Uncover Your Past, Take Charge of Your Future

Total Memory Makeover

New York Times Bestselling Author

MARILU HENNER

WITH LORIN HENNER
Purchase a copy of Total Memory Makeover at one of these retailers

Uncover Your Past, Take Charge of Your Future

Total Memory Makeover
New York Times Bestselling Author
MARILU HENNER
WITH LORIN HENNER

GALLERY BOOKS
Memory is everything! In every single moment of your life—past, present, and future—memory is involved. All that you do, all that you see, everything you learn, each person you meet, and all of your experiences have conscious meaning only insofar as you remember them. No matter how much you discover and experience today, its value vanishes if it’s forgotten tomorrow. When we’re young, we take memory for granted. As we get older, we genuinely fear losing it—not only because the ability itself can fade with age, but also because we are finally wise enough to know its true value. There is no human endeavor more worthy of our best efforts than the pursuit of a great memory!

Like it or not, your past is in you even if you don’t remember it. Every single thing you have ever experienced is in you, stored somewhere on your mental hard drive. It has all been recorded in your body and on your psyche, and it is making you behave in ways that you aren’t even aware of. This can often scare people, but I think it makes an excellent case for developing one’s memory. You may not be consciously connecting this past information to what you are doing in the present, but you should be. You are constantly responding to now because of back then. When you are cognizant of your memories and can call upon them as needed, it keeps you from making the same mistakes over and over again and helps you avoid that pitfall Einstein called insanity. It also makes you better at sizing up situations and making the right choices, as well as understanding why you are the way you are.
Introduction

There are different kinds of memory, but I am known for my autobiographical memory. Choose any random date during my lifetime (every day since I was twelve in 1964), and I can tell you what day of the week it was and exactly what I was doing on that day. This ability is called Highly Superior Autobiographical Memory (HSAM for short), and I am one of only twelve documented cases in the world, so far. I can’t tell you what combination of nature and nurture gives someone a superior autobiographical memory, but I can tell you that I have learned and retained my most important life lessons from having one. But this book is not just about my memory or the feats I can accomplish with it. It is much more about what this ability has taught me and how you can use these lessons to transform your memory, your past, and ultimately, your future. It doesn’t matter whether or not you were born with my ability. Everyone can remember a great deal more than they do now, and everyone can benefit in the same way that I do. All that is needed are the right tools, along with the motivation and effort required to use them.

How much would your life change if, from this moment on, you had the ability to always make the right decision in everything you did? It goes without saying that your life, anyone’s life, would improve instantly and dramatically. For example, think of Bill Murray’s character Phil Connors in the film Groundhog Day. The movie’s premise is that Phil must relive the same day over and over again. Eventually, after many repetitions, Phil reexamines his selfish life and finally finds the wisest choices, best responses, and most helpful actions for every single moment within that one isolated day. And in less than twenty-four hours (twenty-four hours for everyone else, that is) he becomes the most respected and beloved man in town, gets the girl of his dreams, learns what matters most in life, and sets a course to live happily ever after.

— xx —
Obviously, this is just fun Hollywood fantasy. Nobody in the real world bats a thousand. But, of course, that is what we aim to do. Groundhog Day was such a success because we would all love to make perfect choices 100 percent of the time. We all would love to have the information necessary to make the right decision in every moment of every day. I think audiences were delighted to see a character who was given the opportunity to learn from his mistakes, despite the fact that it took him repeated chances to finally get it right.

We tend to think of “the right decision” as what will ultimately get us what we want, whether it’s working late for the boss, helping a friend move, hosting a dinner party, investing in a 401(k), or even destructive choices like binge drinking or cheating on a loved one. Sometimes the payoff is immediate, and other times the rewards are delayed. Every choice is based on some kind of incentive. Even obviously wrong choices are made with compelling motivations. Ordering a mud pie for dessert is a choice we make, because the momentary happiness we expect to receive outweighs in our minds the consequences of those butt-plumping calories. Even if we’ve made this mistake before, we still might not stop ourselves. It could make us sick, depressed, or unmotivated, but what is most important is that immediate gratification. Forgetting what may result from a choice is never good. For example, because of the debilitating mud pie, we might end up so tired that we skip the two-mile walk we promised ourselves in the morning. If we could actually see into the future, our choices would be easy. If we knew for a fact that this mud pie would turn out to be the world’s greatest dessert experience and would inspire us to upgrade our two-mile walk to a five-mile run, the choice to indulge would be perfectly advisable. If we knew that changing careers would eventually lead to a much happier, rewarding life, then that choice would be obvious. But we never really know what will happen. That new career could become
overly stressful, disappointing, or obsolete. As you can see, our happiness depends upon predicting, as accurately as possible, what will happen in the future. In order to minimize this risk, we gather information, much like Phil Connors does in *Groundhog Day*. But we don’t have the luxury of do-overs. For us, the past serves as the primary source of this information. The better you remember your own experiences, the faster you will “get it,” as Phil did eventually.

You could say that everything we do in life is like navigating a maze to get to the reward. Success depends on how well we know the course: where all the dead ends are, as well as all the paths that lead to success. It is easy to repeat negative behavior when we don’t clearly remember the consequences of that behavior. People often say, “I’ll never drink that much again,” only to find themselves doing exactly that. They allow the memory of their hangover to fade. When they are given the choice to take that extra drink, they do it, because they can no longer vividly remember how they felt or the promises they made to themselves. And it’s not just because alcohol dulls memory; people have the same mental block when it comes to food, work, consumer credit, exercise, and bad relationships. It takes some people a lifetime to finally accept the connection between self-indulgence and consequence, and some people never realize it. They never really grow up. Remembering your past in a meaningful way is synonymous with growing up.

In having HSAM, I have an immense, easily accessible, internal library of my past that I can pull from at any point. I carry my personal history in my pocket 24/7. This really does give me an advantage for predicting what will happen in my future. My decision-making process has more information to draw from and, therefore, I am better able to make sound decisions than if I didn’t have that information at my fingertips. But what does that mean for you? Keep
in mind that it’s not the *ability* to remember that matters as much as the *information* itself. You don’t need a superior memory, as long as you have a strategy for gathering, analyzing, and storing your life information.

