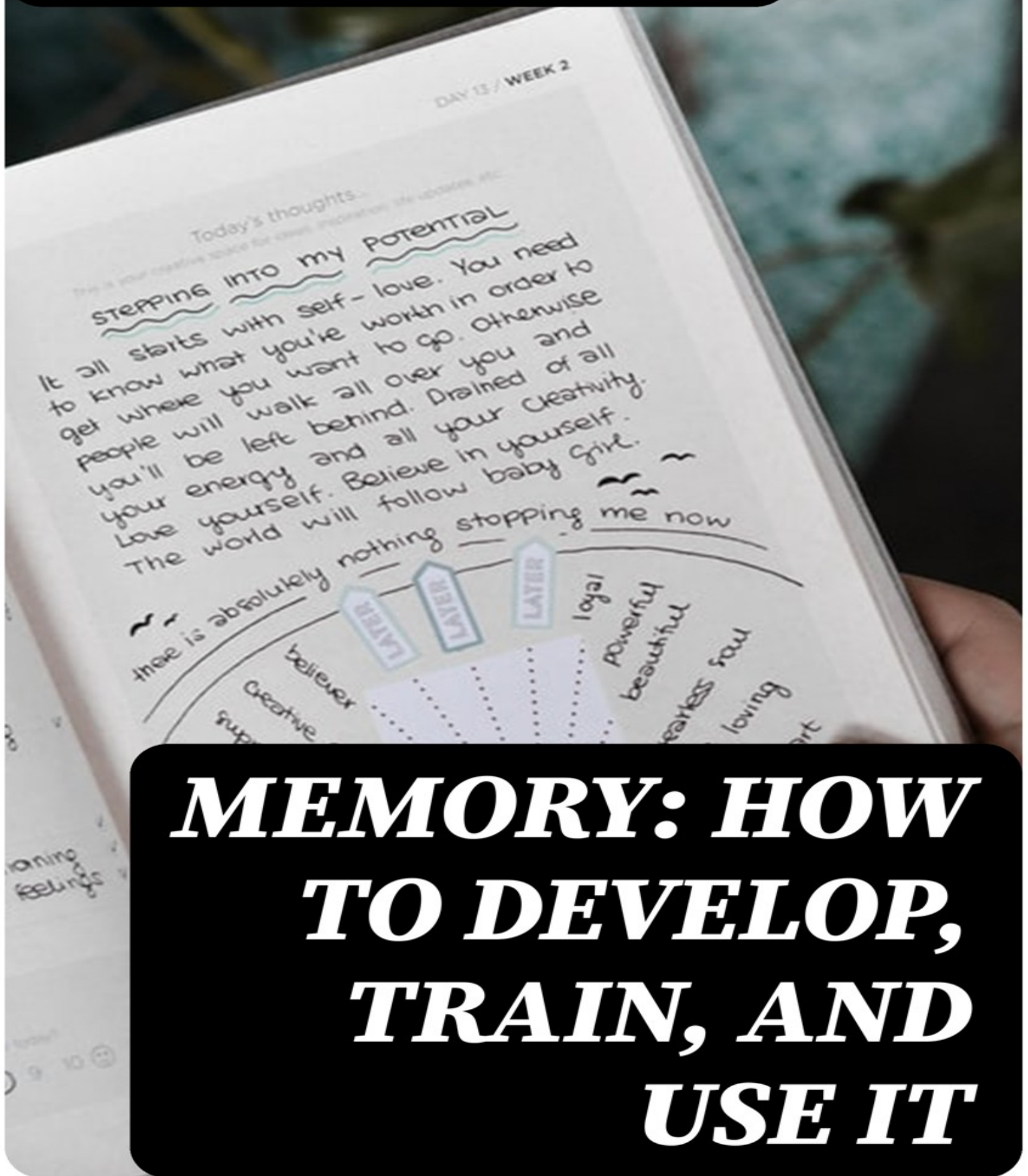


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***MEMORY: HOW
TO DEVELOP,
TRAIN, AND
USE IT***

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Memory: How to Develop, Train, and Use It

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CHAPTER I.

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MEMORY: ITS IMPORTANCE.

