

READING

Considering a skill as vital for “useful functioning” as reading obviously is, one would imagine that society would place a great deal of emphasis and importance on its mastery. Sadly, this is not the case. In this society we are taught to read at a relatively early stage in our development, around the age of five or six. We are instructed in the basic technique and then virtually left alone to achieve any further development. Few of us are ever taught how to improve our basic reading skills. Reading is a very personalized behavior, usually done alone. It is difficult to compare one person’s reading technique with those of others. Each style is unique.

In order to understand the basic technique of how we learn to read, we must go back to our earliest experiences with language. We are first introduced to language in the womb, responding to the emotion in our mother’s voice. Infants are exposed to language through their parents who are trying to get them to mimic some very basic sounds, “Mama” for example. Babies are naturally excellent mimics and depending on the sounds that they make, they are positively or negatively reinforced. At birth, the human infant has the potential to utter any noise or syllable found in any language. Positive reinforcement is given only when the appropriate sounds are made. Non-English sounds are not reinforced in our country.

When the child makes the appropriate noise (sounds found in English), they receive positive messages, smiles, feelings of joy, excitement, all of which the child senses. When the noise is inappropriate (non-English sounds), they receive negative reinforcement, corrections, scowls, and even such harsh words as “Don’t talk baby talk!”

As children progress, so do their vocabularies. The first words that they learn are usually nouns. Next come the verbs, action words that describe what they are doing or what is being done. It is later that the child’s vocabulary begins to include conceptual ideas. It is difficult at first for a child to understand “freedom,” “love,” or “quality.” These words represent concepts or personalized interpretations of one’s own experience. The definitions are often quite vague. Children learn about these words through thought and experience, hopefully with the loving guidance of others.

A few short years later, when children are still in the primary development stages of spoken vocabulary, they are introduced to the written word. Since the child’s connections to language at this point are entirely auditory, they are taught the foundation for reading, the written alphabet, through an auditory experience, the ABCs song.

It is only after mastering these twenty six funny looking squiggles and the noise that each one makes, that we can move on to the next step combining letters and forming simple words. The child is shown the word “dog” and told to “sound it out.” D, O, G, three separate noises are put together to make the sound “dog.”

After time, upon hearing the sound DOG, the child makes the connection that the word is the same one that describes the furry, four-legged creature that lives at home. A little child could look at the word “dog” for a long time without recognition. It is only when they hear the sound that the word becomes recognizable.

The combination of letters or symbols does not evoke recognition in and of itself. The mind doesn't connect the symbol and the concept of the animal until it sounds out the noise that the letters make. Children learn to read through sounds because they don't yet recognize the visual symbol as the word. This is the way that most people learn to read .

Throughout our school system, very little attention is paid to one of the most important of all the learning skills, the art of reading. After primary education, most students spend the next ten to twenty years in school, without learning one new idea about how to read better and faster with greater comprehension retaining and recalling more of what they read.

A summary of the traditional technique is as follows:

- 1. See the word.**
- 2. Sound it out (say it to yourself).**
- 3. Recognize that you know the sound.**
- 4. Connect the sound to the meaning.**

The most essential organ(s) for reading (in sighted people) are the eyes. Reading is tied very closely to the habit and behavior patterns of the eyes. The eyes create the trigger mechanism by perceiving the information in habitual ways and setting off a chain reaction of sub-habits that hopefully result in the comprehension of the material. Unfortunately, comprehension isn't always the result. Many people have developed a sub-habit of reading that lets their eyes continue to move across the page, while their concentration is disengaged daydreaming or “spacing out.” Some have developed the sub-habit of very shallow breathing, which leads to yawning which is equated with boredom and falling asleep.

The most basic sub-habit of reading is the way that the eyes perceive the written material. For beginning readers this means fixating their eyes on one letter at a time (D –O –G). As we become more experienced it becomes one syllable at a time as in (A – mer – i – ca).

