

MASONIC RITUAL MEMORY **TECHNIQUES**

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Confucius almost got it right – ***“A journey of a thousand miles begins with the decision to take a single step.”*** At what level would you describe your commitment, on a scale of one-to-ten? Why is this your decision? The answer isn't important, so long as it is empowering. Self image, or impressing and/or pleasing others - it doesn't matter.

What do you expect to produce from your decision; what does that 'look' like? Imagine yourself being congratulated on a great performance; how does that “feel?” Others can help, but the performance is ultimately yours. Go for the gold & enjoy that magical feeling which accompanies your success! Then, don't stop there.

In the Craft, we rarely see coaches for more than the basics of Degree Proficiency. Thus, the extended memory requirements most often leave the individual to their own resourcefulness. There should be a Lodge standard that the first task of an installed/appointed officer is to train his apparent subordinate/replacement.

While the major memory work should be formally taught, that's just not what reality commonly delivers. Typically, those motivated to do the memory work are left on their own; and – sadly - that often shows in the form of poor performances. Witness the empty chairs of the Lodge Rooms, was anyone impressed? As you read this, Lecturers are being replaced by DVDs! While deemed to be a desperate and "adequate" substitute; there is simply no replacement for a good Lecturer.

If you've not already had the experience, find a junior high school & ask the music instructor if you can sit in the shadows & observe her/his students sing a song of any length. Notice, in particular, the PASSION which they put into the song & its perfection.

From that experience, discover your own “passion,” memorizing ritual will strike you as embarrassingly simple. Yes, memory is easier to train, when young. That is particularly noticed in those stepping up from the various Masonic Youth organizations, into the adult bodies. Take the time to ask the music teacher for any memorization tips. (Stop by the theatrical department, for more memorization advice.)

The biggest aid to memorization is to visit, visit; and visit as many Lodges, which you can. Pay attention to the good & the bad. Most importantly, pick out an outstanding officer & keenly listen to him. Unlike music, there will be no legal recordings of the ciphered work to use as a memory “model.” Go back to that Lodge & listen to that Brother again. There is an excellent possibility that there is an overlooked, but prominent “audiographic” function in you brain, which will allow you to ‘hear’ that particular officer, as you try to memorize your part.

The nature of basic Degree “proficiency” serves as an early memory skill and confidence builder. Depending upon the Jurisdiction, the memory requirements may border on unreasonable. This is particularly true, when one’s work life seems to be a 24/7 vocation. Assistance is desperately needed for memory requirements. That’s not just “good counsel,” but involved support, by others.

A beginning Mason should appreciate that there is no mandate for him to become a competitor to those ritualists who appear to have a photographic memory, combined with the talent and skills of an acting career. Whether helping out with a small part in a Degree or going for Grand Lodge office – start small! Success begets success. Memorize in the spirit of ‘sport’ or ‘challenge’ - for FUN! No one has had their throat cut across for failing a memorization task.

Attitude plays a key role; go for the big “YES!” That is to say that the more impassioned about your success, the quicker the result; and the quality.

A good starting point is the presentation of the ‘working tools’ to a Candidate. Such requires verbal and tactile skills – including timing. The Apron Presentation part is a good second step. The “G” Lecture of the Second Degree is a good first “big step;” if such becomes tempting.

Among other matters, if you suffer from any degree of “performance anxiety,” starting small will be very important.

One of the best resources for Masonic memory work is participation in Degree presentations. In most cases, your offer will be very gladly received. To start, ask for an ‘easy’ part. The overall exposure will allow your subconscious to inadvertently memorize material which can be selectively ‘excited,’ later on. As a minimum, attend Degree presentations as a visitor. Much will automatically ‘sink in.’

When volunteering, don’t be afraid to ask for help. The Lodge may possibly be unable to provide the desired help, but, “no” is the automatic answer – if a request is not made. If you get that “no,” ask for a reference to someone outside the particular Lodge. Don’t be afraid to ask many people for such references. No one should take offense. Some Lodges may have a “school” regularly scheduled for all comers.

Of special importance is the matter of doing memory work in the fashion of team spirit. A Mason should make friends with one he deems to be a good candidate for being a personal mentor; forming a ‘buddy system.’ Having at least one ‘team member’ observe and/or coach (drill) your memory work is an excellent advantage. Multiple ‘mentors’ are possible and workable. That’s also usually a ‘fun’ experience, especially over a meal, coffee or a beer.