As an example, every professional sports team and every successful business keeps detailed records of their past. They don’t just show up every day to play the game or go to work and hope for the best. They carefully plan and strategize to put the odds in their favor, so they can achieve their objectives. In baseball, a record is kept for each player: how he performs against left-handers and right-handers, in day vs. night play, the percentage of his ball placement in the field, and so many other factors. This is how managers determine how to use their rosters, which players to start, when to switch, and which plays to call. (Think *Moneyball*!) The same strategy is used for football, basketball, boxing, tennis, and every other sport. A team couldn’t even compete today without these kinds of detailed reports. Businesses work in the same way. This is what separates a successful business from an unsuccessful one. The more detailed the records are, the better future results can be predicted and controlled. Why not use these same strategies for your own life?

Now, some of you might be saying, “I don’t know if I want to remember *too* much of my life!” Some people are fearful of remembering certain moments from their past. But I think we need to face the fact that this impulse to forget isn’t totally healthy. Everyone has experiences from their past that they try to avoid: a death in the family, a car accident, being bullied in school or humiliated at work, a lost love, or a bad relationship. Although these are painful moments to relive in your mind, it is therapeutic and beneficial to face and understand them. Negative experiences provide the most memorable and useful lessons. (For example, one reason I’m so committed to my healthy lifestyle is that I lost my parents very young, and this fact is never far from my mind as I make healthy choices on a
daily basis.) Conversely, when we avoid negative thoughts and feelings, we give them maximum significance and power. They become emotional “bogeymen.” In denial, we create more pain than we do in simply confronting our memories. Allowing yourself the freedom to relive those moments helps you better understand what made them traumatic in the first place. By understanding that pain, we become better equipped to respond to similar moments in the future and resolve them in our subconscious, which helps weaken their impact. This is the way to conquer the memories you fear most. A horror film is never as scary the second time, and it's often laughable the third or fourth time you watch it. You can watch the movie with interest, rather than closing your eyes and turning away.

But there is much more to the process outlined in this book than learning from past mistakes. Equally important is remembering moments of success—for example, when we made a boss, a teacher, or a client proud and more confident in our abilities. Remembering the consequences of those choices makes us much more likely to repeat them and is key to establishing a pattern of positive behavior. Another critical benefit of remembering your life is the preservation of important moments that would have otherwise been lost or diluted. Without making a conscious effort to remember the people we care about most, those thoughts and feelings will surely fade. As the years pass, it becomes more and more difficult to evoke the endearing way your father told his favorite joke or how patiently your mother listened to your long-winded stories without ever looking bored. It's important to your self-knowledge to remember how those moments affected you and what they ultimately mean to you.

But you will never be able to remember if you are resistant to remembering. In order to be successful at remembering your past you have to develop a healthy mind-set about wanting to remember, and, more importantly, you have to get yourself ready to remember. You have to prime yourself. You cannot be unwilling to look back
and relive certain feelings of abandonment or a bad breakup, or an unsettling argument with a parent, or the humiliation you felt because of a critical teacher or boss, or a terrifying experience with a bully. Something intrigued you about your past enough to compel you to pick up this book, so please don’t just read it. Be an active and willing player and look at your past from a different perspective through wide-open eyes. For years I have heard people say things like, “I really want to lose weight and get healthy,” but they would make no progress, or get even heavier and unhealthier. I now know from my own and others’ experiences that no progress can be made unless one actively commits to making dramatic diet and exercise changes. This is also true for memory. The desire to remember could be there, but unless you specifically set a course to revolutionize your memory patterns, unless you commit to your Total Memory Makeover, nothing will change. Go beyond just wanting to remember or being receptive to remembering. Take action to remember.

The researchers I’ve been working with at UC Irvine are still determining exactly how and why HSAM exists, but everyone, whether or not they have HSAM, can document their past and learn from it. It doesn’t really matter if the information is in your head, in your diary, or on your computer’s hard drive. If it is accessible, it is useful. Think of your Total Memory Makeover as the world’s most fascinating history and psychology courses rolled into one, because that’s exactly what it is! Instead of studying American History or Psych 101, you are learning the history and psychology of you, everyone’s favorite subject (let’s be honest!). You are both the student and the subject of this course. The star of your own movie, as it were. But you’ve got lots of costars, too, who are also fascinating: family, co-workers, acquaintances, friends, and foes. Don’t be surprised if you learn much more in this course than you ever expected.
In this course, we will start with what I like to call the Track. Your Track will be your own personal key for unlocking your past. I believe that everyone has a Track for remembering things. Your Track is usually what you care about most. For example, some people can’t remember what they ate for dinner last night but can tell you precise scores, specific dates, exact stats, and detailed plays from a game they watched thirty years ago. Some people might forget sporting events they’ve seen (perhaps deliberately), but they can’t forget a relationship, a haircut, a meal, or even how much they weighed at specific times. (Guilty!) Many people have a career or travel Track. It really depends on what is most important to them personally. Everyone remembers something exceptionally well and in great detail. Everyone has a Track.

Starting with your Track, we are going to go back and document the highlights of your life starting from childhood. Eventually you will have a fairly extensive, well-organized timeline of your life. It sounds complicated, but it’s not. I will be guiding you through it every step of the way! After creating and organizing this timeline, you will then immerse yourself in the history of your life (You 101). I promise you will learn a lot more studying your own life than studying an ancient hero like Alexander the Great. The Internet alone gives you limitless possibilities to tap into your past. You can look up newspaper archives, old photographs from your neighborhood, old postcards, toys and items you formerly owned on eBay, school and church websites, and, of course, all the different social websites, like Facebook, Classmates, and Genealogy, where you can actually contact people you haven’t spoken to in thirty or forty years. That is something no other generation in history has had the ability to do. Suppose you grew up in the sixties in Brooklyn and now you live in Los Angeles. With Google Earth, you can walk around your old neighborhood, step by step, house by house, and trigger thousands of childhood memories while sitting at your computer desk.
in Los Angeles. Even though Ed’s Candy Store is now a Starbucks, it doesn’t matter. In many instances, the structure is still the same. The memory triggers are still there in your neighborhood even if certain aspects have changed.

This will be good therapy, too. You can’t study your life without taking a good hard look at yourself and learning from it. The past demystifies why something is working or, more likely, isn’t. Positive and negative patterns in your life are easy to identify once you step back and look at them from a wide-angle perspective. Analyzing your history will help you uncover those negative and positive patterns, so that you can take charge and use them to your advantage. Undoubtedly, this will give you a whole new outlook, providing an opportunity to keep what you love, change what you dislike, and get a fresh start! You can begin making sound decisions intellectually, emotionally, creatively, financially, and spiritually. In other words, you can change now by remembering then.

