

FUNDAMENTALS OF MEMORY DEVELOPMENT

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Fundamentals of Memory Development by Cameron B. Rowlingson

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OF MEMORY
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BY

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SECOND EDITION

Revised and Enlarged, with an Added Section on
HOW TO STUDY EFFECTIVELY

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To The Library of
The University of California
Presented by the author
C B Rowlingson
September 18, 1917

FOREWORD

Memory is the foundation on which your mental storehouse is built. A poor memory is like a foundation of sand—shifting, unreliable, uncertain. A good memory is like a foundation of rock—secure, certain, enduring. Successful men are men with good memories. The man with an accurate and dependable memory is the man who is marked for advancement.

These lessons are the result of study and research extending over a period of more than four years. The aim has been to make the course concise by omitting useless stunts and other impractical material; at the same time to make it complete by including all of the basic principles of memory development; in short, to make it clear, understandable, and practical, yet thoroughly scientific.

LESSON I

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is important at the outset to understand just what memory is and what is aimed at in its development, for unless we know where we are going, we shall be like the man in the song, "I don't know where I'm going, but I'm on my way."

A very good definition of memory is the one given by the Century Dictionary: "The mental capacity of retaining unconscious traces of conscious impressions or states, and of recalling these traces to consciousness with the attendant perception that they (or their objects) have a certain relation to the past."

Locke's definition is also good: "The power to revive again in our minds those ideas which, after imprinting, have disappeared, or have been, as it were, laid aside out of sight, . . . is memory." In other words, memory is the knowledge of a fact or event which, having disappeared from consciousness, at a later time reappears, together with the additional consciousness that we have thought or experienced it before.

Since the quality and quantity of brain tissue in a given person remains practically fixed, it follows that no system of memory training can enlarge what may be called the

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native retentiveness of the individual. The advancement must come in mental habits and in methods of learning; these are capable of almost unlimited improvement. Many bad memories are merely bad habits.

Your body is controlled by your nervous system, comprising brain, spinal cord, and branches extending to every part of the body. It is now an accepted principle in science that the brain may be regarded as a storage-battery, storing a form of energy in many respects like electricity, but which may be called nervous energy. Every activity of the body requires energy, and this energy is supplied from the brain storage-battery. Not the slightest activity of any part of the body can take place unless energy is sent to that part over the nerves, which may be compared to the wires going out from a central power station and carrying electrical energy to all parts of a city. When nervous energy arrives at a muscle it is transformed into motion—a process corresponding to the transformation into motion of the electrical energy arriving in a motor over the wires from the power-house.

Every purposeful act of life which is repeated at greater or less intervals is a habit, formed by the nervous current flowing repeatedly through a certain series of nerve wires and meeting with less resistance to its flow each time. The process may be very roughly illustrated in this way: if you walk across a freshly plowed field, there is consid-