21. People Have to Use Information to Make it Stick

I chose to embellish this topic because it is a simple concept that solves a lot of problems but can be easily overlooked. To start, the book says that repetition physically changes the brain, so when a task is repeated, your neurons become stronger. Memories are stored between these connections, so the stronger the connection, the stronger the memory.

One of my hobbies is playing fighting games like Street Fighter. In these games you must manually do complex moves with your fingers to win against your opponent. When a beginner starts, they will have problems doing basic inputs and may even “mash” random buttons to get a simple move out. As they gain experience, the player will eventually string these complex motions together to beat their opponent. If they stay with it, these experiences will stay with them and eventually they will be able to pickup new games much faster.

One technique people use to get better at fighting games is the 10-step method. This is where you practice a sequence of moves 10 times in a row until you mess up. If you do it 10 times congratulations, you have it memorized. This can be as simple as doing one move or as complex as stringing together multiple moves in a row.

People who play fighting games at a high level do this so that they can make higher level decisions during a match without messing up lower-level execution. Here is a video that gives a bit of detail but is fun to watch if you are interested. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pm9IECEnKHQ>

23. Memory Takes a Lot of Mental Resources

Here is a visual example demonstrating this point:

* Concerned
* Justice
* Republic
* Excel
* Chaos
* Freedom
* Chair
* Table
* Stick
* Light
* Computer

What words were you able to remember? Based on the text, it should have been easier to remember general words versus abstract words. Also, it should be easier to recall words at the beginning or the end of the list than in the middle.