where you currently live, and, either, two or three walks from the neighborhood you grew up in or (if that is a too distant memory) from other areas you know (like one walk from within a town/city center, and one walk close to your workplace). You could also use car or bus journeys.

A total of five walks and journeys at this point would be ideal. Remember, you don't need to sit down and configure all of them right now, just decide on them.

Other ideas are: parks, walks from neighborhoods where you have lived before, additional streets with shops from cities/towns you know, mountain trails, etc. If you need to get out of the house and start walking, do spend some time doing this. And pay attention to details. Take snapshots with your mobile phone/camera.

## Assignment

Your assignment will be to sit down and try to set down your list of five memory palaces based on houses, and five based on walks. First, only decide on these ten memory palaces. Write them down in your notebook.

Then, sit down for a few minutes and visualize these locations for, rooms, objects and all. As much as you can remember.

Later we will decide on which specific tags/objects to use for each palace, and write them down to set them once and for all. But before you go ahead and do that, let us just cover a few more tips on memory palaces.

## Decide on uses

As mentioned, I suggest you use the different memory palaces for various things. You need to look at your specific needs at the moment.

If you're a student, you may want to assign a different subject (textbook and lecture notes) for each house. But make sure you leave one house "free" for sudden memorization needs.

If some of your memory palaces have a great many rooms on several floors, you may assign a floor for each subject, for example. A specific idea here is to start hunting public buildings. Do you have any large public buildings in your area/town? Buildings you may start familiarizing yourself with? Even a few days of "lurking" around these buildings may give you solid memory palaces.

# Chapter nine: More about keywords

To memorize information, we need to make keywords out of the information we wish to memorize, and these keywords need to be translated into images. Then these images need to be associated with pegs from your memory palace.

Let's take a few examples.

A shopping list is one of the simplest ones, as all items on a shopping list are easy to visualize. Oranges, milk cartons, eggs, bananas, etc. are all straightforward objects that anyone can easily see.

But what if the keywords you want to remember are more abstract?

## Substitute images

Well, then you need to make what I call substitute images. You may think this is complicated, but you will be surprised how little your brain needs to make the "missing links."

Some of the more abstract words you face are foreign language words. Take the Japanese word shinbun for example. The word means newspaper. If you were to memorize the word shinbun, you would have to make up a substitute image.

The thing is then to deconstruct the abstract word somewhat, and try to come up with an easy visualized, English word that somehow matches. And you are not looking for exact deconstruction here.

## Completely abstract words

For the example shinbun, I immediately think about "chin" and "buns." Buns, as in the baked goods you can eat, and chin as in part of your face. Let's say you want to attach the word shinbun to the peg "sofa." Imagine a sofa that is stitched together with pieces of human chins, and that you rip them from the sofa and eat them "like a bun." A little violent, perhaps, but this is all good for memorization. Or simply imagine a giant human chin being the sofa. You decide. Stick with what works the best.

Perhaps this sounds complicated, or maybe even stupid and far fetched, but this visualization will work like a charm. Shinbun is "chin buns," and they belong to the sofa.

## Somewhat abstract words

While some words are completely impossible to make into images without deconstructing them, others just need a little help. Names are a typical example.

In talking about names, you may use images of people you know with the same name. So if you need to visualize a "John," you could see before your mind's eye someone you know called John.

In the same example, you could also use a famous person that you associate with "John," for example John F. Kennedy. Just make sure you are not using his image in another visualization that could interfere.

Now, take the surname "Kennedy." Once again, you could use the image of John F. Kennedy, as long as you make a mental note of the fact that you are thinking about Kennedy's surname and not his first name.

## Far fetched

But if you need an image for Kennedy, you may also use any other image that spring to your mind when thinking about "Kennedy." My first thought is the "Kennedy Space Center," seeing a rocket being launched into space in a whirlwind of fumes and flames. So if I wanted to make a visualization linking "Kennedy" to a peg, say my TV-set, I would see a rocket take off from that TV set, making a complete mess of the living room.

This absurd scene will work like a dream. Someone without experience with these methods would perhaps say "but won't you get mixed up and think that the image is a rocket?", but the truth is that if you simply think "Kennedy Space Center" or "Kennedy" as you make the visualization, you will be fine.

Your brain is a very flexible instrument.

## Representational images

Let's just have a look at another type of words or phrases you might encounter. They are words and phrases that are not necessarily abstract, but still need a substitute image that has nothing to do with the pronunciation of the word or anything like that, because the link has more to do with how this image "represents" the word or phrase.

It is what I call representational images.

Representational images are images or scenes that represent word or a phrase that you are trying to memorize. The words are not abstract in themselves but still need substitute images.

Let's take an example from history books. Let's say you are memorizing pre-second world war, North American history and need to memorize the keyword "new deal." Well...these two words are not abstract, but still...how do you visualize them?

You need a representation. You could, for example, use the image of a card-dealer, dealing out a new round of cards, a new deal. You could imagine a young, "new" car salesman selling a car; he just made a "new deal"...or any other type of representational image that will have you remember the keyword.

## Another example

The word depression, also from the history books, is much easier, as you can simply imagine someone showing him-or herself to be depressed in some manner, maybe by popping pills, or by sitting on the floor refusing to do anything because of "depression." You could also go for a completely absurd image/representation, of someone being pressed down by some giant machine, saying "help, I am being (de)pressed," or anything similar. The crazier, the better. Often the more logical alternatives are the ones you fail to remember.

Substitute-image, representational images...at the end of the day these words stand for the same thing, but representational images have no phonetic similarity.

The easy way of putting this is: whenever you have a keyword that is not easily visualized, come up with any image that is mildly connected, and in most cases, this will work well.

# Chapter ten: A sample memory palace walk through

I will here show you one of my memory palaces, which takes place in a small apartment I once lived in. I show you this not for you to copy it, which would be absurd - as you need to use something from your own memory. But only to give you a specific example of how this method works at its simplest.

So let me first take you on a tour of this memory palace, which is my memory palace number five. Then we will fill the palace with some information.

**The tour**

Tour: The front door (peg #1) is of aluminum and contains glass, it has a small placard with the cartoon character Bert Simpson (peg #2) and a door handle (peg #3).

I open the door and enter the small entrance hall.

Where there's a table (peg#4), mirror (peg #5), on the top of the mirror hangs a catholic necklace (peg #6), a painting of a bulldog (peg #7), shelf for clothes on top (peg #8), wardrobe underneath for hanging coats and jackets (peg #9). Space for shoes underneath (peg #10). Right here in the entrance hall there are in this case, seven pegs. So the front door and entrance hall alone offer ten pegs.

Going into the living room, to the left is a sofa (peg #11) on the sofa I have placed one of my dogs (peg #12), there's a table in front of the sofa (peg #13) and a vase with flowers on top (peg #14). Underneath the sofa and the table is a rug (peg #15). To the left of the sofa is a TV (peg #16) and it stands on a DVD-shelf (peg #17). Going around the room from left to right, next up is a chair (peg #18) and behind it is a painting of a woman dancing (peg #19). Then there's a bookshelf (peg #20) and on top of the shelf a wooden figure (peg #21). I also use the other side of the top of the bookshelf as a peg (peg #22). There's a lamp hanging from the ceiling, going over the table (peg #23), seeing as I am up on the book shelf, I decided to put the lamp in after the book shelf, not together with the table.

Then there's the bedroom, with its door (peg # 24). Right left of it stands a chair (peg #25) and a hi-fi system next to it (peg #26). Then there's a wardrobe where

the inside is used (peg #27) and the top of the wardrobe (peg #28). Then, the bed table (peg # 29) with a drawer, the bed (peg #30) and a painting of a mountain over the bed (peg #31). On the wall also hangs a religious necklace of Saint George (peg #32) and three photos of my dogs (peg #33). On the ceiling, there is a fan (peg # 34).

The bathroom is next, with a door (peg #35), a toilet seat (peg #36) and the tank that serves as a back for the seat (peg #37), a small rug on the floor (peg #38), a shelf (peg #39) a sink (peg # 40) a mirror (peg # 41) a medicine cabinet next to it (peg #42), a lamp on the wall (peg #43), the shower box seen from the floor (peg #44) and the shower head (peg #45) and a shelf for soap and cosmetics (peg #46).

Finally, the small kitchen with (no door) a painting (peg #47) with a still life motive of a watermelon as the main element, sink (peg #48), shelves above sink (peg #49), workbench with toaster (peg #50), espresso machine (peg #51) and juicer (peg #52), refrigerator (peg #53), oven (peg #54), micro oven (peg #55), small window (peg #56), ceiling with fan (peg #57). All in all eleven pegs. Just outside the kitchen, in a hallway, there is a large window (peg #58).

There you are. That is my example for you, for one of my memory palaces. A small apartment I used to live in.

## Filling a house with information

Now, let's give you an example of filling this room with information. I know that most books and articles on memory palaces always uses the same example: grocery lists. And I will, too, just because it is so much easier at first.

Later on, we will use other examples.

So, here's a grocery list of 15 objects just to exemplify the method.

Butter, Milk, Chocolate, Ham, Cheese, Eggs, Espresso pods, Bread, Tomatoes, Salad dressing, Coca Cola, Wine, Washing powder, Shampoo and Newspaper.

Now, let's fill the memory palace with these 15 objects. I will list the first 15 pegs of the palace of the example. And yes, you may think I'm going into too much detail, but if you feel you already know the method, simply move on. This is just to help people really understand the method by seeing it in action.