It needs very little argument to convince the average thinking person of the great importance of memory, although even then very few begin to realize just how important is the function of the mind that has to do with the retention of mental impressions. The first thought of the average person when he is asked to consider the importance of memory, is its use in the affairs of every-day life, along developed and cultivated lines, as contrasted with the lesser degrees of its development. In short, one generally thinks of memory in its phase of "a good memory" as contrasted with the opposite phase of "a poor memory." But there is a much broader and fuller meaning of the term than that of even this important phase.

It is true that the success of the individual in his every-day business, profession, trade or other occupation depends very materially upon the possession of a good memory. His value in any walk in life depends to a great extent upon the degree of memory he may have developed. His memory of faces, names, facts, events, circumstances and other things concerning his every-day work is the measure of his ability to accomplish his task. And in the social intercourse of men and women, the possession of a retentive memory, well stocked with available facts, renders its possessor a desirable member of society. And in the higher activities of thought, the memory comes as an invaluable aid to the individual in marshalling the bits and sections of knowledge

he may have acquired, and passing them in review before his cognitive faculties—thus does the soul review its mental possessions. As Alexander Smith has said: "A man's real possession is his memory; in nothing else is he rich; in nothing else is he poor." Richter has said: "Memory is the only paradise from which we cannot be driven away. Grant but memory to us, and we can lose nothing by death." Lactantius says: "Memory tempers prosperity, mitigates adversity, controls youth, and delights old age."

But even the above phases of memory represent but a small segment of its complete circle. Memory is more than "a good memory"—it is the means whereby we perform the largest share of our mental work. As Bacon has said: "All knowledge is but remembrance." And Emerson: "Memory is a primary and fundamental faculty, without which none other can work: the cement, the bitumen, the matrix in which the other faculties are embedded. Without it all life and thought were an unrelated succession." And Burke: "There is no faculty of the mind which can bring its energy into effect unless the memory be stored with ideas for it to look upon." And Basile: "Memory is the cabinet of imagination, the treasury of reason, the registry of conscience, and the council chamber of thought." Kant pronounced memory to be "the most wonderful of the faculties." Kay, one of the best authorities on the subject has said, regarding it: "Unless the mind possessed the power of treasuring up and recalling its past experiences, no knowledge of any kind could be acquired. If every sensation, thought, or emotion passed entirely from the mind the moment it ceased to be present, then it would be as if it had

not been; and it could not be recognized or named should it happen to return. Such an one would not only be without knowledge,—without experience gathered from the past,—but without purpose, aim, or plan regarding the future, for these imply knowledge and require memory. Even voluntary motion, or motion for a purpose, could have no existence without memory, for memory is involved in every purpose. Not only the learning of the scholar, but the inspiration of the poet, the genius of the painter, the heroism of the warrior, all depend upon memory. Nay, even consciousness itself could have no existence without memory for every act of consciousness involves a change from a past state to a present, and did the past state vanish the moment it was past, there could be no consciousness of change. Memory, therefore, may be said to be involved in all conscious existence—a property of every conscious being!"

In the building of character and individuality, the memory plays an important part, for upon the strength of the impressions received, and the firmness with which they are retained, depends the fibre of character and individuality. Our experiences are indeed the stepping stones to greater attainments, and at the same time our guides and protectors from danger. If the memory serves us well in this respect we are saved the pain of repeating the mistakes of the past, and may also profit by remembering and thus avoiding the mistakes of others. As Beattie says: "When memory is preternaturally defective, experience and knowledge will be deficient in proportion, and imprudent conduct and absurd opinion are the necessary consequence." Bain says: "A character retaining a feeble

hold of bitter experience, or genuine delight, and unable to revive afterwards the impression of the time is in reality the victim of an intellectual weakness under the guise of a moral weakness. To have constantly before us an estimate of the things that affect us, true to the reality, is one precious condition for having our will always stimulated with an accurate reference to our happiness. The thoroughly educated man, in this respect, is he that can carry with him at all times the exact estimate of what he has enjoyed or suffered from every object that has ever affected him, and in case of encounter can present to the enemy as strong a front as if he were under the genuine impression. A full and accurate memory, for pleasure or for pain, is the intellectual basis both of prudence as regards self, and sympathy as regards others."

