



IMPROVING MEMORY

Venkat J C Kasibhatla

You Too Can Have a Great Memory

Of all the mental faculties of humans, the faculty of memory has been the most enigmatic from time immemorial. Most of us think that if a person is born with a good memory, he is lucky. We tend to categorize people into two segments – those with a good memory and those with a poor one. To set the record straight, every single individual on this planet has a fantastic memory power. Not being aware of this innate capability and lack of knowledge on how to put it to use (shall we say—no user guide?), we often tend to conclude that we lack a good memory.

Memory is needed every single moment of our lives. If there were no memory, each one of us would end up re-inventing the wheel on a daily basis, making it impossible to progress. Good memory is an essential ingredient to success and conversely, if one can achieve good memory by some means or other, one can succeed in one's chosen field of activity. Fortunately, there are very powerful techniques which help people to improve their memory power phenomenally.

The Three Rs of Memory

Human memory is a simple process consisting of three stages, viz., **Registration**, **Retention** and **Recall**, or the 3 Rs of memory. How long the data is retained and how effortlessly it is recalled is directly proportional to the quality of registration. Whenever we forget any data, it happens only for one reason and that is – improper registration. In other words, it may be called lack of attention.

If you did all the things you are capable of doing, you would literally astound yourself. ~ Thomas Alva Edison

How can we become more attentive while learning something in order to achieve longer retention and recall at will? The simple answer is ‘mnemonics’. As per the Wikipedia, a mnemonic (pron.: /nima:nik/, with a silent ‘m’), or mnemonic device, is any learning technique that aids information retention. Mnemonics aim to translate information into a form that the human brain can retain better than in its original form. The easiest and most natural way of manipulating data is to convert it into pictures – because the brain understands pictures better and remembers them longer. The science of mnemonics is so versatile that any information can be converted into pictures. Once you replace any info with a series of pictures, start connecting the pictures in a funny way.

This process may seem very cumbersome. An elaborate explanation on the greatness of memory techniques is not really needed. Instead, a case study would convince us better as to the wide variety of information that can be meticulously memorized and the vast quantities that one can take in one’s stride. The case study relates to one of my students.



A Case Study

Saswat Satapathy was a student of Delhi Public School, R K Puram, Delhi. Around the time that he was in class 7, he approached me at the end of my short talk on memory mechanics (which also included a couple of memory demos) to query whether he could also instantly memorize strings of numbers and words. I explained to him that any person can do so with proper training and some practice. The boy and his father, who was also there, immediately decided that Saswat would undergo training from me. I started giving him two-hour sessions every Sunday at my Delhi residence. We were also frequently meeting on Skype to further strengthen the communication.

Within the first two months itself, Saswat had achieved tremendous improvement in the areas of memory and learning fast track study skills, thereby giving him greater leverage on the academic front. He had started gaining popularity in the school and among friends and relatives by virtue of his new-found skills of remembering around 100 digit numbers, lists of around 50 names of random objects in a surprisingly short time. It was at that point of time that, I, Saswat and his father decided to take the training to the next level and initiate Saswat into memory championship training. I introduced some specialized techniques to help Saswat participate in memory championships both at the national and international levels. In the world memory championship, there are 10 disciplines comprising remembering numbers, binary numbers, sequences of playing cards, abstract images, imaginary dates and events, and names and faces. The major events have a duration of one hour for memorizing and two hours for recall. The speed events have durations of five minutes and 10 minutes respectively. The huge volumes of data to be memorized calls for very powerful and fail proof techniques.

He made his first ever appearance in memory championships in the year 2010. In that year, he secured the 3rd rank in the Indian National Memory Championship (Hyderabad) and the 11th rank in the World Kids’ Memory Championship (Guangzhou, China). In 2011, he secured the 13th and 11th ranks respectively. In the 2012 National Memory Championship at Hyderabad, Saswat emerged as the overall winner (first rank) and became the Indian National Memory Champion. He was declared the youngest ever national memory champion in the entire world by the World Memory Sport Council (WMSC, HQ: London). In the same year, he also clinched the worldwide 2nd rank in the World Junior Memory Championship. Apart from memory championships, Saswat was sponsored by his school to participate in and represent India at the World Mathematics Championship in Germany.

Saswat is a boy of varied interests. He is a good swimmer, an ardent fan of football—being a good player himself, plays golf, has achieved remarkable expertise in Vedic Mathematics and also makes handsome profits in the stock markets. As I look back I think that undoubtedly, Saswat was an intelligent boy even before he met me for the first time. But surely, on that day he was himself unaware of all that he is capable and proud of today. Memory training has done immense good to him and helped him excel at whatever he took up.