1. Door

2. Bart Simpson sign

3. Door handle

4. Table

5. Mirror

6. Catholic necklace (rosary)

7. Painting of bulldog

8. Shelf

9. Wardrobe

10. Shoes

11. Sofa

12. My dog

13. Coffee table

14. Vase with flowers

15. Rug

Example of how the associations are done.

First off is the door, and the item to remember is butter. I see my front door, and it is yellow and completely made out of butter (a completely absurd image). I touch it, and feel the greasy butter (sensory experience, placing oneself in image). I take some butter and put it in my mouth just to check...yes, the door is made of butter.

The second peg for me is a sign of Bart Simpson and in this example, I need to pair it with milk. I see a full figure Bart Simpson hanging on the door, completely soaked in milk (eye catching, absurd). He complains loudly in his typical voice, saying "what the ****, I'm completely soaked in milk" (adding details). In fact, I see myself taking up a carton of milk and pouring over him (putting myself in scene, adding "animation".)

Chocolate and door handle. I try to forget about the door of butter, Bart Simpson soaked in milk, and go for the door handle (making a "film" scene instead of a static image), which is huge (exaggeration of size), and made of delicious chocolate. I break it off and eat it (sensory experience), yes...it is made of chocolate. I enter the room.

In front of me is a small table, and I place a huge pig on top (exaggeration of

size, absurdity), going for a knife in order to cut out a piece of ham (violence, animation), I see myself cutting out the ham while the pig is screaming (poor pig…).

The mirror above is made of cheese, in fact blue cheese (making it specific) and I use the same knife to cut off a piece, and place it in my mouth (sensory experience) and taste the distinctive taste of blue cheese.

The rosary I need to associate with eggs, so I see a very big, long rosary hanging on top of the cheese-mirror, only that the beads are made of eggs...big eggs (exaggeration of size). I drop the rosary on the floor and the eggs break, turning the floor into a virtual pool of eggs. I try to walk, but fall, and feel the eggs all over my body.

On the wall jumps out a bulldog, and bites me in my leg saying (absurd) "I want my espresso pods", and I see him spitting out empty espresso pods. I kick him away (violence), he starts crying. I continue my journey through the house, looking to the left and slightly up, where I see the hat shelf, which is made out of French baguettes (bread). Just to be sure I break off a piece of bread, and as I do I see the French baker in his blue-striped shirt and typical hat, talking in a French accent saying "do you like the bread I made). Under the shelf I see coat hangers where there are no coats, only tomatoes. Really big, ripe tomatoes, hanging from them. I take one tomato with both my hands (it's so big) and eat it. On the floor I see a whole pile of shoes. They are all stinky, and they are all marked with salad dressing labels. I see a huge plate of salad, take a big, stinky shoe, and pour dressing over it.

I move on to the living room, and to my left is my sofa which has disappeared under a mountain of Coca Cola cans. I jump onto the sofa, and feel the cans on my my body.  I take one can to check the taste, yes, it's Coca Cola. On the end of my sofa lies my dog, and he's got his snout stuck in a huge wine bottle. The dog is drunk as he drunk the wine, so he falls down onto the coffee table, which has a pile of washing powder on it. He falls into the washing powder, and starts sneezing. The vase of flowers on the table does not have flowers in it, but shampoo. I take the shampoo and pour over my dog's head, telling him: "Now, we only need some water in order to wash your fur". I see the rug under the table, and it is a huge newspaper, and I clearly see some articles on it, and lie down to read more.

## Explanation

There you are. This is the method of how you come up with keywords, and how

you associate keywords to the peg of your memory palace in practice.

You probably think that it looks complicated and time consuming. But it is not. It takes time writing and reading about it, but making these associations/visualizations took only a few minutes. And this shopping list will be glued to my mind without me needing to endlessly repeat it. Note that I try to make 1) a story, that plays out like 2) a film. The story-element helps bind the objects together, and brings some sort of logic to it.

Now, it's your turn. And it's really important that you do this right now. Take the small grocery list, and start memorizing it. Place the grocery list inside your first memory palace, which is the house where you currently live.

If you haven't already decided on pegs and a route through your first memory palace, go back and do this now. Remember that you need to decide on all pegs in the house, and each time you walk through the house you need to walk through the pegs in that same sequence.

# Chapter eleven: Troubleshooting the technique

You have had a go at memorizing your first list in your first memory palace. Congratulations. I hope you are impressed with the results, although you also probably experienced a few associations (keyword to peg) that didn't go very well. When this happens, only go back and try to figure out why. Was the visualization too ordinary? Add some absurdity. Or did you just not really see it before your inner eye?

Troubleshooting is important, so let's have a more thorough look at the technique, some problematic areas and learn a few tips that may streamline the process.

## Recap

Before anything else I just want to briefly recap what we have learned and hopefully achieved so far.

A memory palace is an imaginary construction based on a house or a walk/journey that you know from real life. Each palace consists of many pegs that you can later hook informational items onto. The way you "hook" information onto pegs is by creative association/visualization making sure the scenes/images you create are 1) absurd, 2) exaggerated in size, 3) violent, 4) has sensory details, 5) involves movement, 6) involves people (we remember faces and people better) and possibly also 7) are sexual in nature.

Your first main goal is to configure your first memory palace, which should be the house/apartment you currently live in. Then, you should decide on 4 other houses and 5 walks that may serve as memory palaces. Write them all down in a notebook.

Next step is to configure all these 10 memory palaces. Then, you should start practicing visualization/memorization. Start with the grocery list, then have a look at the other examples in later lessons (book two).

## Troubleshooting

Using creative associations in order to link keywords to pegs you will see that the only times you will not remember the scenes is when you either did not

actually see the scene before your inner eye, or because the scene was not absurd/eye catching enough.

As mentioned a few times, the main rules for making memorable scenes are the following:

- Make scenes absurd

- Make some objects exaggerated in size

- Make scenes violent whenever possible

- Put yourself in the scene, and "feel" sensory details from it

- Include movement whenever possible

- Place people in scenes

- Make scenes sexual whenever possible

The first rule should always be observed. It is the most important. You will not remember a scene that is not out of the ordinary or absurd. A sofa made out of fish (as was one of our examples) is a typical example. This is absurd, and therefore great. If you were to imagine simply a small fish lying on the sofa, you would probably not have good results remembering the image.

Note, also, how you always should try to expand on the image.

How? You place yourself in the scene, sitting down on the sofa, on top of the fish. The fish themselves are exaggerated in size. They are moving (so we include movement), and you feel what it's like sitting down on the fish, so you include a sensory perspective.

As you probably understand you don't need to use all rules/tricks at all times. They are just there to help you.

With practice this all becomes instinctive, so the main tip is just to practice. When in doubt use the above checklist.

## Really seeing the scenes

Some may think that it's difficult to visualize things. Again, this is mostly a matter of training. Most people are able to see what their house looks like, and even imagine what things that do not exist looks like (like a sofa made out of fish).

If you have trouble visualizing, take more time. Try to close your eyes, although after a while you will be able to do this even with your eyes open.

Remember, you will only remember the scene if you actually see it, so if you have problems visualizing, you should slow down, and take your time. One trick with this is to go back to your first memory palace (of your own house), and have a mental walk through really taking your time. Try to see all the objects that are there, and ask yourself questions: which color does this object have? What's the texture like? Etc.

In your mind, place an imaginary spotlight in the room, to light things up. Or bring with you a torchlight. Small tricks that might help.

# Chapter twelve: Recap, and tips on going forward with this knowledge

One of the things people worry about is coming up with right keywords and substitute images. Because, as you know, the things you want to remember, passages of text or smaller bits of information, need to be condensed into keywords. These keywords need to be "translated", or rather made into, a suitable image. But what it the keywords are somewhat difficult to translate into any good image?

### Don't worry, far-fetched often succeeds

First of all, realize that you have great liberty, as it were, in making these images. Practice will show you that far-fetched images quickly triggers your chosen keywords, that again triggers the information.

The more practice you have, the more you will see that in most cases coming up with good images for keywords will not be a problem. Your memory will help you in interpreting the information.

### What to do next?

At this point you have all the information needed in order to set up at least ten memory palaces, and start practicing the technique either using the examples you will find in book number two, or your own examples.

In the next book in this two-set series we will go further into the technique. You will learn the PAO-system, and see how you can memorize playing cards within the memory palace system. We will also have a look at virtual memory palaces, and how you can make one from scratch.

### BOOK TWO

# BOOK TWO

# Chapter one: Memorizing playing cards and learning the PAO-system

This is book two of the two-book set "How to Build a Mnemonics Memory Palace."

In book one we looked at the basic techniques of how to memorize information using the technique of memory palaces. You can get book one for free on most book sites, like Amazon and Smashwords.

To start this second part of the series, we will take a short break from technique, and look into some specifics uses. Things you can put into your memory palaces. Like playing cards.

Not because everybody necessarily has a particular use for memorizing playing cards in sequence, but because the art of memorizing playing cards will tell us much more about both keywords and also how the overall technique of association work. Including a very sneaky trick that will automatically boost your memory palaces by 300%.

And, in looking at playing cards, you will learn a fascinating mnemonic method called the PAO-system.

### Playing cards needs representational images

Memory palaces are great for memorizing information that you need to remember in sequential order.

One example of this, from memory championships, is remembering the order of a deck of playing cards. To do this you need to make up keywords for every playing card.

The beauty of the playing card-example is that it is a very efficient way of using your memory palace pegs, seeing as one peg serve to memorize three cards. So if the memory palace has 50 pegs, then you will be able to memorize 150 cards in sequence. We will get to how this is possible in a minute.