Good readers see whole words, even large words (psychologist), all at once. For the vast majority, this is as far as they ever progress. From letters to syllables to single words. By the time most readers are ten or twelve years old, they have taken the art of reading as far as they ever will.

Exceptional readers are the ones who go beyond, and see several words, even several paragraphs in one fixation. The ability to move beyond the old “one word at a time” technique is the key to mastering the art of accelerated reading. The movement pattern of the eyes, a very powerful habit unchanged in most since adolescence, is the single most basic sub-habit of reading. It is therefore **very** closely related to all the other sub-habits. By changing that one most basic reading sub-habit, we create a “blank slate” effect. The other sub-habits such as comfort, posture, breathing, concentration, retention, level of interest and attention span are no longer automatic as when they were connected to and triggered by the “one word at a time” eye movement technique.

By learning to read in a “new way” (more than one word at a time) we can discard any and all of the old sub-habits that no longer serve us and integrate anything that works well into the new reading habit. We create in effect a blank slate. We can recreate our reading in any way that we choose. First we have to decide how we want our reading to be before we can change. It is the perfect opportunity to really take a look at, and make some decisions about, the way we read.

Another major effect of breaking and reforming the reading habit is the experience of gaining tremendous self-confidence. Knowing that we can take a habit as intensely ingrained as reading, (something that you’ve done virtually the same way almost every single day of our lives) and, through the use of Alpha programming, change it permanently and completely, is a very powerful awareness.

After creating a change of this magnitude, it becomes so much easier to deal with altering behaviors such as nervous habits, fears, phobias, procrastination, as well as the lack of confidence, initiative, or motivation.

The most important concept is that reading is a habit. If one reads poorly, it’s not because they can’t read well, it’s simply that they have developed the habit of reading poorly. Change the behavior, break the habit, and past performance no longer determines the present or the future. Start fresh with a new habit and you can fulfill your reading potential.

The first new step in accelerated reading is to break the habit of focusing on each word individually, by learning a new habit of focusing on several words at the same time. A recommended first step is the “tri-focus” technique. This means to focus three times per line, or at a third of a line at a time. Focus on the left third, followed by the center third, and finally the right third. Three per line.

Here is an example of how the eyes can learn to see the next sentence.

When I looked into the sky / I saw a bright shooting star / that no one else saw.

While this “tri-focus” technique works well with most books, some magazines and newspapers have shorter columns, so that a “bi-focus” (left half / right half) is more applicable; either way, you will learn how to see about the same amount with each focus. Depending on the relative size of the page and the print, sometimes two words (obstreperously unaccommodating) can be a whole third of a line in and of themselves. Readers can easily develop the ability to see that much and more in each and every focus. The best readers already do.

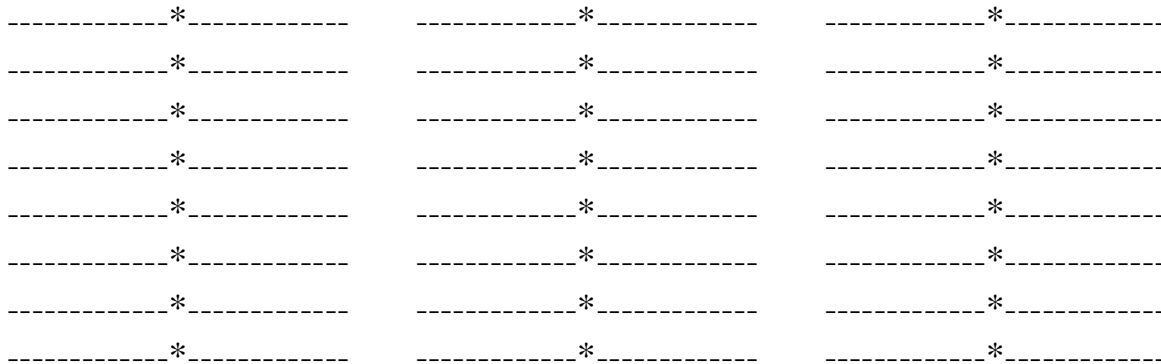
The key to any “speed reading” program is to get the eyes to see more than one word at a time. In most programs the “fatal flaw” is that when we pay attention to the new way to move our eyes, we take our attention away from comprehending. Divided attention (the Beta State) is ineffective for reading. It becomes difficult to focus on what we are reading, and even if we can, it takes all the fun out of the process. The joy of reading is the ability to become lost (Alpha) in the material.