Many memory parts are not considered to be “secret;” the wife or girlfriend can play the role of the “coach.” Try to impress her. The Tools presentation and the Apron presentation, add the “G” lecture are “monitorial,” therefore ‘legal’ for the assistance from anyone. Be certain that they have your best interests at heart; token assistance is hardly worth the time.

Each person is different; we think differently and we MEMORIZE differently. Some people are memory “naturals,” most are not. However there is a reasonable range of memory methods and strategies to effectively identify, and develop a memory “system” – in the particular individual. Motivation and methodology can go the distance.

Somehow, somewhere; Masonic memory work should always be fun – or intriguing!

Few escaped grade school and high school without some remarkable memory performances. In many cases, memory work was a function of competition – sometimes with associated prizes. Adulthood doesn't kill memory skills; we just seem to get out of the "school habit" and lose confidence in ourselves.

Keep in mind, that most people have perfect memories; but, some have better "recall" than others. However, that statement is more about useful mechanics, than a simple play on semantics. We need to both memorize – and recall. Most importantly, we need to recite; and sometimes physically perform. There may be an element of "timing" to accompany the part.

"Memory material" is like music being recorded by a needle onto a blank record. (Please pardon the antiquity of the example.) Some material inherently leaves a deep impression; other material barely touches the grooves. If 'weak' material is a 'must' performance, the impression has to be somehow effected (amplified), sometimes by extreme measures (memory tactics.) "Emotion" will be the best amplifier – more on that later.

One person's commendable memory may involve methods, strategies or techniques which will totally confuse or actually handicap someone else. Conversely, a close match in historical personal memory styles and strategies may produce fabulous results! A little encouragement may be all that's necessary. Know that all will be anxious for your success!

Again, the major part of memory work is "attitude." If a person sees the memory work as important, they will probably succeed – regardless of how much effort that takes. The person who has the "...I **can't be bothered**" attitude is unlikely to be remembered as a ritualist.

Whatever you do, BE CONFIDANT. The most productive attitude is the statement, "**Others did; I can!**" We're human; we gauge ourselves by observing others. If nothing else, identify a "bad example," with the acknowledgment that you're certain that you can easily do better – but, live up to that notion! AND, note the term "acknowledgment;" evade going as far as "judgment."

Judgment, when arbitrary and opportunistic, usually comes home to bite us. The “bad example” may be recovering from a brain injury; attempting to regain mental viability – no matter what the effort. Don’t forget that you’re a Mason; be kind unto all.

A joke about faith and confidence:

The agent of a high-wire bicyclist had been successful in promoting the bicyclist riding a high-wire across Niagara Falls. Thousands had gathered to witness the deed. The weather was terrible; heavy rain and gusting wind. When the start time arrived, the bicyclist was terrified of the weather conditions; expressing his fears to the agent – who was sweating the loss of his profit.

The agent pushed for the gold. ***“You can do it, you’re the best; and I have total faith that you’ll do just fine.”*** The bicyclist wasn’t convinced, the gusting wind seemed to be getting worse. The agent continued, ***“C’mon, there’s no one better; think of the fame & fortune you’ll get. I know you can do it; you’re simply the best there is, the weather isn’t really ALL that bad; go for it!”***

The bicyclist perked up, ***“You really believe that? Do you really know that I can do it?”*** The agent smiled broadly and gave him a loud ***“YES, for sure, nothing can stop you, you’re the greatest show the world what you can do; I have all the faith in the world that you can do it!”*** The bicyclist looked at the agent & said, ***“Great! I believe you, I CAN do it – climb on!”***

Memory work is better characterized as “recall” work. It is a performance; with a variable sized audience. A youthful lad may try to impress his lady by delivering a romantic poem; a desperate politician may speak to a global audience – without a teleprompter.

Whether the memorization process, or the delivery; ‘concentration’ is required. Concentration can be described as focused attention, the ability to pay attention to one single thought or subject to the exclusion of everything else. Imagine a magnifying glass burning a piece of paper when the sun’s rays are focused through it. Concentrate!

As an indicator of the power of “concentration;” hypnosis is a function of concentration, not “sleep.” There’s a thought to keep in mind!

Ritual delivery is about active vocal chords and body language, not mental processing and internal ‘hearing.’ A memorized piece is in trouble, if the vocal chords can’t meet the delivery demand. Call that “Mind-Voice Coordination.”