### International Master of Memory

If you can quickly and efficiently memorize 10 decks of playing cards in sequence, memorize 1000 random digits in 60 minutes and memorize the order

of one deck of cards in less than two minutes, in the controlled environment of an international memory championship, you will get the title "International Master of Memory"...which is not bad, is it?

When it comes to memorizing cards I can, and will, help you, right here in this chapter. Memorizing digits is something we have to get back to in another book, more information on my site.

Now, take the example of memorizing one deck of playing cards, in sequence, in under a minute. This seems to me the ultimate memory palace achievement. If you can do this, you can memorize anything. And speed is what tells us how good you are.The time factor is essential, and although I cannot teach you how to do it faster, I will show you all there is to know about the technique of memorizing decks of cards within memory palaces.

## People are key

In book one we talked about substitute images. Well, with cards these are essential. Because how on earth can you easily visualize six of spades or seven of hearts?

To learn how to memorize the sequence of a deck of playing cards, we need to have substitute images for every playing card. And seeing as we want to make our memory palaces efficient, we will have three substitute images for every card.

Now, before you start complaining about how difficult this will be to learn, just bear with me for a moment. The system you're about to learn is based on an ancient principle devised by the Italian philosopher and mnemonist Giordano Bruno.

These days a similar system is called the PAO-system. People, action, and object.

The idea is simply to assign a famous person to every playing card. 52 in total. People are easy to remember, and the best part is that they can do things and carry objects. So that if you associate one action and one object to each famous person, you effectively have three substitute images for every playing card.

## The PAO system

Let's take a popular example that is well known due to the enjoyable book "Moonwalking with Einstein."

Take three famous people, namely Michael Jackson, Janet Jackson and Albert

Einstein.

The first thing we do is assign an action and an object to them. It could be anything, but it needs to be decided on. In Michael Jackson's case the object is a diamond glove, in Janet's, case it's a microphone, and in Einstein's case, it's a piece of chalk (seeing as he was a professor, he uses chalk to write on blackboards).

The action of Jackson is moonwalking (a dance move he became famous for), for Janet Jackson it's flashing a boob (which she famously did in one prize award show), and for Einstein, it's writing on a blackboard.

Now, if all 52 playing cards were associated with people, actions and objects in this manner, you could easily use them to memorize sequences of playing cards even in small memory palaces.

If Michael Jackson, a diamond glove and moonwalking represents the card King of Hearts, Janet Jackson, a microphone and flashing a boob represents Queen of Hearts, and Einstein, a piece of chalk and writing on a blackboard represents Six of Spades, then you could easily remember the sequence King of Hearts, Six of Spades and Queen of Hearts by making a scene where Michael Jackson is writing on a blackboard with a microphone.

This little scene quickly translates into three cards, doesn't it, but it is one scene only.

And to place this in a memory palace, let's say at the front door, simply involves placing this absurd scene right in front of your front door. Perhaps integrating your front door a little in the scene.

As you see, for memorizing playing cards, the person, action, object system is great as it maximizes the power of your memory palace. And makes everything easier to remember.

**A system for the cards**

Even if your first reaction is "I don't need to memorize playing cards", let's have a look at this. For one, practicing memory palace memorization skills in this way is a great way of practicing visualization skills, not least increasing speed.

Also, there are other ways you can use the people, action, object system, so it's useful to know about it.

To make it easier to choose famous people for the playing cards, we will make a little system of it. One way is dividing the suits into types of people. Let's say

Hearts are people you like; Diamonds are super rich people, Spades are people that are funny, or a little crazy and Clubs are strong or tough people.

- Hearts - people you like
- Diamonds - super rich people
- Spades - funny/crazy people
- Clubs - strong/tough people

The numbers you divide into female and male. Even numbers are female, uneven male. Aces are sports men, 2's are sportswomen, 3's are male movie stars, 4's are female movie stars, 5's are controversial men, 6's are controversial women, 7's are "famous male physiques", 8's are "famous female physiques", 9's are powerful men, 10's are powerful women and Jacks are all religious figures. Queens and Kings are "celebrity couples".

- Kings - Celebrity couple male
- Queens - Celebrity couple female
- Jacks - religious figures
- 10 - powerful females
- 9 - powerful males
- 8 - female physiques
- 7 - male physiques
- 6 - controversial females
- 5 - controversial males
- 4 - female movie stars
- 3 - male movie stars
- 2 - female movie stars
- Aces - male movie stars

Now, these are just examples, and different people use a different type of categorization. But as you can see it wouldn't be too difficult filling in this form. Jack of Hearts - a religious figure you like, could be Jesus, that walks on water and has a crucifix for an object. Jack of Spades - a funny religious figure, could be the Dalai Lama, who lights a stick of incense and has a red robe for an object.

Now, if you don't like Jesus, or do not find the Dalai Lama funny, please, just switch cards. These should all be personal preferences anyway.

But you see how this could be done.

## 52 famous people

If you want to be able to memorize cards, you should start off by deciding on 52 famous people, their objects, and actions. Then you are set for life with a memory system that you can use with your memory palaces to win the title "International Master of Memory," or simply impress friends and family, and possibly even win a few bets.

If you are interested in seeing my personal choices, I enclose them here. But be aware that you should spend an hour or two yourself making these choices. An hour will do. So go ahead, it's well worth it.

Here are my personal choices:

- Ace of Hearts - Usain Bolt
- 2 of Hearts - Gabby Douglas
- 3 of Hearts - Denzel Washington
- 4 of Hearts - Julia Roberts
- 5 of Hearts - Graham Hancock
- 6 of Hearts - Elizabeth Gilbert
- 7 of Hearts - Michael Matthews
- 8 of Hearts - Aline Riscado
- 9 of Hearts - Barrack Obama
- 10 of Hearts - Angela Merkel
- Jack of Hearts - Jesus
- Queen of Hearts - Prince William
- King of Hearts -Kate Middleton

- Ace of Diamonds - Michael Jordan
- 2 of Diamonds - Serena Williams

- 3 of Diamonds - Tom Cruise

- 4 of Diamonds - Nicole Kidman

- 5 of Diamonds - Elon Musk

- 6 of Diamonds - Marissa Mayer

- 7 of Diamonds - Scrooge

- 8 of Diamonds - The Cat Woman

- 9 of Diamonds - Bill Gates

- 10 of Diamonds – Queen Elizabeth

- Jack of Diamonds - Edir Macedo

- Queen of Diamonds - Michael Jackson

- King of Diamonds - Janet Jackson


- Ace of Spades - Diego Maradona

- 2 of Spades - Flo-Jo

- 3 of Spades - Peter Sellers

- 4 of Spades - Julia Louis-Dreyfus

- 5 of Spades - Albert Einstein

- 6 of Spades - Lady Gaga

- 7 of Spades - John Candy

- 8 of Spades - Rhea Perlman

- 9 of Spades - Donald Trump

- 10 of Spades - Queen Elizabeth 2

- Jack of Spades - The Dalai Lama

- Queen of Spades - Yoko Ono

- King of Spades - John Lennon


- Ace of Clubs - Mike Tyson

- 2 of Clubs - Marta Vieira da Silva

- 3 of Clubs - Sylvester Stallone

- 4 of Clubs - Linda Hamilton

- 5 of Clubs - Joe Rogan

- 6 of Clubs - Martina Navratilova

- 7 of Clubs - Hulk Hogan

- 8 of Clubs - Grete Waitz

- 9 of Clubs - Ronald Reagan

- 10 of Clubs - Margaret Thatcher

- Jack of Clubs - The Buddha

- Queen of Clubs - Victoria Beckham

- King of Clubs - David Beckham


As I have said, this list is my list based on people I know, the culture I come from, my age, etc. It is important that you make your own list.

Now, to memorize the sequence of cards in one deck of playing cards using the PAO-system, you would only need a memory palace of 18 pegs. The reason being that each playing card has three, unique substitute images.

If you wanted to memorize ten decks of cards you would need 180 pegs.

I don't know how many pegs your primary memory palace has, but I'm quite sure it doesn't have 180 pegs. Don't worry. What you do is simple: you join memory palaces (which we'll get back to in a few minutes).

As a side note, you could, of course, just choose to work with the famous people, the P's, and not actions or objects, but then you would need three times as many pegs, and the creative visualization would probably take twice as long.

## Combined scenes

The great thing about the PAO-system is that each scene combines what would normally take three pegs, and at least double the time spent visualizing. However, for this to work you need practice. The good news is that practicing playing cards sequences like this is great for your visualization skills, and great

for really getting to know your memory palaces.

# Chapter two: Presidential practice

At this point, you should have set up all your memory palaces. Five based on houses, and five based on walks and journeys. When this is all set up, what you need is practice.

I recommend you also learn the substitute images for playing cards so that you can easily practice creative visualization at any time. You may not see any practical use for it, but practicing the technique will make all the difference later.

For memorizing cards, you use memory palaces that are devoted to "on the spot" memorizing. Information that you don't need to store for a long time.

I also recommend you devote some of your memory palaces to information that you want to store full-time.

### Information

Now this, of course, could be any information. And it depends on your interests. But just to get you going, and to have you see how you can take this memory palace thing, here are some ideas. And at the end of the lessons, I include some of these ideas with all the information you need to make creative associations, plus some examples so that you can get started immediately.

Of course, you can memorize all kinds of general trivia, like history, entertainment facts, geography.

World capitals, is a nice one, although you don't need a memory palace to store this info as I talk about in my course on general study techniques on my site. In addition to memorizing capitals, you could add second and third largest cities, main rivers, mountains, etc. You may not see the use right now, but these kinds of general knowledge memory palaces can be beneficial later.