Most memory books focus on mnemonic devices like acronyms, place pegs, and memory palaces to help you remember lists, definitions, names, cards, numbers, and so on. They are specifically designed to help you remember a lot of information—quickly and temporarily—for school exams, meetings at work, shopping lists, and so on. And that’s great. We will be exploring various memory techniques as well, but that is not the main focus of this book. We will be going deeper than that. This book is more about self-exploration. Hopefully, you will be learning things about yourself that you didn’t remember existed. You will be uncovering your past in ways that will help you make connections and remember them the next time you’re faced with certain decisions. Most standard memory books, at least the honest ones, admit that memory itself is not improved. The skill of remembering things may improve, but there’s a difference. You can get very fast at remembering a deck of cards or long lists of numbers or vocabulary words, but you will still
Introduction

forget where you parked your car or the details of your last birthday (or why you shouldn’t marry that tempestuous on-again, off-again ex!). In addition, memory drills don’t significantly improve your understanding of what you are remembering. They do help to a certain degree, but if you really want to learn with deep understanding, you still have to read, study, analyze, and experience a particular subject. There is no shortcut when it comes to learning. Memorizing definitions or the times tables or the periodic table does help as an aid and reference as you are learning those subjects, but they are not a magic pill that will help you finish medical school in three months—which would never be the goal of autobiographical memory, anyway. In short, mnemonic strategies are helpful but limited.

But please don’t get me wrong. I’m not knocking mnemonics. Being able to memorize the order of a deck of cards in a minute or less is impressive, but it is not going to help you figure out why you always feel like a victim or seem to repeatedly crave drama in your life. There is a bit of a fast-food feeling to the whole process of mnemonics. They fill you up quickly but can’t sustain you properly in the long run. What is different about this memory book is that I am not trying to help you break any speed records. This is a journey, a wonderful, joyful ride through your life, and I hope you enjoy every moment.

Are you ready for your Total Memory Makeover?
Let’s get started!
Part One

ANTICIPATION

Get Ready to Remember
Chapter One

Crazy Memory

Never make your home in a place. Make a home for yourself inside your own head. You’ll find what you need to furnish it—memory, friends you can trust, love of learning, and other such things. That way it will go with you wherever you journey.

—Tad Williams

I grew up as one of six kids in a busy, noisy Catholic family in a lower-middle-class neighborhood on the northwest side of Chicago. My father was in the automobile business, and my family ran a dancing school in our garage. My mother also ran a beauty shop in our kitchen. Everyone hung out at our house, and we were famous for our parties. We thought of ourselves as the Kennedys of Logan Square, and it seemed to me as if everything that happened in our family was important and memorable. But it wasn’t just because of my family’s popularity; I can see now that my father had a lot to do with the development of my desire to remember.

One of my father’s favorite sayings was “There are three parts to every event: anticipation, participation, and recollection, and the greatest of these is recollection!” Perhaps it was because of his
own great memory that my dad—a troubleshooter in the auto-
mobile business who made it a point to remember things about his
customers—instilled in all of his kids this love for recollection. My
family would spend weeks in the anticipation phase planning for
one of our famous parties, imagining who was going to be there, fig-
uring out what music would be played, what each of us would wear,
the food my mom would serve, and what we all had to do to get
ready for the party. The party itself (participation) was always the
highlight of the season, whether it was a pool party at the Howard
Johnson’s Motor Lodge, a beach party at Sand-Lo Beach, a record
party where everyone brought a 45 and replenished my mother’s
collection, or one of our famous Christmas parties with a hundred
and twenty-five people packed in our garage/studio. These gather-
ings were always exciting, but even more fun was had the next day
recounting, reliving, and analyzing everything that had transpired
throughout the night before.

“Can you believe what she was wearing?” “Did you notice how
much they were flirting?” “How great a dancer was that new guy?”
We couldn’t wait to compare notes after every big occasion. In fact,
reminiscing about the party was, in itself, an event not to be missed.
Friends would come over to help us clean up just to be involved in
the actual party’s “recollection party,” which then often needed its
own recollection party!

Recollection became my favorite part of any event, and it would
certainly last longer than the participation phase, and more often
than not, even longer than the anticipation. Over time, we would
continue to refer back to those party images and stories and carry
them through to the next event and its recollection.

I loved these memory sessions and began to see everything in
my life in this way: anticipation, participation, and recollection
(APR). At these recollection sessions and in everyday life, I was so
good at remembering the smallest details about everything that hap-
pened or was taught to me that I was nicknamed Univac and the Memory Kid. As one of six children (like a litter of puppies!) you are always looking for something that distinguishes you from the others, and although everyone in my family is very smart, no one had my memory. I walked around so fired up and in perpetual motion (another nickname) that my mother would often say to me, “Mari! Go run around the block a couple of times!” just to get me to burn off some of that excess energy that I was so famous for.

I also loved to mentally take note of everything, because it was my way of having homework just like my two older sisters, who were five and ten grades ahead of me. It gave me a certain power to know that I could spend an entire day “recording” everything for myself, putting it somewhere in my brain, and be certain that I would never lose any of it.

My Story of HSAM

Even as a very young child, I began creating exercises and routines that helped me develop my memory. One particular routine began on Saturday, October 24, 1959, the night before I was to receive my First Holy Communion. I was only seven years old and in second grade, but I knew that I was facing the biggest day of my life thus far, and I was so euphoric that I wanted to remember every little feeling I was having before going to sleep. I decided to play a little game with myself, in which I tried to remember every day that had led up to that moment starting with the most recent. What did I do a week ago? Two weeks ago? Three weeks ago? I even started to go back to the previous years and the year before that, remembering specific days from first grade and kindergarten.

Over time, this exercise became not only my routine to fall asleep, but also a way to mentally challenge and exercise my brain.
to the point that I could “time-travel” back to: What did we do each day of our vacation? What was I doing when I was exactly to the day my younger brother Lorin’s age? My niece Lizzy’s age? And it was not just about touching down on a fleeting image or a feeling from the past, but rather going deeper and deeper into memories and specific moments, exploring my past through the lens of the present.