In creating the tri-focus, we utilize the Alpha state to reprogram the movement of the eyes. Doing this allows the new eye movement (tri-focus) to happen automatically, leaving the mind free to pay total attention to comprehending the material.

The first step is to go into Alpha (eyes closed, deep breath, peaceful place, eyes rolled up and back) and relax. In this Alpha state we begin the process of recreating our reading by imagining a “magic book.” The “magic book” is the key to changing the habit of the eyes focusing on one word at a time. Begin by creating the cover of the book in your mind. Make this cover as magical as possible. It could be solid gold, jewel encrusted, ancient hand tooled leather, or something that E.T. brought on his last visit. It could smell like roses, make beautiful music when you touch it, and it could even float in the air. This is a “magical book” and the laws of three dimensional reality need not apply.

As we open up this “magic book,” the first thing that we notice is that this book has no words in it. Each page has instead of words, this exercise for the tri-focus.

TRI-FOCUS EXERCISE



As we imagine page after page filled not with words but instead with the tri-focus exercise, we can begin to see that this book isn't about "what" to read, it's about "how" to read. To practice this tri-focus exercise, simply focus on the left third (the center of your focus on the star), then the center third, then the right third, then the left third of the next line, center, right, and keep going down the page. The most important aspect as eyes are moved left, center, right, is to continue to imagine how magnificent this book is, and how wonderful it is to read much faster, with far greater comprehension. This exercise takes 20 - 30 seconds to do and is repeated 20 -100+ times per day for a few days or until tri-focus is a habit.

The imaginary book must be read with the tri-focus exercise at every opportunity. After X number of repetitions, anything becomes a habit. The number of repetitions necessary becomes much fewer when combined with the hypersuggestibility of Alpha, and with very high emotional amplitude. Time means nothing; times (repetitions) means everything. However long (or short) it takes to do that number of repetitions, is how long before the habit is locked in. Once the habit (automatic behavior) is established, it is no longer necessary to practice with the imaginary book tri-focus exercise because the habit reinforces itself. Habit makes it easy to do something and hard to do anything else.

Create the tri-focus in Alpha and allow it to spill over into regular reading. Intentionally tri-focus only in your "Magic Book". Whenever reading, allow the eyes to do whatever they do all by themselves. It is very important to remember to intentionally tri-focus in your "Magic Book only. It is very difficult to pay attention to eye movements and effectively comprehend material at the same time, as it is dividing attention and therefore the Beta State. As you continue to practice the tri-focus in your imaginary book, you will find that you begin to automatically tri-focus in real books as well. Allow that to happen, and concentrate all of your attention exclusively on comprehending and enjoying what you are reading.

Once the tri-focus begins to happen automatically, it is then time to program into the subconscious mind the other sub-habits associated with this new reading technique. Focused concentration, comfortable posture, holding the book up at eye level, and deep rhythmic breathing are a few of the basics. Include enhanced attention span, smooth and efficient page turning, and a pleasant facial expression. A powerful positive belief that “I will understand and recall everything I need from everything I read” is a must. Program all this by going into Alpha and imagining reading with these sub-habits already in place. Feel your intense connection to the book and get a sense of how quickly the pages are turned. By investing a very little bit of time each day now (lots of 20 - 40 second Alpha sessions) save months, perhaps even years eventually. By increasing reading speed just three fold, one who reads a couple of hours a days saves over 40 hours a month. This adds up to several years saved over the course of a lifetime.