So, we see that the cultivation of the memory is far more than the cultivation and development of a single mental faculty—it is the cultivation and development of our entire mental being—the development of our *selves*.

To many persons the words memory, recollection, and remembrance, have the same meaning, but there is a great difference in the exact shade of meaning of each term. The student of this book should make the distinction between the terms, for by so doing he will be better able to grasp the various points of advice and instruction herein given. Let us examine these terms.

Locke in his celebrated work, the "Essay Concerning Human Understanding" has clearly stated the difference between the meaning of these several terms. He says: "Memory is the power to revive again in our minds those

ideas which after imprinting, have disappeared, or have been laid aside out of sight—when an idea again recurs without the operation of the like object on the external sensory, it is *remembrance*; if it be sought after by the mind, and with pain and endeavor found, and brought again into view, it is *recollection*." Fuller says, commenting on this: "Memory is the power of reproducing in the mind former impressions, or percepts. Remembrance and Recollection are the exercise of that power, the former being involuntary or spontaneous, the latter volitional. We remember because we cannot help it but we recollect only through positive effort. The act of remembering, taken by itself, is involuntary. In other words, when the mind remembers without having tried to remember, it acts spontaneously. Thus it may be said, in the narrow, contrasted senses of the two terms, that we remember by chance, but recollect by intention, and if the endeavor be successful that which is reproduced becomes, by the very effort to bring it forth, more firmly intrenched in the mind than ever."

But the New Psychology makes a little different distinction from that of Locke, as given above. It uses the word memory not only in his sense of "The power to revive, etc.," but also in the sense of the activities of the mind which tend to receive and store away the various impressions of the senses, and the ideas conceived by the mind, to the end that they may be reproduced voluntarily, or involuntarily, thereafter. The distinction between remembrance and recollection, as made by Locke, is adopted as correct by The New Psychology.

It has long been recognized that the memory, in all of its phases, is capable of development, culture, training and guidance through intelligent exercise. Like any other faculty of mind, or physical part, muscle or limb, it may be improved and strengthened. But until recent years, the entire efforts of these memory-developers were directed to the strengthening of that phase of the memory known as "recollection," which, you will remember, Locke defined as an idea or impression "sought after by the mind, and with pain and endeavor found, and brought again into view." The New Psychology goes much further than this. While pointing out the most improved and scientific methods for "recollecting" the impressions and ideas of the memory, it also instructs the student in the use of the proper methods whereby the memory may be stored with clear and distinct impressions which will, thereafter, flow naturally and involuntarily into the field of consciousness when the mind is thinking upon the associated subject or line of thought; and which may also be "re-collected" by a voluntary effort with far less expenditure of energy than under the old methods and systems.

You will see this idea carried out in detail, as we progress with the various stages of the subject, in this work. You will see that the first thing to do is *to find something to remember*; then to impress that thing clearly and distinctly upon the receptive tablets of the memory; then to exercise the remembrance in the direction of bringing out the stored-away facts of the memory; then to acquire the scientific methods of recollecting special items of memory that may be necessary at some special time. This is the natural

method in memory cultivation, as opposed to the artificial systems that you will find mentioned in another chapter. It is not only development of the memory, but also development of the mind itself in several of its regions and phases of activity. It is not merely a method of recollecting, but also a method of correct seeing, thinking and remembering. This method recognizes the truth of the verse of the poet, Pope, who said: "Remembrance and reflection how allied! What thin partitions sense from thought divide!"



CHAPTER II.

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CULTIVATION OF THE MEMORY.

This book is written with the fundamental intention and idea of pointing out a rational and workable method whereby the memory may be developed, trained and cultivated. Many persons seem to be under the impression that memories are bestowed by nature, in a fixed degree or possibilities, and that little more can be done for them—in short, that memories are born, not made. But the fallacy of any such idea is demonstrated by the investigations and experiments of all the leading authorities, as well as by the results obtained by persons who have developed and cultivated their own memories by individual effort without the assistance of an instructor. But all such improvement, to be real, must be along certain natural lines and in accordance with the well established laws of psychology, instead of along artificial lines and in defiance of psychological principles. Cultivation of the memory is a far different thing from "trick memory," or feats of mental legerdemain if the term is permissible.