As I grew up, what began as a mental game to challenge myself and relish my First Holy Communion became a nightly routine and a chance to revisit and meditate on my past day, week, year, or decade. Memories became so vivid that they started to feel like little visits to people and places that didn’t exist in my life anymore.

This activity was both fascinating and comforting to me. I was thrilled about my ability to do this and assumed most people could do it, as well. It wasn’t until I was eighteen that I realized my memory was different. It was during a conversation (on Sunday, May 24, 1970) with my best friend at the time, Ireen Rusniak. While listening to me recall in detail a story from our childhood and my being shocked that she couldn’t remember most of it, Ireen stopped me and said, “When are you going to realize that no one else has this crazy memory of yours?” That was the moment when I began taking note of others’ ability to recall their past. I realized then that my capacity was different.

From my dorm mates at the University of Chicago, who tested me on the day of the week certain events took place, to an old boyfriend who claimed he lost his past once we broke up, it became common knowledge to my friends and family that I had this baffling memory. Over the years, whenever people wanted to fact-check some event from their lives, I’d get a call asking, “What day was the school picnic three years ago?” “In what hotel in Philly did we stay that time?” “Remember when we went on that boat ride around Manhattan? When was that?” Many years later, researchers would
tell me that this ability is called Highly Superior Autobiographical Memory, or HSAM.

Even though the A in HSAM stands for “autobiographical,” I still have a strong memory for the usual things. I was a good student, in large part because of my memory, but I do not have a photographic memory or anything like that. My memory is special in its autobiographical detail. I can remember almost every day of my life back to the age of seven (and every day since around twelve) and many incidents and things from my earlier years, all the way back to infancy.

I think it is very common for people to recognize which family members retain memories better than others, because our personal histories are so vital to us. While in some ways, it is no different than the person who can remember every Academy Award winner or the one who can recite baseball statistics, in many more ways, HSAM is very different from these other feats of the mind. Memorizing facts leaves them detached from a personal context. Reciting the dates of battles from the Civil War is very different from conjuring up images of your own past. (Unless, of course, you’re a Civil War veteran!)

Scientists have noted that there are three distinct characteristics of people who have HSAM: 1) They tend to spend a greater amount of time recalling their personal history as compared to most people; 2) they have an abnormal ability to remember specific events from their own past more clearly; and 3) perhaps most importantly, HSAMers (as we call ourselves) remember two hundred events or more in the span of any given year, whereas people with average memories generally remember only about eight to eleven. A person with HSAM can describe in intimate detail the events that took place on a particular date; including the day of the week the date landed on, what the weather was like, what they ate for lunch,
what they wore, and many more seemingly trivial details. Along with our personal experiences, people with HSAM can also tell you current events that were taking place on that given day, as long as the event crossed our radar screen at the time. We also see all of our memories in the first person, unlike other people, who tend to vary in their perspective. In fact, about 70 percent of all people see their pasts in the third person (à la Scrooge!).

For all these seemingly amazing capabilities, people who have HSAM are not classified as savants or autistic. We are not calendar calculators with a system. For people with HSAM, the knowledge of days and dates is almost built in. We aren’t using mnemonic or memory strategies to remember events. When asked how we do it, we all say the same thing: “I just see it! It’s just there.”

I got to meet my fellow HSAMers on Monday, December 7, 2009, when my good friend Lesley Stahl had arranged to have us all get together for a two-part segment on 60 Minutes. Lesley has been a friend of mine for twenty-seven years, and on Wednesday, September 20, 2006, she and her producer Shari Finkelstein and I went to lunch. At around that time, 60 Minutes had been offered the story of Jill Price, the first person to be studied by Dr. James McGaugh, Research Professor of Neurobiology and Behavior at UC Irvine, for her outstanding autobiographical memory. Lesley hadn’t been interested in the story, because she didn’t think that HSAM (or hyperthymesia, as it was called then) was that rare, having known me for so many years. During this lunch, it was clear that Shari was testing me with dates, but it wasn’t until she told me that she had gotten married on June 15, 1998, and I instantly asked her, “Why did you get married on a Monday?” that she knew Lesley was telling her the truth.

Three years later, 60 Minutes decided to do a bigger story on
HSAM because at that time there were only four more people who had been verified as official HSAMers. Lesley called and asked me to be tested on camera, so there I was—on Thursday, November 5, 2009—put to the test by Dr. McGaugh’s team at UC Irvine. After correctly answering over five hundred questions, which included every memory test known to man, as well as hundreds of questions based on current events (“On what day did Princess Diana die?”) and my own life (“What was the date and theme of your senior prom?”), I was officially deemed the sixth person with HSAM. I was also given an MRI in order to check out the size and shape of my brain. When four of the other HSAMers (Louise Owen, Bob Petrella, Brad Williams, and the late Rick Baron) and I met the following month, we were not only asked several more questions to illustrate our ability, but we were also genetically tested for motor skills and had to submit samples of saliva.

As an example of how HSAM works, I will explain how I answered one of Dr. McGaugh’s first memory questions, “When did Princess Diana die?” I told him, “Well, she actually passed away on Sunday, August 31, 1997, but for me it was Saturday night, August 30. I had just come off stage at the Shubert Theatre where I was performing in Chicago and my friend and castmate, MaryAnn Lamb, grabbed me and pulled me into the dressing room where the TV was playing and said, ‘There was a terrible car accident in Paris, and Dodi Fayad has died and Princess Diana is hanging on for dear life.’ After we watched the TV for a while, a group of us went to Josie’s restaurant on Amsterdam and 74th Street, and next to me sat Michael Burresse, next to him his boyfriend Todd, then MaryAnn, Jimmy Borstelmann, my ex-husband Rob who was next to me, and at 12:35 Mary, the maître d’, came up to the table over my right shoulder and pulled me away from the table to tell me that Princess Diana had passed away. I went back to tell the others, and we all had a moment of silence. So, to answer your question, it was Sun-
day, August 31, 1997, but my experience with it was on Saturday, August 30.”