In conclusion, I would like to peep into the future of Saswat. A rare distinction of becoming the world's youngest Grand Master of Memory is awaiting the young, energetic and ambitious boy, that is, Saswat. Out of the three norms laid down by WMSC for granting the title of Grand Master, Saswat has already fulfilled two – firstly, memorizing the sequence of shuffled deck of (52) playing cards under 2 minutes (did it in 56 seconds at Hyderabad 2012) and secondly, remembering at least a 1000 digit number in one hour (did 1080 digits at London 2012). He is all set to cross the third barrier of remembering at least 10 decks (520 cards) of shuffled playing cards in one hour at the World Memory Championship 2013 to be held again at London. That day will swing him into the prestigious club of Grand Masters of Memory. He will be the youngest ever Grand Master in the world. And he also becomes the only 3rd Grand Master of this great country, that is, India. Out of the other two GMs, Nishant Kasibhatla is also my student (and my son as well). Nishant is the first Indian to have participated in the World Memory Championship and the only International Master from our country.

It is only a question of time that Saswat will become the World Memory Champion.

If a person has achieved something which is seemingly very difficult or impossible, we have to draw the conclusion that every other person on earth can also do it, provided one knows the technology behind it and is willing to practise till perfection is achieved.

Dear Readers, if you have the inclination and drive, you too can possess a great memory. If winning championships is not what you aim at, you can, with your phenomenal memory, excel in every pursuit of life—be it studies, a profession, an occupation, or a business.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Venkat J C Kasibhatla

Mr Venkat J C Kasibhatla is the founder-CEO of Memory Vision. He is an international trainer, speaker, writer and motivator. Memory vision is a training company specializing in workshops on topics like Peak Mental Performance, Memory Improvement, Fast Track Learning, Speed Reading, Mind Mapping, Vocabulary Building and Memory Championship Training. Memory Vision has its presence at New Delhi, Visakhapatnam, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. Since inception 17 years ago, Memory Vision has trained more than half a million people from all walks of life, across 14 countries in 4 continents. The participants of the workshops include students (from class VI to PG & professional courses), job seekers, competitive exam aspirants, executives (from freshers to CEOs), professionals, businessmen, teachers and parents.

He is the memory and mind-power consultant to the Limca Book of Records. He acted as an arbiter at the World Memory Championship 2010 at Guangzhou, China. He is the person who brought memory training to India. What he started decades ago as a personal hobby has now become the profession of his family. He encouraged his two sons – Nishant and Anant into becoming memory trainers when they were in their mid-teens. Both of them are now internationally known memory trainers working from Singapore and Kuala Lumpur respectively. Both of them are featured in the books of records like Limca and Guinness. Nishant is the first Indian to have participated in the World Memory Championship and clinched the titles of Grand Master and International Master of Memory. All these achievements were made possible because of the training, guidance and mentoring provided by Mr Venkat.

Role of Teachers and Counsellors

- ❑ To assess the psychological, social, physical and medical impact of abuse on the child and its family
- ❑ To consider the current and rehabilitation needs of that child
- ❑ To understand that it is best to listen to the child and consider the child's needs prior to taking any precipitate action

Response of Teachers and Counsellors

- ❑ Communicate your understanding to the child by taking seriously what the child is saying
- ❑ Assure the child that they did the right thing by telling you.
- ❑ Tell the child that they are not to blame for sexual abuse.
- ❑ Encourage the child to participate in games to remove feeling of isolation.
- ❑ Do not make false promises to the child.
- ❑ Never imply that the child should forgive and forget the abuser in order to heal.
- ❑ Protect the child and reassure them that you will promptly take steps to see that the abuse stops.
- ❑ Don't hesitate in reporting such matters to the police.
- ❑ Consult with the family physician immediately.
- ❑ Take the child for psychiatric evaluation.

Consequences of Child Abuse

Every child is vulnerable, dependent, innocent and needy, be it a boy or girl. So when they are sexually abused, there is almost simultaneously, violation of physical, emotional and mental state forcing the child to struggle through the survival cycle.



A vicious cycle sets in as the child feels shameful each time he/she recalls the abuse. The child experiences a sense of helplessness/powerlessness. The child with his/her feelings all locked up, grows up physically and displaces some of the sleeper effects of child abuse, which then have long-term consequences.

Preventive Measures Parents and Teachers Can Take

- ❑ Remember that child abuse is a crime in which the fact is known only to the abuser and abused, where the abuser enjoys the advantage of age, relationship and prestige.
- ❑ Establish a free atmosphere at home that encourages children to disclose anything and everything.
- ❑ In simple language, initiate the child's understanding of his/her own body and explain child abuse to the child without misleading him.
- ❑ Teach the child the difference between 'good touch' and 'bad touch'.
- ❑ Do not force the child to hug and kiss others, if he/she is uncomfortable.
- ❑ Teach them not to go near strangers or being friendly with them, even if they offer gifts or chocolates.
- ❑ Be familiar with your child's friends and daily activities.
- ❑ Initiate an understanding in the neighbourhood children to keep an eye on one another.
- ❑ Have faith in all what your child tells you and be alert to small changes in his/her behaviour.
- ❑ Be observant of any child/adult paying unusual attention or affection to your child.
- ❑ Equip your child with emergency telephone numbers.