Kay says: "That the memory is capable of indefinite improvement, there can be no manner of doubt; but with regard to the means by which this improvement is to be effected mankind are still greatly in ignorance." Dr. Noah Porter says: "The natural as opposed to the artificial memory depends on the relations of sense and the relations of thought,—the spontaneous memory of the eye and the ear availing itself of the obvious conjunctions of objects

which are furnished by space and time, and the rational memory of those higher combinations which the rational faculties superinduce upon those lower. The artificial memory proposes to substitute for the natural and necessary relations under which all objects must present and arrange themselves, an entirely new set of relations that are purely arbitrary and mechanical, which excite little or no other interest than that they are to aid us in remembering. It follows that if the mind tasks itself to the special effort of considering objects under these artificial relations, it will give less attention to those which have a direct and legitimate interest for itself." Granville says: "The defects of most methods which have been devised and employed for improving the memory, lies in the fact that while they serve to impress particular subjects on the mind, they do not render the memory, as a whole, ready or attentive." Fuller says: "Surely an art of memory may be made more destructive to natural memory than spectacles are to eyes." These opinions of the best authorities might be multiplied indefinitely—the consensus of the best opinion is decidedly against the artificial systems, and in favor of the natural ones.

Natural systems of memory culture are based upon the fundamental conception so well expressed by Helvetius, several centuries ago, when he said: "The extent of the memory depends, first, on the daily use we make of it; secondly, upon the attention with which we consider the objects we would impress upon it; and, thirdly, upon the order in which we range our ideas." This then is the list of the three essentials in the cultivation of the memory: (1)

Use and exercise; review and practice; (2) Attention and Interest; and (3) Intelligent Association.

You will find that in the several chapters of this book dealing with the various phases of memory, we urge, first, last, and all the time, the importance of the use and employment of the memory, in the way of employment, exercise, practice and review work. Like any other mental faculty, or physical function, the memory will tend to atrophy by disuse, and increase, strengthen and develop by rational exercise and employment within the bounds of moderation. You develop a muscle by exercise; you train any special faculty of the mind in the same way; and you must pursue the same method in the case of the memory, if you would develop it. Nature's laws are constant, and bear a close analogy to each other. You will also notice the great stress that we lay upon the use of the faculty of attention, accompanied by interest. By attention you acquire the impressions that you file away in your mental record-file of memory. And the degree of attention regulates the depth, clearness and strength of the impression. Without a good record, you cannot expect to obtain a good reproduction of it. A poor phonographic record results in a poor reproduction, and the rule applies in the case of the memory as well. You will also notice that we explain the laws of association, and the principles which govern the subject, as well as the methods whereby the proper associations may be made. Every association that you weld to an idea or an impression, serves as a cross-reference in the index, whereby the thing is found by remembrance or recollection when it is needed. We call your attention to the

fact that one's entire education depends for its efficiency upon this law of association. It is a most important feature in the rational cultivation of the memory, while at the same time being the bane of the artificial systems. Natural associations educate, while artificial ones tend to weaken the powers of the mind, if carried to any great length.

There is no Royal Road to Memory. The cultivation of the memory depends upon the practice along certain scientific lines according to well established psychological laws. Those who hope for a sure "short cut" will be disappointed, for none such exists. As Halleck says: "The student ought not to be disappointed to find that memory is no exception to the rule of improvement by proper methodical and long continued exercise. There is no royal road, no short cut, to the improvement of either mind or muscle. But the student who follows the rules which psychology has laid down may know that he is walking in the shortest path, and not wandering aimlessly about. Using these rules, he will advance much faster than those without chart, compass, or pilot. He will find mnemonics of extremely limited use. Improvement comes by orderly steps. Methods that dazzle at first sight never give solid results."

The student is urged to pay attention to what we have to say in other chapters of the book upon the subjects of attention and association. It is not necessary to state here the particulars that we mention there. The cultivation of the attention is a prerequisite for good memory, and deficiency in this respect means deficiency not only in the field of memory but also in the general field of mental work. In all branches of The New Psychology there is found a constant