What It Feels Like to Remember

On my first day of testing, one of the questions Dr. McGaugh’s team asked was, “How does your memory work? For example, when given a date or an event, what happens in your brain that helps you figure out where you were and what you were doing and what day of the week it was? What do you see? Walk us through the process.” I laughed to myself because I’ve been trying to describe my memory process for so long now that I used to start with, “You know how a card catalogue works . . . ?” That progressed to my describing trays of photographs developing side by side, each image becoming more and more vivid as I recall it. This explanation later became, “You know how you can find a scene on a VHS tape by rewinding or fast-forwarding . . . ?” But all of these metaphors were thrown out the window when I first saw the scene selection menu on a DVD. I had found the perfect image. Watching several little movie clips running simultaneously is the closest parallel I can use to explain how I remember, which is unlike many of my fellow HSAMers, who often use the image of calendar pages flipping instead. I see any date I’m asked as though it were placed on a linear timeline, from left to right, January being the far left and December the far right. But it is simultaneous. All the days in a year are there in front of me, and I can choose to hone in on any one, but they are definitely not “on separate pages.”

Say, for example, you give me a specific year. The entire year lines up chronologically left to right as though on a timeline, and the easiest days to remember—a major life event from that year or my birthday or Christmas—fill in first. With the whole timeline
scrolling through the months and days of that year, my mind then runs through it as though I were watching several movie scenes all at once. If I want to hang out awhile on a particular day, I can zoom in on that day’s experience. I can even stop the movie to dwell on a particular moment or image.

This process was put to the test on Monday, December 20, 2010, the day after the 60 Minutes story on HSAM aired. I was on CBS's The Early Show, and the lovely host Rebecca Jarvis gave me the year 1975. This was a year I hadn’t scanned through for a very long time, but I immediately saw the left-to-right “timeline” of little video-like scenes, and on it my birthday (Sunday, April 6) and Christmas (Thursday, December 25) came up first. I knew I couldn’t stop for very long on the images I was seeing, because it was only a four-minute segment, and I wanted to be good television. I then saw what date Thanksgiving fell on that year (November 27, a Thursday, of course) and what day of the week Valentine’s Day was on—Friday in this case. (I guess I organically picked days that illustrated day and date.) And knowing I was running out of time, I quickly mentioned Tuesday, August 12, a first date with an old boyfriend.

When I was explaining the process to Rebecca, I could instantly see those days, and it was as though I were stopping on that day for a second before moving on to other days within that year. The segment ended, but by the time I got to the car ride home—about fifteen minutes after I was first told to think about 1975—I could literally describe every day of that year. Some of the days come up in blocks, such as vacations or the weeks of a particular job. And when I go back to any particular day, I am actually there again in first-person perspective looking out through my eyes and reliving the experience as if it were happening for the first time. Because I can do this so easily at this point in my life, I can also more or less visit with a new perspective when I want to go back to a memory.
and see it with a more recent sensibility. I can revisit an experience with an old boyfriend, for example, and see it through my eyes then, but with a different understanding because of who I am today. Say I go back to my fourteen-year-old self and relive the pain of finding out that I wasn’t being asked to a junior ring dance. I can literally be back in that moment and feel the sting of realizing how much more he liked the girl he chose instead of me. But I can also go back and appreciate my feelings, the guy’s decision, and be proud of how I handled it at the time. (I can also go back and know that, the following year, he would not only ask me to his senior prom but also try to date me many years later when we were in our thirties!) And even though that teenage rejection is not the same now as an adult, I can relate back to those kinds of moments in the past as a reference, because in some ways, the feelings of rejection never change. It still hurts, but the greater you understand what’s going on, the less it stings.

In other words, I can be in these old memories, when I choose to, with a *Peggy Sue Got Married* point of view, as it were. If you remember that film at all, you would remember that Kathleen Turner’s forty-three-year-old character gets magically transported back to her life as a teenager and is able to revisit her past as her old high school senior self, armed with the wisdom and twenty-twenty hindsight she has acquired since. She can look at her soon-to-be-husband with the knowledge of what he will become, spend time with the sexy outcast now knowing how special he really was, and help the class nerd discover future inventions. Exercising your autobiographical memory gives you a similar kind of wisdom because you are literally able to go back and visit your past with new understanding and experience (without being able to influence future inventions, of course!).

— 12 —
Better Autobiographical Memory—BAM

Since I was eighteen years old, I have recognized that my memory is highly unusual, and I have seen my brain scans, which, according to Dr. McGaugh, prove that I have “several brain regions which are significantly larger than the average person’s. These consist of brain regions known to be involved in memory, including those regions close to the hippocampus and caudate nucleus.” I also know that according to Aurora K. R. LePort, one of McGaugh’s researchers, “An additional rigorous test, given to confirm the presence of HSAM, was given to Marilu. Ten random dates from throughout her lifetime (age of fifteen to the present time of testing) were selected and she was to give the researcher the day of the week each date fell on, the details of what happened to her on that day and the details of a public event that occurred within a month of that date. Twenty-eight people claiming to have HSAM have been given this test. She, along with only two others, received a perfect score.” Someone with HSAM always answers every date question with a personal story.

However, there is no doubt in my mind that my autobiographical memory is a product of both nature and nurture. The same skills that I learned from my father and the same exercises and routines that I have used over the years to train my memory can give anyone a Total Memory Makeover and help them develop what I like to call BAM—better autobiographical memory! I know that most memory books focus on improving your memorization skills when it comes to lists and names, but there has never been a book that zeroes in on improving your autobiographical memory. And as someone who has HSAM, I can guide you through your Total Memory Makeover from the inside out. So little has been studied, much less taught, about HSAM, because it has only been a few years since doctors and scientists labeled the condition. I have been teaching memory classes and
giving lectures on memory throughout the country for several years now, and the big surprise for me has been how receptive people have been to this way of looking at and remembering their histories.

Throughout this book, I will be giving you a series of exercises to help prompt and access your memory and to teach you how to sharpen your memory skills all through your life. These exercises are designed to improve your autobiographical memory, and I’m sure that if you give yourself over to the process, you will find new ways to access old memories. (If nothing else, you will have an idea of what it’s like to have my memory!)

**EXERCISE #1: HOW DO YOU SEE MEMORIES?**

How do you access your memory?

