

is really going to help lock these words down for you.

At this point, you've probably memorized most if not all the words on your list. At the same time, you're likely wondering how this is going to help you remember all the details in a presentation you're giving.

DELIVERING A GREAT DEAL OF INFORMATION WITHOUT NOTES

As we've discussed, your memory is fundamental to nearly everything you do. There's really no way to unlimit yourself without having a well-trained memory, because memory governs your ability to reason, to calculate possible outcomes, and to serve as a resource to others. And sometimes you just need to be able to deliver a significant amount of information to a person or a

group of people at once. This might take the form of delivering a report to your board, giving a speech to an assemblage, sharing your expertise in a subject in front of your class, or any number of other situations. And in many of these cases, it's critical that you be able to do this without having any notes in front of you, because the notes would suggest that you are less well versed in the material than you should be.

I've been teaching business executives, students, actors, and others a time-honored technique for making their presentations without notes. And when I say time-honored, I mean this quite literally. The method I teach and that I'm going to share with you now is a version of the loci method, something that has been around for more than 2,500 years.

The legend behind the loci method is that the Greek poet Simonides of Ceos survived a building collapse that killed all others in attendance.

When officials tried to identify the victims, Simonides was the only person who could help them, because he remembered who the victims were based on where they were standing at the time of the collapse. In the process, Simonides created a memory tool that is as effective today as it was in 500 B.C.

Loci is the plural version of the word *locus*, which means “a particular point or place.” The loci method, then, is a memory tool that aligns the things you want to remember with specific points or places that you know well. Here’s how I teach it:

- Identify the 10 major talking points from your presentation. These can be keywords or phrases or perhaps quotations that you want to incorporate. They should not, however, be multiple paragraphs long, as that will make this process cumbersome and

your presentation feel stiff and overly rehearsed. The assumption here is that you know your topic well and that you have some facility with the material. This method is designed to help bring each of the key points to the forefront of your mind when you need them.

- Now imagine a place that you know well. This can be a part of your home, a street that you walk often, a nearby park, or anything else with which you have a great deal of familiarity and that you can easily recall vividly.
- Now consider a path through that location. If it’s a room in your house, for example, imagine walking into that room and traveling through it. Identify 10 spots in this room that you can quickly see in your mind. Maybe one is the lamp in the corner that you

see as you enter the room. Perhaps another is the chair just to the left of that lamp. The next might be the side table next to that chair, and so on. Make this path as procedural as possible. Zig-zagging around the space is likely to be less productive. Just see yourself walking through this space clockwise noticing what you always notice as you pass each item.

- Once you've picked out your 10 locations, assign a major talking point to each of these locations. Be sure to make the order of your talking points match the order in which you walk through the room. For example, using the room we just described, if the first thing you want to say is the keynote message to your entire presentation, assign that to the lamp. If the next major talking point is an essential product detail or a key historical fact, assign that to the chair, and so on.

- Now practice your presentation, using your walk through the location as a tool for remembering each of the primary messages in the presentation. Each component of the presentation should come to you as you need it.

As with all tools, this memory tool might require some time for you to become expert at it, but it will likely begin to help you immediately. With practice you should find it possible for you to access large chunks of information without referring to your notes. Your recall will improve dramatically, and your speeches and reports will seem more natural. You can employ this approach whenever you need to memorize in bulk.

BONUS TOOL 1: A QUICK WAY TO REMEMBER EVERYONE'S NAME

As we discussed earlier, failure to remember

something like the name of a person you've just met is often a case of your not being attentive in that moment. Remembering MOM can be enormously helpful in that regard. But I also have a technique specifically geared to helping people remember names that you might find useful. The mnemonic here is BE SUAVE:

- **B is for Believe:** Believing that you're going to be able to do this is the essential first step. If you try hard enough to convince yourself that you can't remember names, you'll succeed.
- **E is for Exercise:** As with the other tools in this book, doing this is going to take some practice, but you should be able to become very good at this very quickly.
- **S is for Say it:** When you hear a person's name for the first time, say it back. This will

both confirm that you heard the name correctly and offer you the opportunity to hear the name twice.

- **U is for Use it:** During the course of your conversation with this person, use their name. This will help lock it in.
- **A is for Ask:** Ask where a person's name came from. This would be a bit odd if you were asking about a name like "Jim," but it's particularly helpful when meeting someone with a less-common name.
- **V is for Visualization:** Vision is an incredibly powerful memory tool, as we already saw with the loci method. Try to attach an image to a person's name. For example, if you meet someone named Mary, you can imagine that person wearing a wedding veil on the day she gets married.

- **E is for End:** When you part ways with that person, end your conversation by saying the person's name.

