



The Recovery of Memory: Before We Forget That Have Forgotten

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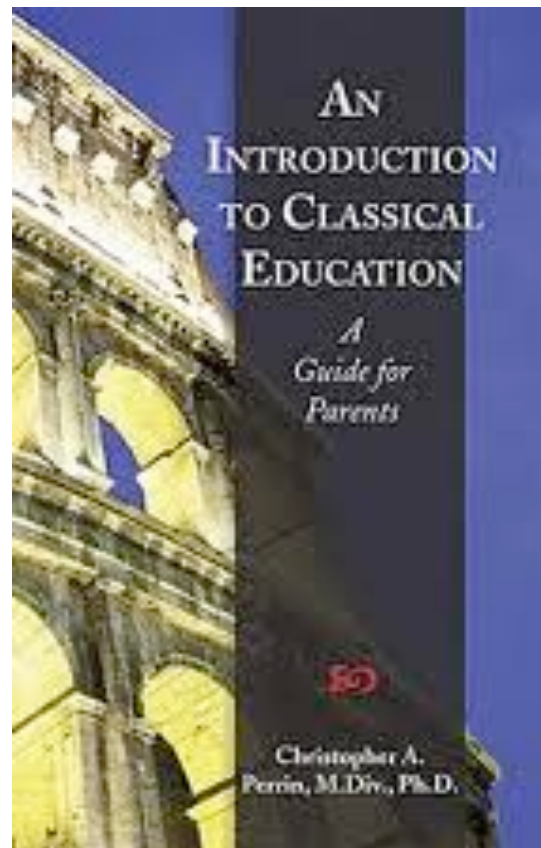
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- *Beatus vir qui non abiit in consilio
impiorum*





Going Back to Go Forward

- Sometimes when we have lost our way, the quickest way forward is to return home
- Prov. 22:28 Do not move ancient landmarks
- Jer. 6:16 Keep to the ancient paths
- Finding your glasses
- Every revolution is a restoration
- Sayers: We can go back...
- Because some things never change...
- Good ideas are evergreen



We Leak

- The reality of forgetting
- Variety of forgetting
- Variety of remembering (recollection, recogn.)
- Wonder and memory—you remember what we admire
- Return to childhood, when you wondered
- Tommy opens the door





This proves that even nursery tales only echo an almost pre-natal leap of interest and amazement. These tales say that apples were golden only to refresh the forgotten moment when we found that they were green. They make rivers run with wine only to make us remember, for one wild moment, that they run with water.

—G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*



We have all read in scientific books, and, indeed, in all romances, the story of the man who has forgotten his name. This man walks about the streets and can see and appreciate everything; only he cannot remember who he is. Well, every man is that man in the story. Every man has forgotten who he is. One may understand the cosmos, but never the ego; the self is more distant than any star. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God; but thou shalt not know thyself. We are all under the same mental calamity; we have all forgotten our names. We have all forgotten what we really are. All that we call common sense and rationality and practicality and positivism only means that for certain dead levels of our life we forget that we have forgotten. All that we call spirit and art and ecstasy only means that for one awful instant we remember that we forget.

—G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*

Thomas Aquinas

Grant me keenness of mind,
capacity to remember,
skill in learning, subtlety to interpret,
and eloquence of speech.

May you guide the beginning of my work,
direct its progress,
and bring it to completion.

—Ante Studium, “Before Study”



Aquinas and Einstein

- Imagination
- Memory

Forget-You-Not

- A tradition of remembering
- What's that?
- Biblical tradition: Don't forget... Remember...
- In your... heart
- The psalms
- The ancient rhetors... the fifth canon



The Memory Palace

- Repetitio Mater Memoriae
- Metaphors for Memory
- Wax tablet, seal, storehouse, bins, strongbox, pigeon coop
- Ancient memory techniques



Memory for Contemplation and Virtue

- Psalm 119
- Psalm 1
- Selective memory
- Ars Memorativa—> Meditatio—> Virtus
- Memory leads to meditation leads to virtue
- You become what you behold
- The discipline
- The image



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Psalm 1

1 Blessed is the man

Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,

Nor stands in the path of sinners,

Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord,

And in His law he meditates day and night.