Aside from geography, you could decide to store certain historical trivia. One of the simplest examples of this, but also quite useful for showing off, is the list of North American presidents. Being a sequential list, this is a typical candidate for memory palace storage. Good as a starter exercise, and for practice.

But it doesn't have to be presidents from the USA, of course. Other such sequential lists are kings and queens of the United Kingdom (or any other country, for that matter), Shakespeare's plays, etc.

Any list at all.

If you wanted to remember the events of one of the major wars, like the first or second world war, you could devote an entire memory palace to this. Get a textbook that condenses the events, or make a summary yourself, then plot in keywords and peg them to the pegs of your palace as these events happened on the timeline.

In science one useful thing to memorize is the periodic table (from chemistry), which would need 118 pegs.

Memory palaces can store any information but are (as mentioned) particularly suited for sequences and lists. You could permanently store textbooks on any subject using memory palaces, although the technique of memory maps probably is better suited for this particular area.

### Examples

I am going to give you some data to work on, to make it easier to get a few general facts into your memory palaces and to give you some real life examples of creative visualizations. I think that if you read through my explanations, a lot of the things that we've talked about regarding substitute images, keywords, etc. will be much clearer.

So let's start with the presidents of the USA.

There have been 44 presidents in the USA until the year 2016. It took me 50 minutes to memorize them in sequence using the memory palace method. Most of this time was spent coming up with substitute images for their names. Memorizing in itself does not come into it, it's all just creative visualization.

I do not want you to memorize this list right now. I will just leave you with the data and some examples. You can commit it to memory later on. With a little practice, it shouldn't take more than an hour.

Note that I suggest that you in some cases only memorize the president's last names. This will simplify things a lot, and sometimes you will even be able to organically remember their first names anyway.

If you choose to only stick with the last names, for now, you can later add the first names to the scenes. However, as you will see, in quite a few of the scenes I have included a way to remember their first names, as well, because it doesn't take a lot of effort once the main scene is set.

Also, note that I have not added the years in question. The reason for this is that

we will not get into mnemonics for numbers in this course on memory palaces. In case you want to learn that, have a try of the general study course. Later on, you may add this to your list.

## The list of presidents

Here's the list.

1. George Washington
2. John Adams
3. Thomas Jefferson
4. James Madison
5. James Monroe
6. John Quincy Adams
7. Andrew Jackson
8. Martin Van Buren
9. William Henry Harrison
10. John Tyler
11. James K. Polk
12. Zachary Taylor
13. Millard Fillmore
14. Franklin Pierce
15. James Buchanan
16. Abraham Lincoln
17. Andrew Johnson
18. Ulysses S. Grant
19. Rutherford B. Hayes
20. James A. Garfield
21. Chester A. Arthur
22. Grover Cleveland
23. Benjamin Harrison

24. Grover Cleveland

25. William McKinley

26. Theodore Roosevelt

27. William Howard Taft

28. Woodrow Wilson

29. Warren G. Harding

30. Calvin Coolidge

31. Herbert Hoover

32. Franklin D. Roosevelt

33. Harry S. Truman

34. Dwight D. Eisenhower

35. John F. Kennedy

36. Lyndon B. Johnson

37. Richard Nixon

38. Gerald Ford

39. Jimmy Carter

40. Ronald Reagan

41. George H. W. Bush

42. Bill Clinton

43. George W. Bush

44. Barack Obama

To memorize these presidents in this memory palace, I did the following:

### Memorizing the presidents

I set aside one memory palace that I have, a memory palace based on a house. Of course, I started with the front of the house, which in this particular case was not the front door itself, but a fence with a mailbox and a small gate. The mailbox was the first peg, so I visualized the image of George Washington being

stuck into a mailbox.

Since George Washington is such a familiar face for most of us, with his peculiar white hair, smile-less face, etc., I didn't feel I needed to make a substitute image for him. But looking at the list of presidents I am sure you realize that most of these guys are completely unknown, and therefore needs substitute images.

Like the next one, John Adams. But Googling the subject I found that John Adams looked like a fat cousin of George Washington, his hairstyle is similar, so I took the chance of using him straight off the bat, right into the visualization. Most people know that the second president of the USA was John Adams, but just to be sure, I placed a naked Adam (from the bible) next to him on top of the gate, having them perform some obscure acts on the second peg. Memorable.

The third president was Thomas Jefferson. Not someone I know what looks like, so here I simply imagined the famous actor Jeff Bridges to give me the keyword "Jeff." The peg was the small stone path that leads up to my memory palace, so I just visualized Jeff Bridges right there, sitting on a chair drinking White Russians (from the film "The Great Lebowski"). I will remember that "Jeff" is the keyword, and automatically I will recall the name "Jefferson".. This will trigger "Thomas" as well, seeing as his name is rather well known, but in your case, it may be different, so add "Thomas" if you like.

Three presidents down, 41 to go.

Number four is James Madison. And this calls for another substitute image. My first reaction is Madison Square Garden, which of course, is not square at all but round. So I visualized the whole stadium right in front of the front door...in a miniature version. I made sure to bend down, tear off the roof and have a look at miniature basket ball players playing a game. The keywords Madison was secure. Just to have me remember the word/name James, I picked up one of the basketball players and realized it was James Bond. James Madison. 40 to go.

As you can see, it is not always that difficult to add the first names. As I have said earlier, think of creative visualization as making small scenes, like scenes in a movie or music video.

Number five is James Monroe. Simple! I have no idea what he looked like, and no intention of Google'ing it, I simply held on to James Bond from the Madison scene, made him grow into full size, enter the door and observe Marilyn Monroe sitting naked on the table to the left. They then started to make out right in front of me. James Monroe.

John Quincy Adams was a little more difficult. The peg was a big vase of flowers. Looking at the name, I decided to go for the substitute image of Quincy Jones (the musical producer). He was caught inside the big vase but decided to break it and jump out. He broke the vase violently by grabbing (again) Adam (from the garden of Eden) and smashing him onto the vase, giving him quite a few bumps on his head. Quincy Adams number six. I didn't do it, but if I wanted to, I could have added John Lennon in the vase just to remember the president's first name.

President number seven is Andrew Jackson. I happen to know a guy called Andrew, so I placed him on top of my peg number seven (a sofa), and to make it memorable he, too, was naked, sitting next to Michael Jackson who did some unmentionable things to my friend. Easy to remember, hard to think about. But look, this is mnemonics.

Number eight? Martin Van Buren. Of course, he drives a van. The peg in my memory palace is a window. So a big van comes crashing in this window and out steps the actor Martin Sheen drinking a big glass of "beer." Yes, "burden" and ""beer" is a long shot, but this particular beer glass is U-shaped, so I remember that the "beer" is "bur," and the rest follows. Martin Van Buren. If you think that it's necessary to add an "n," make a creative association with an "n," perhaps the glass has an "n" written on it? Simply imagine this for a few moments, and in most cases, this "add-on-thought" will stick.

At this point, you might think that I am crazy and that this method would take way too much time, but as mentioned several times, only people with no real practice of mnemonics and the memory palace method thinks this. Those who get on with it, try it and practice, see how beautifully it works.

Number nine is William Henry Harrison. I think of Harrison Ford, so I place him in the corner where peg nine is in my palace: a telephone. He is not using it to talk to someone but is bashing in the head of William Shakespeare, While Henry Kissinger is sitting on the floor trying to stop him. William Henry Harrison.

President ten is John Tyler. I immediately think of Liv Tyler, as I quickly ponder how many presidents are named "John." The peg is a door (into a bathroom), so I have her tear violently down the door, which John Lennon is glued onto, while he is screaming "No, Ms. Tyler, please stop".

And this is the way I did it, president by president.

**Troubleshooting/comments/more examples**

As you can see, quite a few difficult names, but none of the scenes caused any problems.

Do remember, though, that these scenes are "mine," and that you cannot necessarily simply take them and think they will work for you. You always need to come up with your own associations, but it is good seeing how other people do this, to get some inspiration.

Let me just show you a few more of the difficult ones.

Number 19, for example, Rutherford B. Hayes. The surname Hayes makes me think about hay, and I imagine a stack of hay. To recall that it's Hayes with an -s at the end, I placed a few haystacks on my peg number 19 which is a table. "S" stands for "plural." A tricky substitute image this. So what I did, and this is typical, is that I worked some more on the image, and placed the haystacks in the shape of an S. I pictured a guy popping up from within one of the haystacks inside a Volkswagen Beatle car, saying "I'd rather have a Ford." I know...tricky, but for me, it worked. "I'd rather have a Ford" and "haystacks shaped like an S" became "Rutherford Hayes." The middle name I simply didn't bother with, although I could've had the guy attacked by a giant bee who didn't like his statement about the Ford.

Number 25 is William McKinley. A tough one (for me) to come up with a substitute image. The word "kin" is obvious, as in "next of kin," but how do you visualize it? You can't do that. And this is a good tip for not going for things that are too literal. What you need is the image of something that will give you the word "Kinley." Unless you have a family member called "Kin," thinking of "next of kin" will not cut it. On the other hand, there is a famous toy called "Barbie," and her friend is called "Ken." Ken alone will not do, so the next idea I had was to use the "Mc." I thought of a giant Big Mac, that had a Ken-doll inside of it. McKen.

As the word is actually "Kin" I stabbed the burger (and Ken) with a giant letter I.

Now, "li" is difficult, as well, but I wanted something to help me here, so I thought of "lie." Ken was, of course, lying down inside the Big Mac, and when I associated a Big Mac with Ken lying down, with my peg which is a refrigerator, it made sense. A giant Big Mac with a giant Ken lying down, sleeping and smiling while I take a bite worked well. McKinley. This process took me two minutes, but when I got it, it was completely secured. Just to remember the "William," I again placed Willam Shakespeare inside the refrigerator, in fact, it was he who handed me the Mc Kinly-burger.