BONUS TOOL 2: A QUICK WAY TO REMEMBER VOCABULARY AND LANGUAGES

Vocabulary is one of the cornerstones of learning. To remember the meaning of words is easy; just use the very same systems you have been using. One of the most powerful concepts is word substitution. You already know how to do this, you just now have a name or a vocabulary term for it. Word substitution is the process of turning intangible (hard to picture) information into an image that is more concrete and easy to visualize.

Here are some examples of word substitutions:

- Nitrogen can be a knight
- Monroe can be a man rowing
- Washington can be by a washing machine
- Armstrong can be by a strong arm

The main idea behind word substitution is coming up with a picture (or series of linked pictures) that sounds similar enough to remind you of the original word. This abstract word, idea, or concept that was once so difficult to understand is now not so foreign. By creating a picture of the word, you now have something more tangible, something you can see. Remember that we tend to remember that which we create. Some more examples:

- Cytology, *the study of cells*. You see a towel with a huge “G” (cytology) on it. You have always wanted one, so you take it, and you are

thrown in a jail cell. Or you sigh, looking at your toe, in a low G (sigh toe low G), but this is not allowed and you are put in a cell and forced to study. Even though this is thoroughly bizarre, it is very memorable, and it works!

- *Lenient, compassionate, gentle.* Picture a leaning ant (an ant leaning). The ant is leaning on a clean wall and getting it dirty. His mother, instead of being angry, is compassionate and gentle.

This system can be used for practically anything, including learning foreign languages, which works the same way as remembering vocabulary. In fact, some of the vocabulary words you encounter in English might as well be in another language! For example:

- *Très bien* (French), which sounds like tray bean, means “very good.” Picture yourself babysitting and rewarding the child a silver tray with a giant bean on it. The child was very good.
- *Facile* (French), which sounds like face eel, means “easy.” Picture a friend challenging you to hold an eel close to your face; you do it and say, “That’s easy!”
- *Travailler* (French), which sounds like traveler, means “to work.” Picture a traveler coming up to you and inviting you on a vacation, but you can’t go because you have to work.
- *Escargot* (French), which sounds like scar go, means “snail.” Picture a snail getting into an S-car (car shaped like an S) and making the car go.

- *Merci* (French), which sounds like mare sea, means “thank you.” Picture yourself saving a mare from drowning in the sea. She then says “thank you.”
- *Aprender* (Spanish), which sounds like a blender, means “to learn.” Picture yourself taking your books and putting them in a blender.
- *Escuela* (Spanish), which sounds like S-quail, means “school.” Picture a quail with a giant superman S on its chest going to your school.
- *Ayuda* (Spanish), which sounds like are-you-the, means “help.” Picture yourself drowning (in need of help) and someone comes to rescue you and asks, “Are you the person drowning?”

- *Mando* (Spanish), which sounds like man (or moon) doe, means “to command.” Picture a man commanding a doe to jump to the moon.
- *Estrada* (Spanish), which sounds like extra day, means “road or highway.” Picture yourself going on vacation and being stuck in traffic for an extra day on the highway.

Try these Spanish terms on your own:

- *Desventaja* (handicap)
- *Pelo* (hair)
- *Bolso* (handbag)
- *Dinero* (money)
- *Leer* (read)

I’ve used these examples to better introduce you to the basics. Build upon them and under-

stand their significance. You can use these skills for practically anything. These systems are both flexible and universal. For example, if you want to remember whether a word is masculine or feminine, simply add the picture of a top hat for masculine words and a dress for feminine words. There are no rules, so be creative and outrageous, and have fun with them!

STACK IT

To learn new vocabulary or foreign-language words, combine the strategy above with methods that you've already learned from our chapter on study. For example, we talked about spaced repetition. That would be extremely valuable in this application. We talked about using music. Baroque music is very effective at helping to learn languages. The study techniques already in your toolkit will serve a bold

new purpose here.

BEFORE WE MOVE ON

I hope you can see now that having a well-trained memory is an essential part of unlimiting yourself. When your memory is finely tuned, you're exponentially stronger than if you're trying to get by with an untrained memory. This book covers the foundation to jump-start your memory. Visit www.LimitlessBook.com/resources to get the three-part memory training videos as my gift to you. Before we move on to the next chapter, try a few things:

- Think about ways to provide yourself with greater motivation to remember. Simply thinking it would be nice to have a better memory is probably not enough.

- Consider ways in which you can try to be less influenced by distractions when you're in a situation where remembering something might be important. I'm going to give you some tools to help with this later in this book, but what can you do right now to help you focus more?
- Take each of the tools I've provided in this chapter out for a spin. There's a good chance you'll see a noticeable difference in your memory right away.