Reading is the best way to improve vocabulary. People don't learn many new words in conversation as they don't need to use as many different words while speaking. Volume, intonation, inflection, emotion, facial expressions, and hand gestures are available to make their point. Writers have only the ink on the page, so that, for the writer, the search for just the right word is a lot more important.

Accurate or not, most people determine how intelligent they believe another is, based on vocabulary which is primarily developed by reading. Being thought of as very intelligent has many positive implications and consequences. Reading is the often the best way to learn anything from people who are dead or far away. It is always available to do, and because there is always something good to read, we can spend the rest of our lives knowing we will never be bored again. Reading for pleasure and reading for study are two different skills; however the actual reading of the material is done in much the same way. Whenever we are reading something that we need to know, for example for a test, or for a presentation, there are steps to take before we read, to best prepare ourselves, as well as steps to take after we read to be assured of effectively retaining the information.

LEARNING AND MEMORY

Live and learn, or you don't live long."

Robert Heinlein

A key to taking in information is paying attention. We know several things already about paying attention. We know that the Alpha State is the state of focused attention, so before you read anything, technical material or difficult material, close your eyes and go to your peaceful place first. Focus your attention on a peaceful place so now you have a focused attention state to shift over to the material you're about to read. Now, instead of hoping the material will bring you into a focused concentration state, you focus your concentration first on your peaceful place and then shift over to the material you are learning.

Another thing about paying attention is that it is much easier to pay attention to something when you have some kind of idea what you're going to pay attention to before you pay attention to it. Its much easier to move into the process of learning, when the mind/spirit/heart is warmed up. So step one, you scan the material. This is not reading, its not even skimming. You take a look at what you're about to read, just looking at a few words on each page, the words that pop out at you, just thinking about what subject this is, before you read it. The reason for this is that one of the most basic of all human experiences is the fear of the unknown. When you take a book that you haven't read before and you look at what you're about to read your eye is a camera it actually takes a picture. We all have a photographic memory, though some of us develop the film better than others, we all take pictures. Go back to actually read the material and it seems no longer unknown. There is an instant recollection, an immediate affinity for what feels familiar. Always look over the material before you read it.

Perhaps the single most dangerous thing our school system does, is force children to take classes they're not interested in. When you attempt to learn something you're not interested in you usually don't learn it very well and therefore you feel less intelligent. We don't need to force children to take classes they're not interested in. We already have existing today, the technology to entice them to. Just hire creative people like those who come up with ideas like Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles to make commercials for English classes. Kids will be saying, "please, please, let me take English.

One time, to create passionate interest in a physics class I feared would be boring, I imagined I was walking out of my class carrying my physics book in my hand and walking

across campus and across the street from campus to my bank. I walked into the bank carrying my physics book in one hand and my check book in the other hand and as I got in line in the bank, I noticed that standing in front of me in line, the next person in line, was the woman of my dreams. There she was, Venus in blue jeans, Aphrodite in a halter top. Everything, everything, everything I'd ever dreamed of in a woman was standing right in front of me. Even from the back I knew, she was the one for me.

I'm imagining that I'm staring at her, and she turned around and she looked at me, and her eyes met my eyes and my eyes met her eyes and cupid's arrows were shot into both of us and there were flowers and hearts and angels and rainbows and it was love, it was love at first sight, it was the most incredible love, it was the most wonderful love. We stared at each other, wondering where we had been all of each other's lives and then all of a sudden I noticed she started looking down. I thought that was rather odd until I noticed that she was looking at my physics book, what a strange thing to do, and so for the first time I looked down and I noticed, what a small world, she was carrying a copy of that same physics book. Amazing coincidence.