There you are. Some examples of exactly how the memory palace method works. Again, you may find it completely ridiculous, but I guarantee you that it works.

Now, go ahead and spend an hour or two memorizing this list of presidents. Use one of your memory palaces, but not the one based on the house you currently live in or the house you grew up in.

Try using one of your walks/journeys.

If you find it difficult, break it down a little. Do 12 today, 12 tomorrow and the rest after that. In the beginning, these things will take a bit more time than when you have nailed it completely, but this is normal.

You need to put a little effort in at this point, to learn this method. So go ahead. Give it a shot. In the next chapter, we will look at yet another example of how you may apply this method before we start looking more generally at what you need to do the following ten days to get to the next level.

# Chapter three: Shakespearian practice

To get a few more real-life examples, which is the best way of getting to know the method, I will give you one more example of general information that you can fit into your memory palaces.

One very good use of memory palaces are memorizing speeches, and this we will look at specifically in just a bit. Let's just first see how we could memorize a list of Shakespeare's plays in chronological order as they were written/performed.

You may say "look, I don't see the reason for memorizing Shakespeare's plays…," OK, but the important thing here is simply that you go through the sample visualizations that I give you to better understand the method.

If you feel you don't need more help with the method, a little trouble shooting, etc., simply skip this lesson and go to the next one.

Keep in mind that the exact chronology of Shakespeare's plays is not easy to establish, even scholars disagree. But here's the consensus so far:


- Henry VI, part 2
- Henry VI, part 3
- Henry VI, part 1
- Richard III
- Comedy of Errors
- Titus Andronicus
- Taming of the Shrew
- Two Gentlemen of Verona
- Love's Labour's Lost
- Romeo and Juliet
- Richard II
- A Midsummer Night's Dream
- King John

- The Merchant of Venice

- Henry IV, part 1

- Henry IV, part 2

- Much Ado About Nothing

- Henry V

- Julius Caesar

- As You Like It

- Twelfth Night

- Hamlet

- The Merry Wives of Windsor

- Troilus and Cressida

- All's Well That Ends Well

- Measure for Measure

- Othello

- King Lear

- Macbeth

- Antony and Cleopatra

- Coriolanus

- Timon of Athens

- Pericles

- Cymbeline

- The Winter's Tale

- The Tempest

- Henry VIII

- The Two Noble Kinsmen

There are 38 plays. To memorize this list, I am using one of my memory palaces that are based on a walk/journey.

**The example**

First, play I treat as one. There are three plays on Henry VI (VI means 6 in Latin, so this means Henry the 6th). First is play number 2, then number 3 and lastly play number one.

OK, the first step is to find a substitute image for Henry the 6th. I don't know anyone called Henry if I did I probably would have used his image and possibly placed six versions of him on the first location of my memory palace. Then, in trying to remember the order 2, 3, 1 I would place two trees to one side and visualize all the 6 Henry's climbing up into these two trees, and then see a single tree on the other side with no Henry's. Two, T(h)ree, One. I don't know a Henry, so I am visualizing Henry Ford. I don't remember exactly what he looks like, but thinking about him I have a certain image in my mind, probably from a book I read at one point, so I decide to use this. In practice, this will probably work fine.

On my next peg, peg number two comes play number four. Richard the III. If you have some recollection of an actor playing Richard the III, simply use this actor's image. Al Pacino did a film called "Looking For Richard," so I simply place Al Pacino on peg number two - a doormat, seeing him wrap himself into a giant door map and shouting "A horse, my kingdom for a horse" (Which is a famous line from Richard III. In case you are not at all familiar with Shakespeare, just come up with a different detail to make the image memorable, anything will do, it doesn't have to give you any more information about the keyword Richard III). In case you don't know any actors who played Richard III, perhaps you know a Richard? In that case, place three of him on your fourth peg. Or use the same trick from above with a "tree," which rhymes with three. In case you do not know a Richard, maybe you can use a celebrity called Richard. There are few, one that pops to my middle aged mind is "Richard Clayderman," a popular pianist from the eighties. Richard Pryor is another possibility.

Again...I'm taking my time explaining the processes and possibilities here simply for you to learn better. In actual, live, memorization these visualizations take only seconds, maybe up to 15 seconds.

Peg number three belongs to play number five. "Comedy of Errors." My peg, in this case, is a door. So I want to incorporate this door in this scene. Seeing as the name "comedy" is in the title, I want to incorporate a comedian or a clown. Now, the keyword "error" does not give me any image that I can readily use. So this would be a case of representation. A student sitting at his desk, writing something in a book, then having the teacher come up to him and punch him for doing an "error" could work. So I see a clown (comedy) sitting on a desk that is

fastened to the door at a 90-degree angle (just to make it even more absurd), a teacher comes up to him, hits him violently and tells him he has done an error. This will, hopefully, have me remember that the phrase is "comedy of errors."

Whenever you work with difficult phrases, I think you'll find that if you go over your memory palace (with the information inside) a few times the same day, and a few times the next day, normally it will work well.

Play number six is Titus Andronicus. A difficult phrase to visualize. I know there's a famous wrestler in the US called Titus O'Neill, but I don't know him well enough to trigger the keyword "Titus." So this is a perfect example of breaking up meaningless words into parts to find images that are easy to see. The sad thing is that "Andronicus" doesn't give any real triggers either. The best idea I have is "tits" and "android" and "cuss." If I can somehow see a scene were some Android phone is being used with "tits," and perhaps someone "cussing," then I think I'm good. I will not go into details here, but I used the image of a famous wrestler and made a funny/absurd scene here. I made sure that the keyword "tits" came before "android" and "cuss."

And this is an important point because seeing as you make scenes not static images, you can make sequences to help you with the order of the different words/syllables of the keyword you want to remember.

I think you get the idea.

## Comments

I have given you two rather extensive examples of how visualizations/association is done, trying to focus on keywords that are difficult to visualize. Later on we will troubleshoot a little more, but for the time being, I think you have all the information you need.

The rest is up to you in terms of practice.

If you like, why don't you memorize this list of plays right now? Even if you think it's stupid to go around knowing Shakespeare's plays.

At least you have a specific suggestion for what you could memorize because I know for a fact that the problem most people face is not the lack of knowledge, but the lack of motivation to follow through with things. It shouldn't take you more than an hour and a half to memorize this list of plays, but I am assuming that you have memory palaces already configured and ready to go.

As mentioned, at this stage you should have five memory palaces based on

houses, and another five based on walks or journeys. So go ahead, devote one of your palaces to the plays of Shakespeare, but not your current house or the house you grew up in, as these places will be used to store "on the go memorization."

However, if you don't want to permanently store the plays of Shakespeare, simply use your primary palace, or whichever palace you have dedicated to "on the spot," short-term learning.

# Chapter four: The secret of joining your memory palaces

If you have followed my advice, you now have at least ten memory palaces. Next step is joining them like each palace was simply a room of a memory palace.

Let me explain.

### Joining your memory palaces

The idea of memory palaces is a fascinating one, and the "romantic ideal" is to have one, big palace where one can store all the information one needs. A real palace, with many, many floors, and hundreds of rooms on each floor. Each room full of distinct and memorable furniture, art and objects that serve as pegs.

Reality is different.

In real life, we live our lives in smaller houses. Our spatial memory is confined to smaller spaces. But this doesn't mean that it has limits.

If you live in a palace, or if you have a working memory of one, by all means...dedicate ten rooms in the west wing of floor 6 to English literature, ten rooms to Italian painters, the first floor to European history, and the attic to physics.

But the rest of us, what do we do?

We string together, join, palaces. You simply decide to list your palaces in a certain sequence so that if you need more pegs than your first house offers, it's just a question of you mentally jumping to the next memory palace in your sequence. And this is the technique you will be using in memorizing more than one deck of cards.

### Here's an example

I have 12 memory palaces based on houses and buildings, and another 18 based on walks. 10 of the memory palaces based on houses I use for specific, long term knowledge that I want to store permanently.

Two of the houses, and 18 of the walks, I use for "on the spot" memorizing.

This means that I simply leave them open to do memory feats, or simply to

remember day to day things, like an article that I read, a book, etc.

I have placed these 20 memory palaces in a sequence.

For instance, the first memory palace is the house I grew up in. Note that this is the house that I know the best, even better in fact than the house I currently live in, but still, I dedicate this house to "on the spot" memorization.

The reason is that I know this house so well, that it becomes easier to perform under pressure. If you ask me to memorize six decks of cards, for example, this is the palace I would use. So, contrary to what you may believe, I do not store "permanent" info in this house. Also, because much of the permanent info that I need, foreign vocabulary, geographical facts, etc., do not even need memory palaces, as you can see in the general course on study techniques that I have (I will talk a little about this at the end of this course, as well).

OK, back to my 20 memory palaces that I have joined in a list.

The first palace is my old house/the house I grew up in. The next is a certain walk in that particular neighborhood. The third and fourth other walks in that area. The fifth is the house I currently live in, and the next four palaces walk around that area.