- Is it similar to the way I remember? Like scene selection on a DVD?
- Do you see random images? Do they appear as if in a dream?
- Activate your memory by using a simple example. Try to recall any activity you engaged in yesterday. Anything is acceptable, but the more vivid the better. Once you lock on to one activity, try to bring back as much from that moment as possible. Notice how those images came to you?
- What did you use to guide yourself to that moment?
- Were there certain triggers, like emotions or smells, or markers, like time of day or specific locations?
- When you revisited that moment, what was your perspective like?
- Did you watch yourself in the activity? Or did you see the activity through your own eyes the way you did when you originally lived it?
Total Memory Makeover

Keep your answers to this exercise in mind as we proceed, or even better, jot down a couple of things you’ve noticed, like “first person” or “smell.” This will not only help you later on, it will also be fun to see how you answered the first question of your Total Memory Makeover. The more you understand your own unique process for recall before we start playing with it, the better control you will have as you start to improve and further develop your BAM. Of particular import is the point of view in your memories. Pay attention to this perspective during this and all other exercises throughout this book.

What Is Memory?

The more connections that can be made in the brain, the more integrated the experience is within memory.

—Donald T. Campbell

There is nothing more fascinating to me than memory! I love the sheer idea of it, the way it works, its beauty, and its complexity. The more associations you can make through memory, the more rewarding your life will be.

Let us begin with the broadest definition of “memory,” because within this will be all of the different and nuanced forms memory can take. According to the dictionary, memory is the process of recalling what has been learned and retained, especially through triggers and repetition. In the words of this definition lie the two most general categories of memory: short-term memory, which is the immediate re-creation of a piece of information, and long-term memory. There is more to memory than rote repetition, and the word “retained” in the previous definition starts us down that road, the road of long-term memory.
Let’s look a little closer at these two categories. Have you ever been given a seven-digit phone number, remembered it long enough to dial it, but forgot it the second you heard it was a wrong number? Well, that is your short-term memory working for you. Short-term memory is the storage of information for only a short period of time.

Conversely, have you ever tried to figure out how your partner is able to remember an argument you both had five years ago? Or how your teenager can remember a poem he or she learned back in second grade? That, by contrast, is long-term memory, and it involves the retention and recollection of information over a long period of time, such as days, weeks, years, or even decades.

From the various memory tests I took at UC Irvine, I have learned that there is no one spot in the brain for memory, but rather many different areas of the brain that are used to store different types of memory. This is especially true for long-term memories, for within this group we can make even further groupings and divisions. Under the umbrella of long-term memory are explicit memory, implicit memory, episodic memory, and semantic memory.

Explicit memory, a type of long-term memory that we all share, is the ability to comprehend and remember information consciously. It is what most people have in mind when they think of memory, and it is what you might use when remembering a doctor’s appointment or someone’s birthday. It is also what a person may use when studying for an exam or any time one needs to make a conscious effort in order to remember the information they are receiving. When I tell you what I was wearing on, let’s say, Sunday, May 15, 1977 (bell-bottom jeans and a mint-green T-shirt with capped sleeves), that is an explicit memory that I am consciously recalling.

Implicit memory, on the other hand, does not require conscious thought. This type of memory allows you to do and remember things by repetition. It is where human beings are “mechanical.” Implicit memory is information that becomes second nature to you,
in the way that driving and the rules of the road become after years of being behind the wheel. These are things that become habit, like brushing your teeth or putting on your shoes. Implicit memory is the result of explicit memory. If you practiced very hard for that driving test using explicit memory, the fruits of your labor would manifest in the habit of driving, using implicit memory. I may have sat in bed when I was a little girl and consciously ferreted out what I did the month before in my mind, but at this point, it's literally “just there.” The act of remembering, for me, is completely second nature.

There are also various other types of long-term memory that have recently captured researchers’ interest, including prospective memory, retrospective memory, emotional memory, and, finally, the focus of this book—autobiographical memory.

Autobiographical memory (AM), another form of long-term memory, is based on an individual’s life, and it’s the one you’re going to improve over the course of this book. With AM, the brain uses episodic memory (personal experiences, specific objects, associated emotions, people and events experienced at a particular time and place) and semantic memory (general knowledge and facts about the world, related to no specific event). For example, an episodic memory would be your happiness at your sister’s wedding (on Monday, June 17, 2002, for me at least!) and semantic memory would be your knowing that a bride at a wedding is the one getting married.

The biggest misconception about autobiographical memory is that it is photographic memory, also called eidetic memory, which is the ability to recall images, sounds, or objects after a short time of exposure. In fact, assuming that what I have is photographic memory, people will often ask, “So, you can just read a script once and know all the lines?” The answer to that is no. Although I am very good at memorizing a script quickly, it is not because of my autobiographical memory, but rather because of my explicit memory.
With autobiographical memory, it is more about the experience of what you are doing, where you are doing it, and what is going on around you at the given moment an event is taking place. It can resonate in significant ways, like remembering how you felt when an important life lesson took place. And it can keep that lesson alive long after the incident has passed. It can also help prompt seemingly insignificant connections that can be helpful later. Apropos of the script question, when I read a script, my autobiographical memory allows me to remember not only the script, but where I was when I read it, thus enabling me to remember the lines in a more connected way.

For example, when I first read the script to the musical Chicago, it was Monday, March 17, 1997, and they had sent it to me because they were interested in my replacing Ann Reinking in the Broadway production. I hadn’t seen the show yet, but I did know two things: that it was a brilliant production, and that to get the job, I would have to work my butt off! I can remember sitting in my bedroom with script in hand and being surprised at how spare and precise the text is. I remember looking up and seeing the teal-green chair in my bedroom as I was thinking how much the character of Roxie was like a little kid (my own boys were both under three at the time) and how the characters were written, at least in this version of the script, without much description, thereby leaving a lot up to interpretation. I can’t tell you how many times during my 374 performances I flashed back on that first reading of the script while sitting on my bed to bring myself back to the spare and precise essence of the show. This type of cross-connection between activity and time and place happens numerous times throughout my day, usually in a flash of thought, but significant nonetheless. It is just one more example of how HSAM works.

