

# The Memory Palace

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The Memory Palace is a more advanced mnemonic system for memorizing pieces of information. So, earlier in this program, I told you how you could use the Chain Method to remember lists of facts or concepts. Well, the Memory Palace takes it a step further. It can sometimes be a little more difficult to apply, but it is also more efficient for dealing with even larger sets of information. So, once you've understood the basics of the Chain Method, so you understand how to create very exaggerated visual associations and you are familiar with this technique and this approach, then you can move on to the Memory Palace as a way of remembering even larger stores of information more accurately.

The basis of this technique actually comes back from the Greeks, who used this to memorize entire poems, entire speeches, entire lists of facts, and it leverages the fact that humans remember physical spaces and the layout of geography a lot better than we memorize arbitrary facts. So, the basis of the technique is the same as the Chain Method. You're still creating highly exaggerated visual associations that will stick out in your mind except this time you use a different approach. Instead of creating a combination between adjacent elements, you're going to walk through an actual physical location in your memory, walk through that location and place, in the path that you're walking, these visual associations.

So, let's use the example of Porter's Five Forces that we talked about in the last example of the Chain Method. Now, again, these are abstract concepts, so the first step was to create a visual symbol table for each of the associations. So, if you remember, the five forces were bargaining power buyers, bargaining power suppliers, rivalry between the firms, barriers to entry and thread of substitutes. So, a list of five isn't very comprehensive but it is a good basis, because it is something that you could forget.

So, we've created a symbol table, so that the suppliers was an ore truck. So, the bargaining power suppliers was like an ore truck. The bargaining power buyers was like a crying toddler in a store throwing a tantrum because his parent won't buy him what he wants. The rivalry between firms was like a wrestling match. The barriers to entry was a fence. And finally, the thread of substitutes, and as I said, this was a little more difficult for me to come up with an example. Maybe you could come up with a better one. But, I came up with Netflix because if you are a cable company or you deliver television services, Netflix is a real threat of the substitute because it has a very different business model, a very different product offering, but it can replace your cable subscription.

So, these are our symbol table, and now normally with the Chain Method, you would create visual associations linking the adjacent elements. So, the ore truck and the toddler, and the toddler and the wrestling, etc, etc. So, we did that in the last video. In the Memory Palace, the technique has shifted a little bit. So, you're going to first close your eyes and imagine that you are in a very specific location, a location you know well. Maybe a childhood home, a school, classroom that you're very

familiar with, a building, the walk you take to work, anything that you are very familiar with the layout and that you can close your eyes and easily imagine walking the entire route without thinking, “Okay, well what comes next?” So, this is the first step.

The second step is, while you’re on this route, you’re going to place the visual associations along the way. So now, I’m imagining my old walk to my old school in my small town in my childhood home. Now, I’m going to take each of these symbols, and I’m going to imagine walking there and placing them very conspicuously along the way. Now, as you develop, you can create even larger Memory Palaces that can store larger abundances of information, but it’s best to just start with this technique on simple ideas. So, for me, I am walking to my old school.

So, the first step is I get out of my house and I can see the sidewalk. And, on the sidewalk, on the street that’s outside of my house, I’m going to put this ore truck, which is just dumping ore and it is ridiculous. Like, it is huge. It is way larger than all the other houses and it’s just spilling ore everywhere, and there are cars backed up and they’re honking. And so, this is my first visual association which I’ve pegged to a physical location.

The second step, I’m going to keep walking and I’m going to go through the park that I normally go through. And in this park, there is going to be, again, a very...an 8-foot tall toddler who is screaming about his mom not wanting to buy him something in the store. This is the next part, in this park that I’m walking through.

Then, I keep walking and there’s a back lane that I have to cross over and on that back lane there are two Mexican wrestlers who are just wrestling and they’re throwing each other around. I’m going to walk through the forest which I would walk through to get to my school. I walk through this short path about 15 meters through the forest. And, in there, there is a very large fence. It is a hundred feet tall and I have to literally, I have to climb it in order to get over the fence. So, that’s barriers to entry. And then, finally, when I am at the final road that’s before the school, there’s a large man in a giant Netflix sort of mask or a costume, and he is dancing around in the road, and he gets hit by a car.

So, this is an example of how you can take out exaggerated visual associations and link it to a physical location in your memory. Some people prefer the Chain Method because of its simplicity. You can do it for numbers of lists and you don’t really have to worry about overlap. The Memory Palace technique, one of the drawbacks is that you tend to have to create a lot of new Memory Palaces. So, when you use something to memorize it, you don’t want to use the same location to memorize another set of facts. If you’re doing a lot of different factual sets in your classes, then you have to have a lot of different Memory Palaces. However, you can get used to this technique. It is used by professional mnemonists to learn a lot more information.

So, if you are interested in this technique and going a lot further, I recommend reading the book, *“Moonwalking With Einstein”* by Joshua Foer, and he really talks about how he used this technique to win the U.S. Memory Competitions. So, if this is a technique that you want to use to, again, remember factual sets and lists of information, this is another good method for doing that, the Memory Palace.

So, once again, create a physical location that you're very familiar with, walk through it and pin along the way the visual associations that you'd normally create in the Chain Method. So, good luck with this tactic, and I'll see you on the other side.