Let me list this for you:

- The house I grew up in, 104 pegs

- A walk through the street I grew up in, 52 pegs

- A walk through another street, into town, 52 pegs

- A walk in another direction from my house, 52 pegs

- Walk 4, old house, 26 pegs

- The house I currently live in, 52 pegs

- Walk one current neighborhood, 104 pegs

- Walk 2, 52 pegs

- Walk 3, 26 pegs

- Walk 4, 26 pegs

- A grand walk through the city I grew up in, 52 pegs

- Street 1 city I grew up in, 26 pegs

- Street 2 city I grew up in, 26 pegs

- Street 3 city I grew up in, 26 pegs

- Street 4 city I grew up in, 26 pegs

- Grand walk city I currently live, 52 pegs

- Street 1 city I live in, 26 pegs

- Street 2 city I live in, 26 pegs

- Street 3 city I live in, 26 pegs

- Street 4 city I live in, 26 pegs

These 20 memory palaces total 858 pegs.

Since I have ordered all these memory palaces into a list, I can easily join all these palaces in order to memorize huge lists.

**Distance is not a problem**

The mind doesn't worry about distances. The house I grew up in lies 13000 km away from where I now live. Even so, I can "jump" from the last memory palace of my old neighborhood and go directly to the front door of the house where I now live, without any problem.

And this is what I suggest you do, too. As you can see, everything we have done so far supports this. Now, you don't necessarily need 20 memory palaces strung together, but perhaps at least start with the 10 you already decided on. You could model your memory palace system on mine. Something like this:

- The house you grew up in

- A walk in your old neighborhood

- Walk 2 in your old neighborhood

- Your current house

- A walk in your neighborhood

- Walk/journey 2 in your neighborhood

- Walk/journey 3 in your neighborhood

- Walk near your job

- A street in the city you currently live

- Street 2 in the city you live

Now, you may be living in the house you grew up in. You may be living in a different house, but same neighborhood et.c, etc. There are all kinds of possibilities. But at least you get the idea. Maybe you have lived in more than one house? Maybe your family had a second house, a summer house? Maybe you have more than one house now? Maybe you recall and ex-boyfriend or girlfriend's house? Maybe you have a large family, and can recall 10 houses just from uncles and aunts?

- Houses you have lived in

- Houses of family members

- Houses of old friends/ex's

- Houses you currently live in

- Friend's houses

- Walks around the neighborhood you grew up in

- Walks around the neighborhood you currently live in

- Walks around your job

- Walks around a town/city center

**Go explore**

Again, if you feel you lack inspiration for houses you could take your car, or bicycle, and explore areas around you. Paths, residential streets, commercial streets, buildings, parks, etc. Anyone, absolutely anyone, can come up with ten memory palaces with at least 26 pegs in each palace.

So....have a think about this now and decide on the ten memory palaces in a certain order. You can probably see what I did to easily remember the order of my palaces. The first five are in my old neighborhood, the next five in my current neighborhood, and so on.

In addition to ten memory palaces for "on the spot" memorizing, I would like you to devote at least three memory palaces to long term knowledge. Perhaps you like the idea of knowing Shakespeare's plays? In that case, devote the memory of your grandfather's house to those plays. Or your aunt. Or your friend...any house you can remember and configure as a memory palace.

So all in all, I would like you to have 13 to 15 memory palaces.

Assignment: Your assignment now will be to have a thing about these 13 to 15

memory places. Sit down with a cup of coffee, tea or whatever, and have a good think about houses you can remember, walks you can use.

I think it's fair to say that houses from the past are easier to remember than walks from the past. So when talking about walks, I suggest you limit those to walks that are in your current region. Walks you can easily check at any time. So the houses you know the best, most likely the house you grew up in and your current house, perhaps together with a summer house, etc., should be devoted to "on the spot" learning, and sequenced together in a chain.

Houses from the past and houses that are outside of your daily reach could be devoted to long term memory storage.

So, go ahead. Sit down and brainstorm your possible memory palaces, even beyond the ten you should have by now.

# Chapter five: Long term storage palaces

As you know, I think it's useful to have a set number of memory palaces devoted to "on the spot" memorization, whether you want to do speeches, memory feats, memorizing articles, books, conversations, or simply loose facts that may pop up.

But you also need a few memory palaces that may store permanent information.

Now, the way I teach memory techniques, is that memory palaces are not the "have all" technique for memorization. I find them excellent for memorizing sequences, and no doubt are they great for speeches and for memorizing books. But as you can see in my study course, I use memory maps for text books, perhaps in combination with a small memory palace just to remember the start of each memory map.

And when it comes to foreign vocabulary, I use the principles of memory palaces, without the need to "occupy" valuable, memory real estate. There is no need to use memory palaces based on "fully configured" houses or walks to memorize foreign words.

The same applies for phone numbers, credit card and bank account numbers, and a host of other, typical information that one wishes to memorize. The key to memorizing is triggering the memory. In a memory palace your memory of what the house or the route looks like, specifically, specific objects in the palaces, trigger the scenes that you made. But let's say, if you are taking a test in a particular classroom, you could use objects from that classroom to trigger scenes containing keywords about the test in question. You wouldn't necessarily need to be able to remember the exact layout in your head, as your triggers were displayed to you right there.

Of course, if your teacher decided to do the test in another room, you would struggle.

Likewise, just to talk a little bit more about triggers, if you want to remember the telephone number of a friend of yours, you do not need to put him into a memory palace of telephone numbers. Make a scene with your friend, so that

the memory of your friend triggers the scene where you place the telephone number.

It's as simple as that.

'Do you want to remember the number of your credit cards? Come up with a substitute image for all your credit cards, this could be the image of a bank building or any other substitute image, and then the number.

I know I haven't taught you a way to memorize telephone numbers, or any numbers apart from playing cards, I do so in my course on study techniques. But the principles are all the same. You come up with substitute images for numbers, and make absurd scenes that are linked to triggering images. My point is that you do not need to take up the space of your memory palaces to memorize these things.

### Some ideas

So, what about content for memory palaces? Think sequential lists. I have mentioned the presidents of the USA, Shakespeare's plays, the periodic table, human anatomy, historic events, etc. Sequential information. Lists of facts. Great for memory palaces.

But when it comes to facts like countries and capitals, you don't need a memory palace as the trigger will be the name of the country or capital itself.

And this is, again, important, because the more you can memorize without the use of memory palaces, the better.

The one thing memory palaces are useful for is the next topic.

### Speeches

A speech is like a journey, and any good speaker will tell you that the aim is not to remember a speech word by word like an actor would learn a monologue. No, the ideal is to remember keywords that trigger the thoughts you had when preparing the speech. And then you find a way to communicate your thoughts right then and there. So, it's perfect for memory palaces.

I will give you a few tips on memorizing speeches in the next lesson.

# Chapter six: Memorizing speeches

Memory palaces all started (or so the story goes, anyway) with a Greek man called Simonides of Ceos. Unless you have already done some reading on memory palaces, you probably haven't heard about him, but you can Google him.

He was a poet. Not completely unknown, in fact, he was considered one of the top nine, Greek, lyrical poets. But these days only fragments are left of his poetry, ironically. Because for memory scholars and enthusiasts, he is known for the importance of using your proper memory, not writing.

The story is this:

Being a poet, Simonides was commissioned to write a "victory ode" for a party that was being held for a man called Scopas. And the party got started, everybody ate and drank, and the poem was recited. But Scopas didn't like it, so he refused to pay Simonedes the full amount for it. I guess people were slightly intoxicated, and the discussion heated.

For some reason, and it's unclear why, Simonides was suddenly called to go outside, as there were two men looking for him, So he did.

When he got outside these two men were not to be seen. But something else happened. The house where the banquet was held collapsed, killing everybody, or at least most people in it.

Now they had a collapsed building with a bunch of smashed corpses.

Identification was not easy. They simply couldn't recognize the faces of the corpses, which was, of course, important to bury the right person in the right grave.

However, Simonides discovered that by thinking about the banquet hall, and its features, he was able to recall who sat where. And going about the ruins they were able to identify the crushed bodies accordingly.

This struck Simonides, and he got the idea for memory palaces. He later found the two guys that were supposedly looking for him, thanked them both for saving his life, and also for having helped him create a mnemonic method.

He first called memory palaces for memory theatres, but the principles were the same as you have been taught in this course.

Now, this story is most likely fiction, but it's a great way to remember the principles of memory palaces. A mnemonic onto itself.

## Memorizing speeches

Memorizing speeches was one of the first uses of memory palaces, or memory theatres. And it's well suited. A speech has a journey, in many ways a speech is a journey. And simply going through a pre-configured memory palace in your mind will have you easily remember keywords from the speech.

Most experts on speech writing agree that memorizing a speech word by word is not a good idea, as the very act of trying to come up with the specific words there and then, live, on the podium will have you make a more compelling speech. Often, when people simply memorize words, they just look like they've just memorized words as well.

The important thing with a speech, however, is to communicate ideas with the audience. Reach out. Memory palaces will help you do just that.

## Keywords

Some people prefer to write down the speech as they see it working best, word by word, then simply note down keywords, have a few good read throughs, memorize the keywords and then rely on these on the day of the speech. The work done researching and writing the speech will trigger the right words on the day.

Others do not even bother to write down anything other than notes, and rely on keywords to trigger these thoughts and take responsibility for "producing" the words themselves then and there. Fundamental, however, is that you have some thought process beforehand and that you note down keywords. Regarding memorization, these keywords will be linked to pegs in your memory palace.

Different types of speeches. Different styles

Sure, some types of speeches are better memorized or read word by word, like classic masterpieces like "I have a dream," and Kennedy's inauguration speech. But, these types of speeches are different. They are more literary and should be performed word perfect.

But more "normal," contemporary speeches can all be performed much more casually. And to help you with this you can use memory palaces. The important thing is that the same person that is to perform the speech needs to prepare it for memorizing it if memory palaces are going to work. So the very thought

processes, the preparation you do beforehand is what is being recalled by keyword triggers.