All living things are emotional in some fashion. Thus, “memory” is often about dynamically exciting emotions – before, during and after! Is it exciting to anticipate? Is it exciting to perform? Is it rewarding to receive a commendable response afterward? [hopefully!] And, yes, sometimes desperation may be the emotional motivator.

However, as mentioned before, there is an often seen a characteristic, usually termed “performance anxiety.” Otherwise observed as a pathological fear of embarrassment in front of a group. Polls on “fear” have shown that public speaking rates second to burning to death. That anxiety is to be understood – and respected. By all that is right, we should admire the person who sweats the proverbial ‘bullets,’ giving everything he has, in an attempt to break through that fear. Such are due encouragement and support, not judgment.

Most people are sensorily biased. One person lives in a “visual” world, another in an “auditory” world, another in a “kinesthetic” world of ‘touch.’ Often their memory will function in that very same bias. Most people are a mix, in this regard, with one ‘sense’ being particularly dominating.

The ‘visual’ person may be able to ‘see’ a sequence of printed words – emulating accordingly. The ‘auditory’ person may require a tape recording of the ‘work’ or be verbally coached by a skilled lecturer, or have the ‘work’ read to him by an ‘assistant.’ He may be able to accurately “hear” the voice of a role model, from his memory. Possibly, the role model might be sufficiently flattered as to allow his delivery to be recorded – within due bounds. The ‘kinesthetic’ person may need a squeeze on the shoulder, as he reads/memorizes ‘key’ words. The science of “Neurolinguistic Programming” integrates the physical with the mental. Reportedly, it works – well.

A great actor may succeed, because they “see” themselves on stage – or on screen. Possibly, they “see” themselves receiving a performance award (with associated emotions of gratification.) A person with a weight problem may rely (insist) on their performance being exclusively verbal. Remember the saying, **“It’s not over until the fat lady sings.”** She may not hang around for pictures, but will wait by the phone, expecting a flood of compliments.

The key is in the emotional “payback” of their performance – however it is motivated or expressed. What does that image of success “feel” like?

People are also ‘personal image’ biased. They live for a self-image, a “projected” image, or the real-world of how others generally see them and report back to them. Ideally, those three images are reasonably identical. What does your image look like?

Lodge performance is largely a “personal image” agenda. A casually attending member might see a Lecturer give a great performance, witness the applause and say to themselves, **“I want to look like THAT!”** (identification) An Officer is born. Success is thereby spawned; the result to be tested by time.

The Lodge Room and the lore is highly visual. “Symbols,” remember? The verbal parts incite “visual” imagery. That includes success, whether a jewel worn, or a dozen members waiting to shake the hand of the successful officer.

Character and personality also play a major role in memory performance. Those with low self esteem will either try harder than anyone else, or deliver a mediocre performance – or refuse to make an attempt. That’s where “motivation subjectively enters the equation.

Once again, the key to good – even ‘great’ – performance is the element of “passion.” Whatever motivates the individual will determine much of their performance. That could be anything from a passion for the Craft, itself, to a pathological fear of failure – reasonable, or otherwise. Don’t be afraid to have an admired individual in mind, in terms of a one-sided (secret) competition.

Everyone has a different memorization style; while many styles can be called 'similar.' One person's success and seeming genius can be another's 'emulation' disaster.

Again, people are always EMOTIONALLY motivated. When it comes to memory work, it's the emotional payoff which makes the difference. However unpleasant, fear-of-failure (negative motivation) can also command great success. By all that's right, when a Brother announces that he will take a particular part, mass encouragement should follow, with the sincere commitment of support/assistance by others. Remember the joke; ask them to get aboard – and hold them to their promises.

Here's the catch – the end result (payoff) may be positive, neutral or negative; the difference between a standing ovation, a 'standard' applause level, or zero response, with heads shaking.

Another twist – whose perception is more important, relative to the payoff? The delivering performer; or the audience? A bewildered audience (forced into 'new' thinking) may leave the delivering performer with the "YES!" gratification that he/she gave the audience something to seriously think about; just as was intended.

But, the actual delivery has a dynamic trail. What happens when the standing ovation is perceived as patronage, in the mind of the performer? What happens when a perfect delivery is met with ridicule - born of politics, envy or jealousy? What does the performer's perception of the audience reaction do to the next performance? Sometimes, the performer must settle for the personal knowledge/gratification that he did a great job, dismissing the reaction; then moving on to the next performance.