3 He shall be like a tree

Planted by the rivers of water,

That brings forth its fruit in its season,

Whose leaf also shall not wither;

And whatever he does shall prosper.

4 The ungodly are not so,

But are like the chaff which the wind drives away.

5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,

Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

6 For the Lord knows the way of the righteous,

But the way of the ungodly shall perish and the way of the wicked shall perish.



Psalmus 1

1 Beatus vir

qui non abiit in consilio impiorum

et in via peccatorum non stetit

et in conventu derisorum non sedit,

2 sed in lege Domini voluntas eius

et in lege eius meditabitur die ac nocte

3 Et erit tamquam lignum plantatum secus decursus aquarum,

quod fructum suum dabit in tempore suo;

et folium eius non defluet,

et omnia, quaecumque faciet prosperabuntur.

4 Non sic impii, non sic, sed tamquam pulvis quem proicit ventus.

5 Ideo non consurgent impii in iudicio,

neque peccatores in concilio iustorum

6 Quoniam novit Dominus viam iustorum

et iter impiorum peribit.



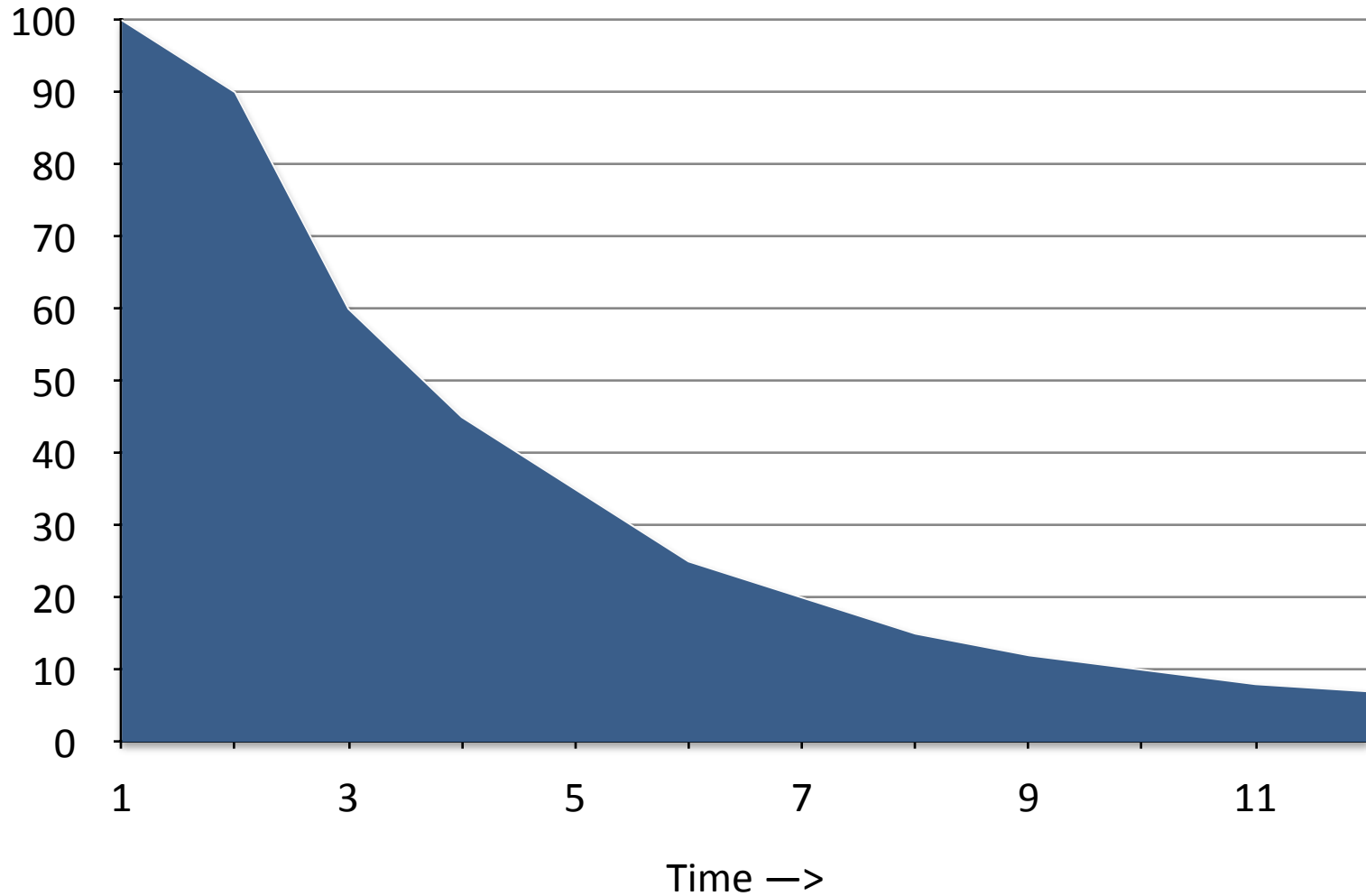
Modern Memory Research

- Wide variety in forgetting, but we do (Thalheimer)
- How much do people forget? It depends
- The type of material being learned
- The learner's prior knowledge
- The learner's motivation to learn
- The power of the learning methods used
- The contextual clues in the learning situations
- The amount of time the learning has to be retained
- The difficulty of the retention test

Lessons Learned

- While there is a wide variety in forgetting there is a general forgetting curve we can predict
- On average people do forget information in a predictable manner
- People forget more information shortly after learning it, but gradually the pace of forgetting slows

The Forgetting Curve



Lessons Learned

- Learning/Teaching methods matter
- Meaning matters!
- Retrieval practice matters
- Spaced repetition
- Wonder, Admiration, Gratitude