## One approach

If you are new to speech writing I suggest that you start out writing out the speech in the way you would like to perform it, note down keywords, work through it without memorizing, but simply looking at ideas, logic, development, etc., then simply forget about the speech, memorize the keywords and go for it on the day. And even if you don't write down a speech word by word, at least write 50 to 60% of your thoughts down before-hand.

# Chapter seven: Memorizing text books

One great use of mnemonics is, of course, memorizing books. Whether it is simply memorizing a book you are currently reading, to help get into it more – remember more details, or if you are studying some particular subject and want to commit entire chapters and books to memory for study.

As I have mentioned in book one, one of the great ways of memorizing text books is by using what is called mind maps, or memory maps. I talk about this elsewhere, for example on my site. Memory maps are a fantastic way of memorizing books, and in my opinion perhaps more efficient and more potent than simply using memory palaces.

But that doesn't mean that you shouldn't use memory palaces to memorize books. And it doesn't mean that memory palaces and books do not mix. On the contrary.

With memory palaces, you can potentially store chapters upon chapters in your mind, book after book. The essential thing is finding good keywords.

### Keywords

With books, you follow the same principles as for memorizing speeches. What you need are keywords. And you need to read and study the chapters carefully for the keywords to give you the right triggers. It would be difficult to read through a chapter one time, make some notes of the principal keywords, memorize them in one of your memory palaces, and then hope for the best.

What you need is several read-throughs, and some focused attention.

Having said that, the time you save not having to use repetition to memorize the keywords will speed up the learning process considerably. Once you see how much studying a subject using memory palaces help, you will never go back to studying without this mnemonic support.

### Chains of keywords for each peg

One of my first memories of the technique of memory palaces was from my last year of high school. A friend of mine taught me the principles, extremely rudimentary, and I had a go at it that same evening for a test that was scheduled for the day after.

This was a subject that I got modest grades in, economic geography I think it

was. But on that test the next day I scored a max grade. And the reason was that I had been able to recall what I read the previous day thanks to my memory palace and the way it served me the right keywords at the right time. The keywords reminded me of the content of the textbook.

One really interesting aspect of mixing the association/linking techniques that you learned in chapter one with memory palaces, is linking sequences of keywords from one peg only.

Instead of simply hooking one keyword to each peg, you link a chain of keywords to each peg. Each keyword is associated with the next, and it all starts with the peg and the first keyword.

This is not something everybody will manage right away, and it can get confusing. But think about the possibilities. If you have a memory palace with 50 pegs, you could, in theory, hook the chapter of a book on each peg, and then the keywords of each chapter in a chained sequence leading on from that first keyword.

If each book has ten chapters, you could manage to fit in five whole books on those 50 pegs.

Just to give you an example, it would look something like this

- Peg 1 – chapter one, keyword 1, keyword 2, keyword 3, keyword 4…

- Peg 2 – chapter two, keyword 1, keyword 2, keyword 3, keyword 4…

- Peg 3 – chapter three, keyword 1, keyword 2, keyword 3, keyword 4…

- Peg 4 – chapter four, keyword 1, keyword 2, keyword 3, keyword 4…

If you have studied these books a little in depth, these keywords will prompt you with just the information you need to recall each chapter. And thanks to the memory palace, you have a way of remembering the exact sequence of keyword for each chapter, and the exact sequence of chapters per book.

**The palace keeps all in one place**

Just imagine the confidence that kind of memory could bring you. Knowing that you have, within your memory, all the chapters of all the books you are working on, and all the keywords from each chapter.

Most people simply read and read, endlessly, each chapter, take notes, and try to remember by repetition. But using memory palaces, you do not need to spend any time "remembering", just focus on understanding the content and

finding the right keywords.

Another thing I found when studying, is that my understanding of the subject matter increased. Maybe it was the fact that I didn't need to spend energy trying to remember anything that made me relax more and also helped free up time that I could use trying to understand more than just memorize. Or maybe by being able to memorize everything quite early on, I was able to easily think about the contents of my textbooks more times, even when I wasn't reading.

I don't know, but I think a combination of these two factors were at play.

## Start assigning memory palaces to books you are reading

If you are currently studying any subject, I will encourage you to dedicate one or two memory palaces to textbooks on these subjects. Make a point of memorizing each chapter of these books. If you feel confident, by all means, try to make chains of keywords for each peg. If that seems too much for you in the beginning, simply use a peg for each keyword.

Spending some time memorizing keywords like this, by placing them in your memory palaces, will increase your awareness of the subject you're studying and quite possibly help you enormously on any exam or test you may have.

The earlier you start, the better. Plan, and make sure you set aside memory palaces for each book.

## Don't forget your notebook

As you can see, when you suddenly start using memory palaces a lot, the aid of a notebook becomes evident. It would make a different if you got into the habit of noting down each memory palace, with all its pegs. And also, in which sequence you are joining memory palaces, in case some books suddenly need more pegs.

If you're using memory walks (which I recommend), any photo/snapshot of pegs will further strengthen your memory palace. Not least give you the confidence you need. If you start worrying about a detail, it's just a matter of looking at the snapshots, and by regularly doing so you even strengthen your memory palaces further.

The more subjects you are studying, the more memory palaces you need, so, therefore, it will become quite important to continuously strengthen memory palaces that not necessarily are based on houses or places that you are too familiar with.

# Chapter eight: Memory palaces and learning languages

I have seen some memory teachers recommend people use memory palaces to memorize foreign word/ vocabulary. The idea is apparently that you set aside one memory palace for each letter of the alphabet. To me, this seems too complicated and even little efficient.

If you were to learn Norwegian, for example, that would mean 29 letters, because they use the letters æ, ø, and å in addition to the 26 letters of the English alphabet. So...is using memory palaces a good idea for those wanting to learn languages?

### Too complicated

First of all...this technique would require a lot of memory palaces. Also, the number of words with the same letter that you can memorize will be restricted to the number of pegs of your memory palace. Let's say you have 50 pegs in each palace, well that limits your vocabulary to 1300 words in languages that have 26 letters in the alphabet.

Also, when you learn a foreign language, most often than not you know what you want to say, but not how to say it. So if you are looking for the Japanese word for dinner, how are you going to suddenly remember that the word in question begins with a "b" and then enter you "B" memory palace to find *bangohan*? If you are listening, and want to understand a particular word, that word should similarly simply spring to mind without you needing to enter a particular memory palace and start walking around.

Also, what if you were to learn more than one language?

### More than one foreign language

Currently, I am studying three foreign languages, in addition to the two other foreign languages I speak, that means a total of five foreign languages. Now, does that mean that I would have to work with 130 memory palaces to learn a simple vocabulary of 1300 word of each language?

No, this will not work for me, anyway. I prefer using the meaning of the word as a trigger, and I have other techniques for dealing with more than one language.

So, if you want to memorize words, do not use memory palaces.

The only time I see a good use of memory palaces is if you are to memorize 20 to 50 particular words for a particular test. Then yes, I would recommend using a memory palace. And it would work like a dream so that this trick can be worthwhile for anyone studying languages in schools. But this technique is not really about learning words. It's more about performing a trick to get great grades at an exam.

## Neighborhoods

Still, there is one interesting aspect to memory palaces about learning foreign languages. And we will have a little look at it here.

In many languages, you need to know whether the noun is feminine, masculine or neutral. And some languages get complicated. German, for example, where there are some ways to pluralize nouns.

Well, take gender. Some teachers recommend turning a whole town or city into a memory palace and dividing the city into three areas, each for a different gender. So, let's say you're in New York. Well, all feminine words would be in Manhattan, all masculine words in Brooklyn and neutral words perhaps in New Jersey.

You would then decide on streets, landmarks, buildings that belong to each area, and, as you memorize words, link them to the respective neighborhoods. You wouldn't need to do that much of a job preparing routes and pegs within the neighborhoods. Because the great thing is that your brain will have a perception of these areas (if you know the city well). But at any rate, you should at least prepare a street or area of each neighborhood...secure a few buildings/shops/landmarks, for easy scene-making afterward.

In this case, you would use the foreign word as a trigger, then see in which neighborhood you placed that particular scene and automatically know the gender of the word.

## Use of space

I mention this because I think it is interesting for you to see how you can use spaces a little differently from a regular memory palace to trigger information.

Some people even think that if you take a particular city, you could mentally place all verbs in a sports stadium, all nouns in the city itself, adjectives in the park, etc. So, for example, if you were to memorize the foreign word for "book,"

you could visualize a bookstore in that city and visualize a scene tying "book" to the foreign word for book, right there in a particular bookstore. The verb "jump" could be located in the sports stadium etc. Adjectives, which describe nouns, could be placed in the park.

I merely mention this as a curiosity for you to see that you can use spaces more freely to place visualizations, not just strict memory palaces that you have configured in detail.

# Chapter nine: Learning how to conceive and build a virtual memory palace

So far we have been looking at configuring and using memory palaces based on real places. But virtual memory palaces are extremely interesting. And for some of us, virtually irresistible.

Yes, I am thinking about creating memory palaces completely from scratch. Designing and architecting a big house with many rooms to fill it with information. It can be done, and we will see how.

First, let's also think about some of the different forms of virtual memory palaces. Because there are people, who are making memory palaces out of movies, books, and computer games.

**A new world**

This, quite literally, opens up a new world of possibilities. Imagine, if you could be playing Grand Theft Auto, Call of Duty or Assasin's Creed and in doing so build the foundation for being able to store hundreds, maybe even thousands of pieces of information.

Think about it. Games most often involve you being in a point of view, maneuvering through a virtual world. Well, the more familiar you are with this virtual world, wouldn't it be easy, too, to use them as memory palaces? Many games have a particular route through that virtual world, automatically giving it a strong sequence.