She looked at my physics book I looked at her physics book, our eyes met once again and she said to me, "Oh you're taking physics, I'm having oh so much trouble with that." I said "Well fair maiden allow me to be of assistance." So we went over to this coffee shop across the street from the campus and she said "Do you really understand physics?" and I said, "Well of course I do." At that moment, I opened my eyes for real, I picked up my physics book for real, and opened it up and I read the first paragraph, for real. I closed the physics book, closed my eyes, imagined my peaceful place and then, the restaurant, and there she was again and she said "What did it say?" and I told her what it said and she said "Oh you're so smart" and she started holding my hand as we started studying together. We studied together for our first physics exam and we both got As and came back together and congratulated each other and we started studying together all semester long.

About half way through the semester I had a really brilliant idea and I decided to make her a better physics student than I was. Now all of a sudden she's picking up on this stuff faster than I am and she's saying, "What's the matter don't you get it?" I'd say, "Well give me a minute" my male ego's being challenged. This exercise with my Physics Girl changed my academic life dramatically. To this day I truly **LOVE** physics. It has forever become one of my favorite subjects to study.

If you're already interested in what you're about to read then get in touch with that interest and amplify it. If you're not interested in what you're about to learn then create interest in it. When you read, you read for the duration of your attention span. It's fine that we have a limited

attention span because it doesn't really matter how long it is. Five minutes is as good as twenty minutes, because regardless of the duration of your attention span you have an incredibly rapid recovery rate.

You can pay attention to something for five minutes, then take ten seconds off (in your peaceful place) and you're ready to go again for five more minutes. Pay attention for five more minutes, take ten seconds off and you're ready for five more. It doesn't matter how long your attention span is. Because you have an incredibly rapid recovery rate.

When you study, distractions and interruptions can be **GOOD**. If I'm studying and all of a sudden I hear this truck go by “vroooooommm”, that's good, because my attention had begun to fade enough so that the truck captured it. I didn't hear the previous trucks go by. I only heard that truck because I wasn't giving my full attention to what I was reading any more. When you get interrupted, or distracted, that gives you an opportunity to go to Alpha and get a brand new attention span.

If you are reading and you have this internal distraction, this thought that says, “You need to do your laundry!” What you need to do then (to keep the distraction from reoccurring) is to make a decision. You need to decide when you are going to do laundry (for example, Thursday 4 PM) or decide when to decide when to do your laundry (for example, I'll do it after I finish reading this chapter).

It is important to effectively process the information. One of the most interesting things about the process of memory is that when information comes in there is short term memory and long term memory. Short term memory is very temporary, lasts for just a few moments. Long term memory is anything that lasts more than those few moments and what happens with long term memory it goes into permanent memory storage. There is no middle term memory. If it makes it into long term its there forever. Your memory is perfect, the ability to recall information from the memory bank is what breaks down. Where information goes in the memory bank, has nothing to do with the information itself at all.

If you imagine your memory bank being like a file cabinet drawer with the easy to remember stuff in the front and the hard to remember stuff in the back, where information goes in that memory bank has nothing to do with the information. What it has to do with entirely is something I call the emotional rider. The emotion you feel about the information is what determines where in the memory bank it goes.

You remember what you love, you remember what you hate and you remember what scares you, you remember what excites you, what you don't remember is what you didn't care about, what bored you, what you were apathetic about. The more emotion, the easier to remember, the less emotion, the harder to remember.

The key to processing information is doing it with emotion. This works with real emotion or pretend emotion because the subconscious mind doesn't know the difference between imagination and reality. As I finish reading, I stop for a moment and I say to myself, with great passion **“GOT IT”**. I put that emotion of intense confidence onto the information I just learned and then it files into my memory bank along with everything else I feel that confident about. It goes right next to, how to tell time, how to tie my shoes, what my brother's name is. Process information, put an emotion on it, before it goes into your memory bank.

