





Section the Third

*Advanced Failure – Getting Into and
Bringing Down the Organisation*

Congratulations you are now playing with the Big Boys and Girls of failure. We're into realms of unparalleled damage and destruction. Here we learn just what you can do to damage yourself, your team and your whole business.

Thanks for the memories

Right, if we're going to take on the whole organisation you're going to have the mental agility to do so. So let's look at how your memory works so you can either build it up to remember past failures or so

you can choose to live in blissful ignorance of days gone by. How does the World Memory champion remember 520 playing cards in random order, when asked to recall them having studied them only for 20 minutes? How do they teach people with poor memories how to remember 40 random words in order in only 15 minutes on TV entertainment shows?

The brain records things in three ways. These are:

1 *The Replacement Technique*: where you have already learned something, but got it wrong. Think of things you get wrong time and again – for example spelling a word. This is the most difficult method of learning since you’ve already fixed it firmly in your head.

2 *Repetition*: where we tell ourselves something time and again until it sticks in your noggin. This is hard work and not as successful as you’d like.

3 *Association*: the best way, where we learn by linking one thing to another. Memories work in chains and are linked to things that come before and after them. To illustrate this take the list of things you have to buy today. Say you need: bacon, a table, toilet rolls, a dog, newspaper, a semi-detached house, new Wellington boots, a birthday card for the mother-in-law..etc.etc. We’ve tried to choose really obscure things to make the point about how easy this is. Try just looking at this list and repeating the words to yourself without looking. It’s not all that easy.

Next, tell yourself a story involving all these things. The story needs to be multi-sensory. Picture the story in your mind: see what you would see, hear what you would hear and feel what you would feel.

For example:

*You walk into your kitchen and smell freshly cooked **bacon**, you turn round and see it lying on the big round **table**, a beige puppy **dog** walks in carrying **toilet rolls** in its mouth but drops it and runs off with today’s **newspaper** which has a picture of you on the front. You go to follow it but have to put on your bright red **Wellington boots** first and follow it towards a very small wooden*

semi-detached house. *You knock on the door and it is opened by your furious mother-in-law who demands to know why you forgot her birthday card. You rush off to buy a card...*

If you repeat it once or twice then all the things should be locked away to be recalled when you get to the shops. This technique of memory through association works for everything.

The act of remembering things is much easier if there is something to link it to, but it doesn't have to work in chains as above.

Visual associations by themselves work a treat. This is why people learn language much quicker in foreign countries. They see something like a delicatessen and remember what it was called last time. This is much easier than staring at a book and saying the word over and over again.

The process is enhanced by all sorts of stimuli – sounds, smells, sights, emotions and so on. This is why emotional events tend to be ones where you say “I remember it like it was yesterday...”

Even the most abstract things can be remembered if you use association. Take surnames of people, their jobs and where they work. For example, one of your Professors is Mr Millar who is (at the time of writing) a deputy news editor. If you'd just met briefly with the aforementioned Mr Millar – say in a busy room where you're networking – you might easily forget names, jobs etc. But what if you looked at him (and my, isn't he handsome?) and imagined a man with flour on his hands outside a windmill and wearing a deputy sheriff's badge? That makes things much easier.

If you just want to be able to put a name to a face then when you first meet someone look for a characteristic – a huge nose for example – that stands out as this will act as a simple form of association. If they look like someone famous, that works too.

As you will have seen throughout this book we love working with animals. With this thought in mind we challenge you to test out the memory technique. The next four people you meet for the first time, decide which one of the following types they are. Picture them as one of these dogs and then remember their name.

The sheepdog – which rounds up everybody and makes sure they're all ok

The springer spaniel – playful, but perhaps not, the most intelligent

The labrador – friendly, solid & dependable

The terrier – won't let go until they're done

The bulldog – the powerful top dog that scares the others into doing what they wish

Remember, it's a dog meet dog world out there!

SUCCESS WARNING!

Memory works best by association and just trying to learn something in isolation is really difficult. Make use of all sorts of stimuli as well as the chain technique above if you quickly need to learn a set of facts or imprint any sort of memory upon your brain. To some people names are important, for example as a leader if you know the names of your staff and customers it shows they are important to you.



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