The following chart will give you an at-a-glance explanation of the different types of memory.
### MEMORY CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERM</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short-Term Memory</td>
<td>The recall of information for a relatively short time.</td>
<td>Remembering a seven-digit phone number for a few seconds in order to dial it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-Term Memory</td>
<td>The retention of and ability to recall information over a long period of time, such as days, weeks, years, or even decades.</td>
<td>Remembering a poem you learned in high school or an argument you had with someone a month ago.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit Memory</td>
<td>The ability to comprehend and remember information consciously.</td>
<td>Remembering an appointment, a birthday, a script, or information while studying for a test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit Memory</td>
<td>Memory that does not require conscious thought.</td>
<td>Knowing how to drive after driving for many years, or how to brush your teeth once you’ve learned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episodic Memory</td>
<td>Part of autobiographical memory/declarative memory. The memory of things related to autobiographical events.</td>
<td>Remembering particular times and places in detail, including objects, emotions, people, and events from personal experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semantic Memory</td>
<td>Memory of the meaning and understanding of general knowledge and facts about the world. Unrelated to specific experiences and events.</td>
<td>Knowing that a hamster is an animal or a hammer is a tool.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Autobiographical Memory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Memory about specific information in one's life. It is made up of episodic and semantic memory.</th>
<th>Remembering your first kiss, various birthdays, vacations, names of pets/friends/relatives, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Highly Superior Autobiographical Memory (HSAM)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In-depth and detailed autobiographical memory far above the average.</th>
<th>Remembering what you wore, what day of the week it was, what you ate that day, and so on, on any day in your life.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Retrospective Memory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The ability to remember people, words, or events in the past. Can be implicit or explicit.</th>
<th>Remembering your mother's doctor's name or friend's name through passing or purposeful thought.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Sense Memory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Memory recall of physical sensations that were involved in emotional events, not just the emotions themselves.</th>
<th>Being able to recall and &quot;feel&quot; a hot day, a headache, a painful blister, a kiss, a partner's touch, the pain of a rejection, or &quot;taste&quot; a flavor or &quot;smell&quot; a scent.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

---

**Tools to Remember: Anticipation, Participation, and Recollection**

As explained earlier, my father's dictum—that every event can be broken up into anticipation, participation, and recollection—has guided me through my life and helped me develop my autobiographical memory. Almost unconsciously, the people in my family still automatically relate everything to APR to this day. I think most of us do, even if we don't realize it. We all look ahead to things before we actually do them. No matter what it is—going to the doctor, on a
date, to school, or to work—we tend to think about an experience before it happens. After we anticipate the experience, we then, of course, participate in the actual event, followed by its recollection of some sort. The APR cycle is the building block of experience and of life itself, but unfortunately, many of us go through these things unconsciously. We don’t spend as much time as we should preparing for the events in our life, thinking about what we hope to get out of the experience and how best to get it. We don’t actively participate enough and are often distracted or texting during real-life conversations, or we don’t take in our surroundings or really listen. Most glaring, though, is how quickly we walk away from something we’ve just done without any attempt to remember it. For each of us, the more cognizant effort we put into the immediate recollection, the more deeply embedded in our mental hard drive that experience will be, thus improving our long-term memories of the experience.

Let’s think about anticipation for a moment, because anticipation is perhaps the most nascent stage we enact. When we are young, we yearn so completely for so many things—our dads to come home from work, summer vacations to start, the holidays to begin—that some of the easiest memories to conjure up are not about the participation in big events, but rather the anticipation of those events. I remember as a child loving the Christmas season and all of its rituals, and how I could not wait for them to start.

*Even writing these words, I am remembering Wednesday, December 21, 1960. I am eight years old and in third grade, Sister Paula Marie’s room, and the Candlelight Ceremony is taking place, where each class gets to perform the Christmas carol they’ve rehearsed for the event. My class is singing “Away in a Manger,” and I am singing loud and with great in-*
tention, because it seems a more grown-up song choice than last year’s (second grade’s) “Joy to the World,” although not as sophisticated as what will be our sixth-grade song, “O Holy Night.” I am now flashing on Tuesday, December 10, 1963, and my mother and I are buying three trees, one for our living room and two to set around the pole in the center of our low-ceilinged dance studio, which was then in the basement. (You have no idea how small our house really was!) The whole family made a party out of decorating the house and dance studio each year, and all of this was in anticipation of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

We love the feeling that something wonderful is ahead of us. Is it easier to remember the extended excitement of giving the perfect gift or the momentary joy of receiving one, even if it’s perfect? Anticipation is very strong, whether positive or negative, and, considered this way, it is obvious that many of our strongest memories come not from the actual events, but rather from our anticipation of and preparation for those events.

For example, why did we anticipate Christmas so feverishly? Because we remembered how great last year’s was! The recollection of past events sets the stage for anticipating the next ones. Circling a date in a calendar imprints that date on your mind. Later, it will be easier for you to remember the exact date of some past event, because you spent time anticipating it. A first step to improving our memories is focusing on upcoming events and anticipating their arrival. If we can just slow down enough to see what is coming, we can be better equipped to participate and will have already made the cognitive bed for recollecting. We’ll already have strong memories of anticipation before anything actually happens.

Oddly enough, participation is often the least satisfying of these three stages. Is this not the truly pathetic thing about human experi-
ence? Whether we like it or not, it’s extremely difficult to fully be present in a moment. Only in memory can you hope to discover the full significance of a moment that you didn’t fully recognize at the time. The present is elusive. Like a bar of soap, the present is hard to get a grip on, because just as we close in on the present, it becomes the past. It is impossible to analyze except in anticipation or recollection. If we do not fully live in the present, then we will only have memories of anticipation and recollection, never of enjoyment and fulfillment.

Our lives hinge on the ballet of these three activities. Imagine the person who lives his or her life solely in anticipation. In the entertainment industry, you meet many people who have no interest in what they’re working on right now, because they want to be doing things that are bigger and better. For this reason, they never take full advantage of their current opportunities and never progress. These people are found in every area of life. There are also people who live solely in the past. I’m sure you can think of a few of those, too.

If anything, it’s best to live presently, in the moment, because this leads to the other two rather than blocking you off from either one. When we participate actively in our lives and open our senses to all the stimuli around us, we build memories that can be retrieved and enjoyed the rest of our lives. For example, one of my favorite things to do at a party is to help out the host. I like to be in the kitchen, prepare the food, plan the seating, and just be involved! Of course, because I am so engaged, participating so vigorously, I build strong memories to remember the party later. I know who brought the guacamole, who enjoyed the strawberries, who came late, and who did not come at all. We tend to get this involved only when we are doing or feeling something that is important to us. Soon we will discuss your Track and how these times of exceptional involvement lead to those memories that are especially vivid.
Frequent recollection of any of life’s moments is the key to attaining a better autobiographical memory. (Practice makes perfect, right?) I know that part of the reason I have such a strong personal memory is because I have spent my entire life instinctively reviewing my past and pasting the memories up against my internal timeline. This timeline has served to keep my memories in a chronological order that allows me to access them at any time, from anywhere in my life. Spurred on by my father’s belief that recollection is the best part of any event, I have, from a young age, tried to savor all of my experiences. I have reviewed them time and again, from every angle possible.

