Improving Memory Through Association and Reflection
Written by Barbara Lang

Mnemonic - any learning technique that aids information retention. Mnemonics aim to translate information into a form that the human brain can retain better http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mnemonic

STEPS TO TAKE

(1) Look the person in the eye and repeat their name as soon as you can. If you can’t immediately recall, simply say, “Please say your name again – I’m sorry, I’m not sure I heard it correctly.”

(2) Without sounding like a parrot, use the name as often as you can in a conversation. Reinforcement and repetition create the memory.

(3) To trigger a memory you need an association so that you are making an encounter with someone memorable. Though it may seem strange, the weirder, more creative, humorous, surprising, and outlandish the association, the better. Noticing a unique quality or feature of a person and using that as part of your association, can also help.

(4) The memory (no matter how outlandish the association) is best stored spatially in the mind. Memory champions build “palaces” in their minds where memories are stored and as such, can be quickly retrieved. Though people who practice memorization do this, see if you can apply your most effective study habits requiring memorization, to this practice of name recollection.

(5) Have your memory triggered through quiet reflection at the end of a day. With a written reminder list of encounters (meetings, receptions, career fairs, third-party introductions, etc.), become settled into 10-15 minutes of quiet reflection. This is done without background noise and with eyes closed (memory experts wear headphones to block out noise and wear blacked-out goggles).

(6) Developing the above mental acuity takes practice but it is effective and will provide enormous benefits while avoiding embarrassing blunders.

Articles
Ericsson, K.A. ed. (2003), Exceptional Memorizers: made, not born; TRENDS in Cognitive Sciences, Vol.7 No.6

Crafting An Email That Sends the Message You Intend

Take a look at the following 2 emails - both were written in response to the same presentation. What is compelling about each email that would persuade you to meet with the writer?

EMAIL 1 – sent the day after my event  
Date: August 31  
Subject: Yesterday’s Event  
Dear Barbara,

I just wanted to take the time to thank you for your incredible insight at yesterday’s event. As I told you when I met you briefly at the end, you were an incredible wealth of knowledge and advice, and I took away a lot from it. I was telling my dad about your presentation and he actually happened to read the book “Send” that you mentioned.

I was also wondering if there was anyway I could meet with you at some point to ask you for some more guidance on more specific instances of etiquette in my life. I’m not sure if you normally meet with students, but I would really appreciate. I understand you must be very busy; even 5 minutes would mean a lot.

Thanks again,

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EMAIL 2 – Sent 6 days after my event  
Date: September 5, 2012  
Subject: Career Fair Advice  
Hi Mrs. Lang,

I am -----, and I am majoring in Applied Economics and Management and I attended your workshop on How to Navigate an Information Session last Friday. I was following up because I was wondering if you would be willing to meet with me on a one-on-one basis to give me suggestions about the Career Fair coming up next Tuesday or just general career advice?

Please let me know if you would be able to do this, Ms. Lang.

Thank you.
Sincerely,

Remember:
• If you are following up on an event, write the email in a timely fashion (within 24-48 hours).
• Consider if the subject title conveys the tone and content of your message.
• Make the email a combination of formal and personal always customizing to the reader. The less you know about the reader, the more formal the tone.
• The salutation sets the tone, so decide if first names, Ms. Mrs. Mr. or professional titles are appropriate.
• Always best to start with dear, greetings, hello, good morning good afternoon, vs, hi or hey.
• For important emails, copy and paste into a word document and review again. Sometimes the autocorrect works more effectively in word.
• Be brief and always revise, removing unnecessary words, checking facts and correcting errors.
• Always include your title (AEM sophomore ’14), email address and cell phone number. If you have a LinkedIn page or other social media links that will help with your career interests, include them but stay aware of social pages like Facebook, that share your personal life vs. professional development interests.
(1) List 1 personal achievement for which you are most proud. It can pertain to academics, extracurricular activities (clubs, sports, etc.), a summer intern/job, or just an occurrence in your life.

__________________________________________________________

(2) Identify which soft skills contributed to this achievement. Soft skills are qualities that enhance personal encounters, often contributing to new career opportunities and resulting in better job performance.


__________________________________________________________

(3) List a job interview you would like to have this semester pertaining to a summer internship or job upon graduation.

__________________________________________________________

(4) Think of a specific, moment-in-time story that persuades the listener (prospective employer in Step 3) that you really have the traits sought by that company.

(5) Transferrable skill – Even if you have little experience, a specific soft skill can be positioned as a compelling transferrable skill. Craft your story to the listener, convincing that person (aka interviewer), that you have the right qualities for the specific job. The better (and more customized) the story, the more a person will listen.

(6) Resumes – Look at every entry on your resume. You should have moment-in-time stories articulated in your head for each entry, highlighting the soft skills that contributed to your success in a job. Think of your resume like a series of movie trailers, piquing the interest of the reader so he/she wants to learn more (aka interview you).
References from an Etiquette Factor Presentation

BOOKS
SEND: Why People Email So Badly and How to Do It Better, by W. Schwalbe & D. Shipley; Written by the Op-Editor of the New York Times and the Editor-in-Chief of Hyperion Books – great book

Would it Kill You to Stop Doing That? A Modern Guide to Manners, by Henry Alford; Written by a journalist who researched etiquette - funny, insightful and spot-on

What the Dog Saw, by Malcolm Gladwell; (Part 3 in the book focuses on "How do we know whether someone is bad, or smart, or capable of doing something really well?")

Blink, by Malcolm Gladwell; A book about fast cognition that occurs in the “blink of an eye”

Don’t Take the Last Donut, By Judith Bowman; Excellent book on the “New Rules of Business Etiquette.”

The Etiquette Advantage in Business, by Peggy Post and Peter Post; Another excellent “how to” book

Antidote of Happiness for People who Can’t stand Positive Thinking, by Oliver Burkeman (I have not read this, but for those who find the title appealing, it may be of interest!)

Quiet – the Power of Introverts, by Susan Cain (she also presented the 2nd most viewed TED video on Introverts: http://www.ted.com/talks/susan_cain_the_power_of_introverts.html)

ARTICLES
What Interviews Really Tell Us, By Malcolm Gladwell, New Yorker (and in the book - What the Dog Saw)

Available via the Cornell Library – Terrific issue offering several articles on happiness – an absolute read!

When You Text Till You Drop – book review by Bryan Burrough - book is by Dr. Larry Rosen

Are You Shy?, by Bernard Carucci PhD and Philip G Zimbardo PhD, Psychology Today – This is a review of the article “The Social Disease Called Shyness” – offers great tips
http://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/200910/are-you-shy

Total Recall, by Joshua Foer – New York Times Magazine
An article on name recollection, memory and the associations we can make to help us remember!

The Four Truths of the Storyteller, by Peter Gruber, Harvard Business Review

The Flight from Conversation, Sherry Turkle, New York Times (MIT Prof. on concerns w/ social media)

Brain on Love, By Diane Ackerman, New York Times
http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/24/the-brain-on-love/ A bit on neuroscience regarding pain and love

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