Best Settings for Memory

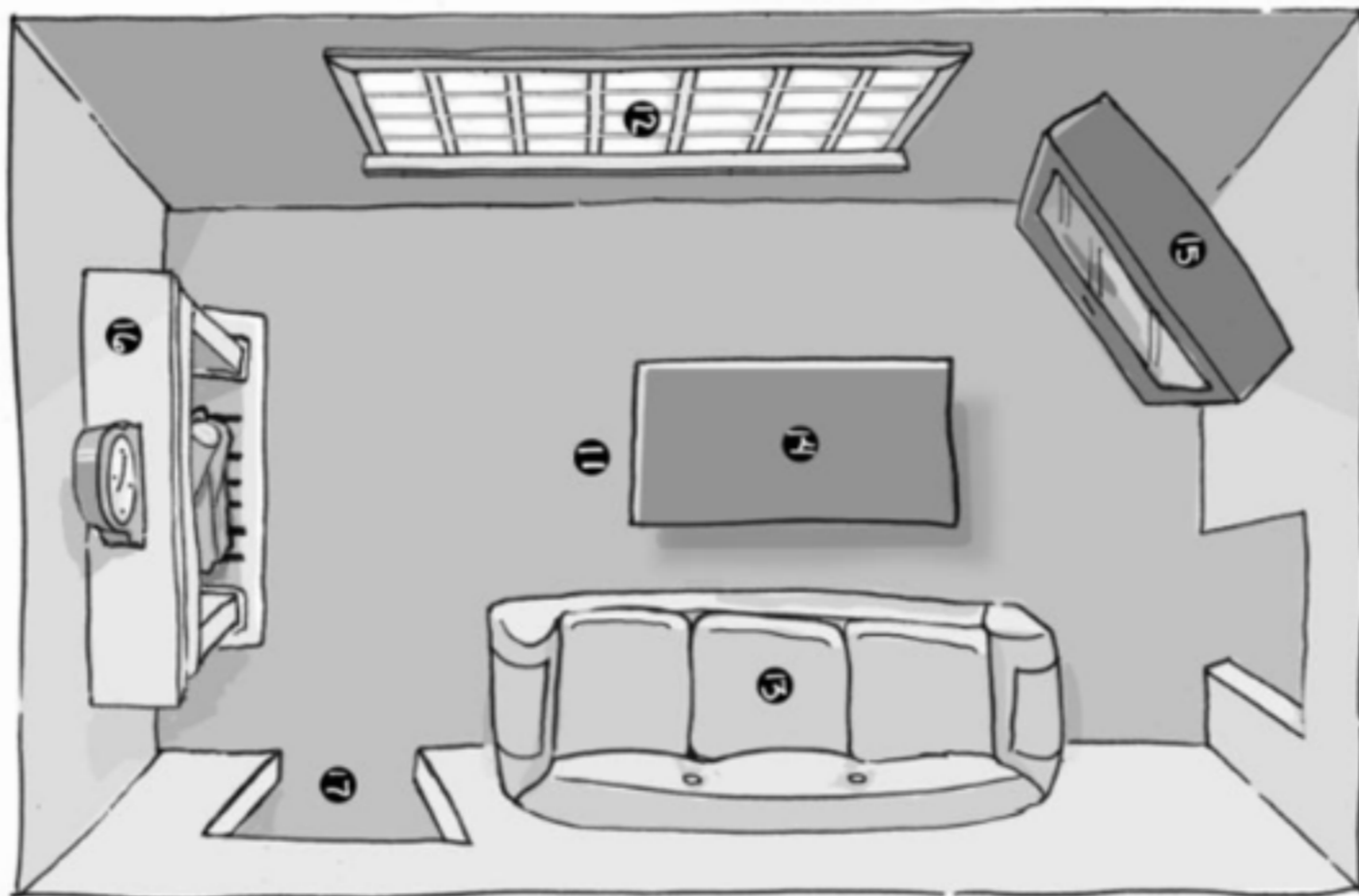
- 90% of what they learn when they teach someone else (use the info) immediately
- 75% when they practice what is learned
- 50% when they engaged in a group discussion
- 30% when they see a demonstration
- 20% from audio-visual
- 10% from reading
- 5% from lecture

Let's Try It

- Recite *Beatus vir qui non abiit in consilio impiorum*
- Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the impious...
- Etymology: beautiful, beatitude, virile, virtuous, counseling, impiety
- Teach the essential meaning to your partner
- Discuss it: What application comes to mind?
- Recite it.

Using The Memory Palace

- A Room?



Sources for Further Study

- *The Art of Memory*, Frances Yates
- *The Book of Memory*, Mary Carruthers
- *Memorize The Faith*, Kevin Vost
- *The Memory Palace*, Lewis Smile
- *Moonwalking With Einstein*, Joshua Foer

Text Me

- Textile
- Texture
- Text

Ante Studium

Grant Horner... King

CAP on my head

Ski... submarine

Helicopter in mouth

Tour Guide at Work

Director of the Dress

Spring competing













Purpose

- To obtain the object of your desire/love
- To become what you behold
- Transformation
- Re-Orientation (truth north)
- To fulfill and exercise your humanity: to wonder, celebrate, admire, praise and worship

Why Is It Hard?

- Because our world is more like a carnival than a monastery.
- We are drawn to amusement more than music.
- We lack models.
- We lack (or think we lack) opportunity.
- We were educated/raised in and to distraction

Know It By Studying It

- A long tradition
- *The Intellectual Life* (Sertillanges)
- *Leisure The Basis of Culture* (Pieper)
- *The Prodigal Son* (Nouwen)
- Lifting Out of Yourself
- Receptive Vision/Gift
- Joy (divine longing greater than any human satisfaction)

Know It By Doing It

- A part of your humanity that you may not have exercised for a good while
- But you have a history of contemplation
- Spiritual Contemplation/Meditation
- In Small doses
- Place
- Décor
- Time
- **Solitude/Friendship (highest good) conclusio**