

The Three Laws of Memory

Extracted from "Assimilative Memory, or How to Attend and Never Forget"

There are 3 laws of memory or of thinking that you must know if you are serious about developing a sharp memory.

The first and principal thing the pupil requires to do in this lesson after learning the definition of the following Three Laws - is to be able to clearly understand the examples under each Law, and whether they verify or illustrate that Law.

LAW I

INCLUSION indicates that there is an overlapping of meaning between two words, or that there is a prominent idea or sound that belongs to both alike, or that a similar fact or property belongs to two events or things as, to enumerate a few classes:- Whole and Part -

(Earth, Poles) (Ship, Rudder) (Forest, Trees)
(Air, Oxygen) (House, Parlor) (Clock, Pendulum)
(Knife, Blade) (India, Punjab) (14, 7) (24, 12)
Genus and Species. - (Animal, Man) (Plant, Thyme)
(Fish, Salmon) (Tree, Oak) (Game, Pheasant)
(Dog, Retriever) (Universal Evolution, Natural Selection)
(Silver Lining, Relief of Lucknow)
(Empress Queen, Victoria) (Money, Cash)

Abstract and Concrete. [The same Quality appears both in the Adjective and in the Substantive.] -
(Dough, Soft.) (Empty, Drum.) (Lion, Strong.)
(Eagle, Swift.) (Courage, Hero.) (Glass, Smoothness.)
(Gold, Ductility.) (Sunshine, Light.) (Fire, Warmth.)

Similarity of Sound.
(Emperor, Empty.) (Salvation, Salamander.)
(Hallelujah, Hallucination.) (Cat, Catastrophe.)
(Top, Topsy.)
[Inclusion by sound is not punning.]

Simple Inclusion embraces cases not found in either of the foregoing classes, but where there is something in common between the pairs, as
(Church, Temple.) (Pocket, Black Hole.)

LAW II

EXCLUSION means Antithesis. One word excludes the other, or both words relate to one and the same thing, but occupy opposite positions in regard to it, as

(Riches, Poverty.) (Hot, Cold.) (Old, Young.)
(Damp, Dry.) (Life, Death.) (Love, Hate.) (Joy, Sorrow.)
(Courage, Cowardice.) (Health, Sickness.)
(Righteous, Wicked.) (Beauty, Ugliness.) (Peace, War.)

LAW III

CONCURRENCE is the sequence or co-existence of impressions or ideas that have been either accidentally or causally together. It is either the accidental conjunction of experiences or the operation of cause and effect; since even in the latter case, it is merely the sensuous facts of immediate succession that we know about, as

(Gravitation, Newton, Apple.)
(Dives, Lazarus, Abraham, Bosom.) (Pipe, Tobacco.)
(Michaelmas, Goose.) (Columbus, America.)
(Bartholomew Diaz, Cape of Good Hope.)
(Grandmother, Knitting) (Socrates, Hemlock.)
(Bruce, Spider.) (Nelson, Trafalgar.)
(Demosthenes, Seashore, Stammering, Pebbles.)
(Job, Patience.) (Wedding, Slippers, Cake.)
(Wellington, Bonaparte, Waterloo.)
(Depression, Fall of Silver.) (Lightning, Thunder.)

In the case of the following pairs, one word has been so often appropriated to the other, that there seems to be something in common in the meaning of the terms - but it is not so, they are mere cases of Concurrence, but of almost indissoluble Concurrence.

For instance, a man might examine a "spade" in all its parts and might even make one after a model, and not even know what "dig" means. The mention of "dig" is as likely to make us think of pickaxe as of spade. "Spade" does not mean "dig" nor does "dig" mean spade. "Dig" merely means the action of the "spade," or the use to which it is put. Hence this pair of words does not furnish an example of Inclusion. But as "dig" is frequently appropriated to "spade" - as we have often thought of those words together - this is a case of strong Concurrence. The term "swoop" is almost exclusively applied to "eagle."

A certain action or movement of the eagle is termed swooping. But "eagle" does not mean "swoop," nor does "swoop" mean "eagle." We always think of "eagle" when we think of "swoop," but we do not often think of "swoop" when we think of "eagle." It is not In, but Con.