I rejoice in recollection, because it allows me to again relive moments that have passed and that will not come again, unless I remember them. Whether this is to remember a moment in the car with my teenage son Joey from last week or a moment with my brother from forty years ago, these recollections are sweet and further build my memories. I live in APR. It doesn’t torture me or torment me. It doesn’t take long, and it doesn’t take me out of my day.

When we spend some part of our day reviewing the previous day, we are more likely to learn from our mistakes, to improve our behavior, to enhance our current day, and to retain what we have learned into the future. If we slow down and “smell the roses,” we will also improve our ability to recall each day and how the flowers smelled the day before, or how Mother’s bread smelled when we were ten years old!

**EXERCISE #2: APR**

As a first little step toward mindfully experiencing your life, let’s spend a moment examining your current A’s, P’s, and R’s.
• First, what are you currently anticipating in the future? Is there anything happening in the next few days that you are preparing for?
• Next, what are you in the middle of participating in right now? Are you taking full advantage and appreciating that which is presently going on in your life?
• Lastly, what situation or event from the last few days can you strongly recollect as you are sitting there reading this book? Is it something that you would want to remember for years to come?

Memory Lessons

The best case for recollection as the most important component of APR is that it is when our most heightened learning process takes place. It’s the time when we step back to look carefully at what we’ve done—not just the good times, but also the bad and the somewhere-in-the-middle. Because I have reviewed my history regularly like this throughout my life, I can recall thousands of details from my childhood. I can remember every first day of school and what I wore (most memorably a crazy green and orange ensemble on my first day of sixth grade, Wednesday, September 4, 1963!), every teacher, classroom, and where I sat, every birthday and Christmas, including gifts and who gave them to me. And I remember so much more. Even as young as eighteen months old! I still practice my time-travel exercise whenever I have trouble falling asleep or feel like “visiting” any specific day or time in my life, or, especially, when I want to figure out exactly, to the day, what I was doing when I was either of my sons’ ages. (One of the most interesting perspectives on my past ever!)

I’ve never found a downside to recalling my memories. Think-
ing about the good ones has always been enjoyable and rewarding. And visiting bad memories not only allows me to feel grateful that I’ve gotten past them, but also reminds me what I’ve learned from those unpleasant and painful experiences. With each “bad” memory comes a major life lesson. It doesn’t matter if it’s from the time I didn’t do my homework in second grade and how mortified I felt at not being prepared, or when I was caught in a lie by a friend while trying to get out of our plans, or even when I found out my first husband had cheated on me. I would go back over these lessons and relive them, so that they became part of me, and I wouldn’t make the same mistakes again. To this day, I am vigilant about preparation and homework, am honest with friends, and have stayed away from philanderers.

A good autobiographical memory is also like an insurance policy against loss. It has kept my parents alive in me for so many years. I lost my father when I was seventeen and my mother only nine years later. Losing my parents so young was a terrible experience, but I would rather remember their deaths every day than forget my time with them for even a single day. My ability to recall my parents and all of the details of the life I lived with them keeps them present and with me. We all have this ability not to lose our loved ones, to be able to go back to happier times or to learn something from a past mistake. All of the moments that have made up my life may have been lost if not for my memory, and for this reason, I look at it as a line of defense against meaninglessness. What was the purpose of my fight with my brother in 1968 unless it informed the arguments I’m having with my teenage son in 2011? We all owe it to ourselves as living beings to take full advantage of the wealth of our own experiences.

_Nippersink Manor Resort was like the resort in the 1987 film Dirty Dancing, only instead of the Catskills in New York, it_
was located in Genoa City, Wisconsin. I remember Wednesday, July 26, 1967, when I was fifteen and a guest at the resort, and our nineteen-year-old busboy Sammy and I stayed up most of the night listening to the soundtrack of A Man and a Woman while getting his wait station ready for breakfast. I couldn’t believe that after Sammy and I had flirted all week, we were now slow-dancing to sexy grown-up music in the dining room, then moving on to a poolside lounge chair, where my father found us at three o’clock in the morning making out. My father, as you can imagine, was very angry. It was like the scene from Dirty Dancing when Jennifer Grey goes to Jerry Orbach on the golf course to ask for help. There was nothing but fury and, worse than that, my father’s obvious disappointment in me. He had been searching all over the resort for me, only to find me in a compromising position with this cute guy. We walked back to our guest cottage in total silence. He was furious. But I couldn’t help it; I was so in love with Sammy. I would have done anything to be with him.

The next morning, I found out that Sammy had taken off with one of the other girls and gone on a road trip. It was a devastating blow to little fifteen-year-old me. But what I get from this memory now is not so much Sammy, nor how in love and then hurt I was when he left, but the memory of my father.

I was this young girl on a trip with my family, vacationing at the place I would later work for several summers, and every time I go to this memory, I have a chance to visit my father again—anger and all. I can see him standing there and feel my heart jump as he catches Sammy and me making out on the lounge chair by the pool. I can remember, through my fifteen-year-old eyes again, seeing my dad. It is intense and it is sad, but I wouldn’t lose this memory for anything in the world. Why should I? I only had two more years to create memories
with him—good and bad. I look back on this incident and see how far I have come and how long he has been gone. But for that moment, in that memory of making out with Sammy and being caught, I am that silly, naïve little fifteen-year-old girl again.

And I have my father.

We all have our memories. But yours can be so much deeper, so much fresher, so much richer, if you learn to access your memories and look at them without flinching. I have been giving lectures and teaching classes in autobiographical memory for several years now, and I have witnessed tremendous changes in my students who have improved their autobiographical memories. Together, we have explored the importance of memory and how it helps us layer information and gives us access to things we already know. We have analyzed how an improved autobiographical memory keeps us from starting at square one and becomes the foundation for self-confidence as it builds and develops one’s personality. It also becomes easier to size up new situations and see the bigger picture. Exploring your memory is almost like therapy, in that it helps you to better understand yourself and predict how you’ll function.

I have my whole life within me, as do you.
Now let’s unlock it.
Purchase a copy of Total Memory Makeover at one of these retailers.