Interesting? Yes. Easy, perhaps no. But possible.

Books, films, and art

And the same applies, interestingly enough, to books. If you think about a story, you know well, quite possibly it has a very clear narrative that includes scenery, places, people, and objects. Just like a memory palace serves as a great mnemonic trigger, the narrative of a book can do so, too.

Even books on art.

Let's say that you are particularly interested in art.

Well, you could use paintings as locations (loci) for information. Take one of the world's most famous paintings, for example, the "Birth of Venus," by Botticelli. You have several points of interest, several pegs there. You have a forest to the right, the woman with clothes on next to it, and you have the shell, the main (nude) woman, some weeds at the left, a winged couple above them, them the sea and the sky. That's eight pegs just there! Now, what if you were particularly interested in Botticelli's (the painter) paintings. Well, you could link them together to form a memory palace.

The sequence could be the particular way certain paintings are hung together in art museums or the sequence in which they are displayed in an art book. Or simply a sequence you decide on.

Some paintings are even better as memory palaces, like Leonard's "The Last Supper," or "The School of Athens" by Raphael. There are virtually endless possibilities for those who like art, movies, literature and video games. Depending on your interests, making memory palaces out of art, video games or books could be interesting.

### Building a non-existing memory palace from scratch

Let's finally have a look at creating a virtual memory palace based on a building that doesn't exist. This was Hannibal Lector's way of using memory palaces. And you have to admit that this is the ultimate memory palace regarding both scope, vision, and achievement. If you are not restricted to real, actual houses, then your memory palace can be infinite.

You would then only need one palace.

Also, a virtual memory palace is built simply with the aid of your imagination and visualization skills. You mentally construct a building with floors upon floors, rooms upon rooms filled with artwork, furniture, and objects.

### How can you do this

Let's say your dream is to build a new house, and you spend some time researching before you plan it all out on paper, and these days even on 3D architecture software like SketchUp. Could you not use this as a memory palace?

It is possible.

And if you can do it with a "normal" dream house, you can also design a virtual

dream palace, ten, twenty times that size.

It's all about engagement. An architect drawing a house can surely make a memory palace out of this house. He knows it that well. In fact, he was the person deciding where to put the different rooms, the staircases, etc. Where to put the walls. He knows it inside out.

Taking this one step further, after you have designed a building, why not start furnishing it with all the furniture, art and objects that you like and would want in your dream home. Such a work of passion would surely be remembered easily. And in this way, you could design a really big house with many pegs well suited for storing long term information.

What does your dream house look like? And what if you were to make a dream memory palace?

**Build your fantasy dream house**

If you could have a gigantic memory palace based on your fantasy house, with hundreds of rooms, and thousands of pegs, wouldn't it be worth the effort to make it?

You could model your dream home on traditional, European palaces, like English country houses/manor houses, or French Chateaux. The nice thing about classical palaces is their symmetry, which makes it easier to remember the floor plans. A traditional, English manor house has a central space and then wings to each side. It is very easy to memorize a floor plan from above, and if you make each room of the palace characteristic, this could work. Typical rooms in English palaces are:

- Vestibule/entrance hall

- Hall

- Drawing room

- Dining room

- Ball room

- Antechambers

- Billiard room

- Music room

- Library

- Etc

If you want to try making a virtual palace either based on traditional European architecture or your own, free design for what your dream house looks like, remember that this is a process that will take some time, so be sure to have some ordinary memory palaces to start with.

# Chapter ten: How to use apps and software to boost your work

In talking about virtual memory palaces, let's not forget all the great tools that now are available online. If you want to make a memory palace from scratch, simply based on your imagination, you can now use architectural software to great effect.

### Architectural software

If you spend a few hours each day for a few weeks designing a virtual palace, and then a few hours each day for another two or three weeks filling this palace with objects, and familiarizing yourself with it, I am convinced that most people would ultimately get a working memory of that house that was almost equal to a real house.

And with computer software, you can virtually enter your own fantasy house, much like a video game. Indeed, games like Minecraft are an excellent example. As well as architectural software like SketchUp and more professional ones like ArchiCAD, Chief Architect, and Punch Software.

Use these tools to create your dream, memory palace. And be sure to have plenty of rooms, each with a particular characteristic. You could distinguish rooms by color, such as having a green room, a red room, a yellow room and so on. Not just the color of the walls, but all objects of the room could be in that particular color.

Anyway, with software tools, you would be able to see and enter your dream house without any problem.

### Google Maps/Google Earth

And listen, while talking about software, let's take a look at a really useful tool for anyone working with memory palaces.

Google Maps and Google Earth is great for preparing and remembering your memory walks or journeys. These days a large part of the world is covered even with Google Street View, so making memory palaces out of journeys and walks makes sense.

You can save your journeys on your Google Account, and every time you enter

Google Maps, you will see them. If you want to check your pegs, simply click street view, and there you are. Fantastic for configuring a walk.

In fact, Google Maps is becoming so good that it is almost possible to make memory palaces out of virtual walks.

### Virtual walks?

Have you ever been to Rio de Janeiro? No? But even so, you could make a memory palace walk along the Atlantic Avenue of Copacabana, and secure 50 to 60 pegs quite easily. You could virtually walk through the streets of Paris and notice every single shop, cafe, and restaurant that exists in the neighborhood of La Marais. You could make memory palaces out of your Google Maps walks of the West End theatre district in London.

Which city is your dream destination?

But even if you don't want to make such walks/journeys from scratch, think about the possibility of refreshing your knowledge of trips you've had. Two weeks in Rome could become a gigantic memory palace with the aid of Google Maps.

At the very least, do strengthen your walks by marking them onto tools like Google Maps.

### Virtual architecture

If you wanted to make a memory palace from scratch. In other words, designing a building - your dream house - you should just go ahead and try it. Have a look at the software that's out there, and get going.

Start with making some rough sketches. Decide on the shape of the house, the number of floors, etc. Have a look through books on architecture. Maybe you want to go for a classical style? You could even copy some of the famous palaces.

Or maybe you want to make a fantastical building with all kinds of shapes and rooms. The latter would probably be easier to remember.

### Imagination, extravagance, and fantasy

Remember, too, that if you decide to go the virtual route, focus on making as many rooms as possible, but remembering to differentiate between the rooms. Add large spaces as well, where you can fit in many pegs. Like a cathedral.

As much as you should focus on architecture, focus on the pegs that you are going to furnish your buildings with. Art, furniture, but also absurd elements. Things you wouldn't normally find inside a house. A room could be a jungle room. The other filled with ice, like the north pole. Maybe your house has secret passageways that end up in other parts of the world. Paintings with "live" content.

Imagination has few limits, just like your memory has few limits.

There is very little literature on building virtual palaces like this, in fact, I think I am the only one talking about it, but do consider it. The possibilities are virtually endless for those who like to think big.

Personally, I am working on constructing a virtual memory palace with ten floors, one hundred rooms for each floor and about ten pegs for each room. For a total of 10000 pegs. This memory palace will be designed for information that I want to store long term, including history, art and art history, history of science, literature, philosophy, medicine, chemistry, etc. Classical, general knowledge that most people forget about as soon as they leave school. I do it mostly for the challenge, and this is a type of thing only those who are extremely interested in memory palaces do. Also because it takes quite a lot of time. But even if you "only" use regular memory palaces that we've been covering in this book, you will positively explode your ability to memorize any piece of information, so don't feel disappointed in yourself if you do not go into virtual memory palaces.

# Chapter eleven: Summary, and plan for going forward

In these two books on memory palaces, you have learned how to make creative mnemonic visualizations, and how these help you in remembering information. You have been introduced to the idea of memory palaces, and have seen how you can configure and use these, either based on actual or virtual houses, or walks and journeys. What's left now is just to start practicing the technique as much as possible. If you spend some time now, while the matter is still "fresh," you will lay the foundation for a lifetime of learning.

Set aside some memory palaces for long term information that you want to store, and use the rest as "on the go" memory palaces to store information that is not needed permanently.

Exactly how many memory palaces you need depends on your situation and needs. As you know, I recommend that you have at least 15 memory palaces, made both by houses and walks/journeys that you know. It may sound a lot, but I think you have seen how easy it is to set up a memory palace. Most of the work is already done by our memories. Our brains like images and locations and remembering spaces are easy. Your job is just to organize some of these spaces so that you have memory tools that you can use practically in your day to day life.

### General knowledge

I have a particular interest in general knowledge, and I think memory palaces are great for storing this type of information. You may ask what the point is of knowing world capitals or certain historic facts. And you may not even see a huge benefit to spending time setting up memory palaces to store this information. But on the other hand, this type of "dry," hard, "boring" information is perfect for memory palaces. Because if you were to learn these facts the normal way you would have to spend so much time just repeating endlessly. With the use of memory palaces, your job is reduced several times over.

It takes a very little effort to commit this information to your memory, and I think that the rewards of raising your level of general knowledge will be worth it.

Apart from general knowledge, you can, of course, use memory palaces for virtually any subject of your interest. As you have seen, if you are a student, it can be very useful. The main thing now is to keep practicing using your memory palaces, and using the technique. A few weeks well spent at this stage will pay itself back later.

If you are interested in more info on studying, mnemonics and memory palaces, please visit my website totalrecallmethod.com

Thanks very much for your attention, and good luck!

If you liked these two books, please support my writing by [leaving a review on Amazon](). This helps others find the books. You don't need to write an essay, just a few words about your opinion, and a rating (from one to five stars).

Thank you!

Sjur Midttun

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