Having said all that, we must now consider what memory techniques or strategies work in the Lodge Room. It is academic that tactics for memorizing numbers, formulas or lists won't lend themselves to memorizing a "script."

In all fairness, we must rely on the "visual" character of Masonic lore. That lore is all about visual images exciting matters of morality. That fact also methodically enhances memorization; whether a performing member of a Degree Cast, or an Officer.

In terms of basic Lodge ritual; the officers describe that which is 'visual.'

(START WITH A DIAGRAM OF THE LODGE AS A VISUAL AID)

The Lodge ritual is orbital, following the path of the Sun. The Great and Lesser Lights are at the center of the Lodge "universe."

From there, the Officers, in their ritual parts, describe the visual. Thus, the associated ritual memory is a matter of "visualizing" a sequence of events, then reciting accordingly.

In 'normal' Lodge ritual, the responses go all around the room – with a pattern. Imagine a ball being thrown across the room, from one responder to the 'next' responder. "Remember" the pattern.

The real memory-taxing part of Lodge ritual is in the degree work, whether the Degree conferral, or the Lectures and Charges. Here, too, one may easily discover the visual, in terms of a sequence; memorizing accordingly. The Degree Lectures reinforce the sequence and content of the Degree – designed to further impress/support the Candidate's memory.

However, it becomes "real work" when the verbiage must be actually committed to memory – and vocal chord output. The 'visual' serves as a tremendous aid, but the "speaking part" typically requires long hours of hard work. Not everyone has the advantage of an audiographic or photographic memory.

As with the rest of Masonry, the key is in breaking the task into smaller parts, then assembling them - coherently. Often, that is a matter of approaching the task like any other – don't get in a hurry, be careful and methodical; be accurate.

The major observation about verbal memorization is that the words must be actually spoken. Memorizing the fine details of a golf club swing isn't the same as swinging a golf club. The vocal chords must be trained and exercised, along with the mental 'training.'

Ideally, the spoken words somehow ‘magically’ become, in essence, a ‘verbal habit.’ In most cases, that equates to a lot of verbal recitation – with, and without, an audience. Reciting in the privacy of the wilderness is NOT the same experience as delivering a part before a Lodge Room. There’s that “pass-fail” challenge created by whatever level of performance anxiety.

In time, such “verbal habits” are, ideally, rather easy to reproduce, with little or no notice. The saying, **“Practice makes perfect”** is so very true; devote the major portion of that ‘practice’ to the vocal chords. Think of how you will “sound” to your audience.

SPECIFIC TECHNIQUES

The Mason has the advantage of seeing/hearing previous examples of what he wants to memorize. Again, perhaps he has a specific role-model to emulate. However, when it gets to the nitty-gritty of accomplishing the memorization, personal tactics must be employed – even ‘developed.’ Most of us have the history of memorizing poems or speeches in school, or in other environments. For those without a significant history of memorization, the task might be an exercise in experimentation.

1. Is there an obvious “flow” to the material? Is there an easily identified time-line sequence which is apparent? Is there something of a ‘sing-song’ nature to the material, making it easier to memorize?

In American Masonic lore, such is usually the case. Some jurisdictions are more accommodating than others. Any Mason who has read Mark Twain’s “Punch Brothers” story will know that he was a Mason. (The story describes an obsessive-compulsive memory piece.)

2. Survey the material for major titles and headings. How is the material organized? What are the major areas being emphasized? How do the symbols and lessons relate? Look for “main ideas.” If so presented, learn from the general to the specific. Try to formulate a ‘big picture,’ (moral lessons) toward better understanding and retention of the details. Especially during degree work, the “philosophy” should be emotionally prominent and be thereby easier to commit to memory. If you find “meaning” in the work, memorization will be that much easier; emotion will assist the process.

In example, for aspiring Masters, the First Degree opening-closing ritual is the most complex. It is possible to learn that work, first, then adapting that work for the Second and Third Degree ritual. The second Degree is simpler than the first, with the Third Degree opening-closing ritual easier still. Remember the pattern of that “ball” being thrown across the room, to the next responder. (The master uses the recited response as his cue, for his sequential part of the ritual.)