The real key to learning technical material is effectively reviewing what you've learned. When you're reading technical material go through it once and let yourself miss stuff, its okay because you know you're going to go back. Get the gist, the basic idea, the first time through. Let yourself miss stuff, don't reread, continue to read onward, feeling it's okay to come back and get it next time through. You go back and you go very, fast over the material that when you read it the first time you realized you already knew that. You go very fast over the material that when you read it the first time you realized you definitely got that. You go very fast over the material that when you read it the first time you realized that you don't care about that, and you stop and you carefully study what you still need to learn. “Great students only study what they don't know, they don't study what they know.”

Read it once through for the purpose of getting most of it and then go back really quickly and only stop and pick out the pieces you missed the first time. If you like to underline or overline or take notes on what you are studying, this is where you do it. Do not underline the first time you read something. The purpose of underlining is to prioritize, to determine what's more important than what. How are you going to do that effectively, when you don't know what you've got to work with yet.

Finally you practice remembering. This is an example of Mental Rehearsal in the Alpha State to create Peak Performance. If you were a student and you had a history test on Friday, you would start your practicing a week before.

You would close your eyes, take a deep breath, and go to your Peaceful Place. Next you would imagine yourself laying in your own bed waking up in the morning. Imagine your first thought is, “Today is Friday”, today's my history test, and I'm ready.” So you imagine getting up, feeling very confident, and going to school.

As soon as you get to school you imagine that you sit down at your desk and the teacher passes out the exam, and as soon as you get the exam you imagine that an invisible part of you steps outside of yourself and is watching yourself from over there taking that exam.

Imagine that you are a little to far away to see what questions are on that exam, and a little too far away to see what answers you are writing, but you can see as you watch yourself, is your pen zooming along answering question after question, and you can see that smile on your face,

and that gleam in your eye. You know just what you look like when you are doing great, and that's what you looks like. Answering every question, nodding, smiling, having a great time.

Imagine finishing with lots of time left, put down the pen, pick up the answer sheet, checking your answers, nodding smiling, saying, yes, yes, yes, yes. You hand in the exam, the bell rings and you walk out of the room. As soon as you get out of the room you imagine that it's the next class day, you turn around walk back into your class, the teacher passes the corrected exam back with a big red A on the top and you say **ALL RIGHT!!**

Imagine this about fifteen times a day for a week before the exam. When you walk into that exam on Friday for real your subconscious mind is going to thin/feel "Oh this exam again - I've taken this exam a hundred times, I always get an A on this exam. The last hundred times I took this exam I got an A. I've got a habit of getting an A on this exam."

What happens is, that all the answers that are in your mind will come out. Now of course this only works if you study, but if the information is in there it knows how to come out. This virtually eliminates the tip of the tongue syndrome.

For pleasure reading, just read, but for study reading these six steps are what you need to do.

STUDY SKILLS

- 1. Scan:** Look over the material before you read it. Warm up the mind on the subject matter before you begin to study.
- 2. Psyche up:** Get yourself interested in the material that you are about to study. Imagine why it actually is important to you or else make up a reason that motivates you to pay attention.
- 3. Read:** Read with total focused concentration in alpha using the tri-focus technique for the duration of your attention span.
- 4. Process with confidence:** In eyes closed Alpha, imagine that you are fully confident that you know the information and will be able to recall it anytime, especially under pressure.
- 5. Review:** Go back over what you just read, very quickly over what you realized that you already knew. Go very quickly over what you totally understood. Go very quickly over what you don't need to know, and stop and study only what is left. Review what you know, study only what you didn't get the first time through.
- 6. Rehearse:** Imagine that you are watching yourself taking the test. Watch the smile on your face and the gleam in your eyes as you successfully answer question after question. Observe yourself checking your answers and realizing that you got them all right. Imagine handing in the test with great confidence. Next, imagine that you have come back to class on a later date and received the corrected test. Imagine the A or 100% and finish by congratulating yourself on a great performance.