3. Find or make the material meaningful. Put “your” Masonry into a perspective, which is meaningful to you. Remember why you find Masonry meaningful; and how the information you are learning will play a role in the future – YOUR future! By keeping in mind the importance of what you are memorizing and/or learning, you will be better enabled (motivated) to retain the information. (Yes, sometimes you need a dictionary.)

4. Memorize “in place.” As best you can, emulate your physical presence in the Lodge Room. If possible, get access to a Lodge Room and make the experience more authentic. You may require at least a Lodge/Chapter room diagram, standing or walking around your living room, while studying, memorizing or reciting the material. Lodge Room “action” can be as dynamic in the memorization process as verbal recitation. The ‘motion’ may be a required element of the intended delivery. Such emulation can also relieve the stress of memorization and recall by providing a needed energy outlet and alleviate what might otherwise be boredom. Action can serve as a great memory enhancer.

5. As best you can – Relax! When reasonably relaxed, you can absorb new information more quickly - and recall it with much greater accuracy. Dynamic relaxation is a useful state of alertness, free of tension, allowing your mind to employ the techniques for recall. (Too much relaxation can lead to the escape of sleep!)

6. Create mental pictures. If able and useful, draw diagrams or even make cartoons to cement or connect information and illustrate relationships. For example, imagine or draw a sweating brother, kneeling before the Altar – **“Remember**, at THIS altar, you have promised...” (Throw in a hand gesture)

7. Recite and repeat in different styles. Verbal habit (vocal chords operating) is a function of actual experience. Verbally repeat the information you want to retain and later recite. Verbal repetition is the difference between information being short-term memory or long-term memory. Recite it rapidly, slowly, normally – or even sing it! Driving down the highway, “singing” the ritual, in whatever fashion you may be able to devise, will be far more productive than you might imagine. There’s no reason to think of that method as being “foolish” or “stupid.” Whatever works for you is the best method in the world. When getting back to the “serious,” develop your own style, whether original, or emulating others. As appropriate, hand gestures are allowed; a “visual/kinesthetic” aid to memorization.

8. Distribute the “load” of the learning task. Marathon memorization sessions are usually not effective. It is better to conduct a “memory drill” in multiple small sessions, than to work for hours at a time. Again, start from the beginning, perfect each ‘comfortable’ section; before moving onward. That means taking breaks between memorization sessions - as personal rewards. Different people will require different work and break periods. Be certain that your subconscious mind will still be at work while you are taking a break. You may find that your mind will stay with the task – in your sleep!

9. **Know – or develop - your own memorization style!** One person may regard the expression **“Four-score and seven years ago ...”** as an easily manageable ‘single-chunk.’ Another may relate to it as the organizational ‘when’ of the Gettysburg Address. Most have a certain ‘stretch’ to their memory ability, during the course of a memorization task. **“Four-score and seven years ago ...”** may have impressed the individual as a ‘whew!’ of memory – in the beginning. Later, that was easily stretched to a manageable and comfortable ‘chunk’ of - **“Four-score and seven years ago our forefathers brought forth on this continent...”** As said before, whatever is factually and reliably successful to the individual is the most successful method in the world!

10. **Timing!** To be brief, our minds work better in the morning than at night. Even at work, we can use an “authorized coffee break” to a ‘timed’ advantage for memorizing. A casual hour on a weekend is preferable to cramming before bedtime – or staying up late. Many use an extended and relaxing hot shower in the morning, to do ‘peak’ mind work. Commuting to work on a bus or a train allows an opportunity to make productive use of valuable time – and timing.

11. **Exposure.** Again, visiting Lodges which employ the particular ritual is a great reinforcement method. That is particularly true, with respect to the Degree work.

12. **Opportunity.** Make yourself available and advertise to key persons (Masters) that you’re **“...looking for work,”** for the purpose of building or reinforcement of proficiency. There is no adequate substitute for delivering in a Lodge room. When the time comes for volunteering, be certain of the quality of the outcome, then get to work.

Mnemonic Devices

Mnemonic (pronounced nee-'mahn-ik) “devices” or “tricks” are used to assist memorization and recall. Mnemonic devices are memorization “tricks,” not intended to help one to understand the content of the associated material. Memorization is not the same as “insight.” Try to imagine how much “medicine” is actually understood by the actors of hospital TV shows. Mnemonic tactics are tools to assist rote memorization – nothing more.

Here are few ‘standard’ examples. Most have their own mnemonic devices, which they already use!

Acronyms

Acronyms are words created by employing the first letters of a series of words. A well-known example in the Pacific Northwest is “BRASH,” which helps one to remember the names of the tall mountains, from north-to-south - Baker, Rainier, Adams, St. Helens, and Mt. Hood.

Acrostics

Acrostics are sentences – as opposed to just single words – which assist in remembering a series of letters, which stand for something. A common example is ***“Every Good Boy Deserves Fudge”*** (E, G, B, D, and F); the associated letters being the musical notes of the lines of the treble clef staff.

Rhyme and Song

How many can forget the English “Alphabet Song?” Many people softly sing the song in their head, when trying to orient themselves with the alphabet. (On a field sobriety test, the police won’t let the suspect ‘cheat’ by singing the alphabet.) Similarly, rhymes often embed facts, such as, ***“In fourteen hundred and ninety-two - Columbus sailed the ocean blue.”*** Throughout history, songs and rhymes help to burn information in your memory. Most religions depend on those techniques.

Visualization

“Visualization” is making a mental image of something, whether that ‘something’ is an activity or a group of facts. Many people use this technique to gain their best performance. In its most powerful form, it is – once again - encouraged to “... get in touch with the associated feeling,” accompanying the anticipated success.

Musical artists take full advantage of it too. The good news is, it can work for something as simple as studying for your next test, or even in everyday life.

What exactly is visualization?

Most of us can recall seeing a performer – of some type - with his or her eyes closed prior to a performance. That “visualization” might be either truly ‘visual,’ or possibly auditory – or both! Many musical instructors encourage students in the format of ***“In your mind; hear the note; push the key(s).”***

Repeated Recitation

Just as an athlete practices certain whole-body moves, memory-work requires mind-body action and feedback. That entails the brain activating the vocal chords, with the ears then stimulating the brain – for good or for bad. We hear ourselves, as we speak. When we recite perfectly, we create a “success feedback loop.” Obviously, we hear our mistakes, as well. In the process of the memorization drill, we usually have our “part” visually available – that involves the eyes as well. Even for those who are not visually talented, some visual registration takes place, and serves the player – even in the subconscious ‘background.’ Such repetition bridges the gap between short-term memory and long-term memory.

However, the ideal memorization process entails a “team effort.” For best results, have a practice audience to assist, support – and particularly to applaud! For better or for worse, the strongest memories are EMOTIONALLY driven. The key is in creating as many powerful positive memories, as possible.

Obviously, learning ritual is not an easy task for many, but all of us recognize that good ritual work is extremely important. Some hints for learning and delivering the ritual follow.

Anyone of normal intellectual ability can memorize if s/he sets his/her mind to it. Determined effort will bring the desired result. By the time a Master Mason has 'proven up,' he should be impressed with his memory capabilities; the rest is 'extended motivation.'

Concentrate

The majority of people need peace and quiet when beginning to study. When other thoughts begin to intrude on the study of the ritual, you will need to push these thoughts aside and stay focused on the material to be learned.

Read

Read through the whole section of work to be memorized. Reread the section several times. This gives you the big picture and will help you develop a sense of sequence and continuity. What, at first, seems too difficult will resolve itself into something familiar. Read it aloud – many times; begin with training your vocal chords – then your memory. Read it fast, read it slow; even do your best to sing the material.

Learn Carefully and Exactly

Next, select a manageable section to begin memorizing. Read and reread the section; read it aloud. Read it in a capricious style; whatever works.

Cover the printed material and recite the first portion over and over. Verify that you are saying it exactly as it is written in the ritual. Don't attempt to discard the book too soon. Learn carefully and be as exact as possible. Doubts or actual inexactness spoils the work.

Most ritualists will advise to memorize and recite each part which you can easily manage, taking advantage of anything that you might find 'catchy' about any segment. Start from the very beginning & get a manageable portion down perfect, before moving forward. It is usually a mistake to adopt the attitude that you know that you're a "late bloomer," disregarding the aforementioned discipline & practice. With rare exception, jumping ahead, or, jumping around will only delay the success.

Go Back to the Beginning

When each part is learned, go on to the next part by going back to the book. Be sure to return to the beginning with each recitation. Going back to the beginning helps keep the overall picture in your mind. Continue adding phrase after phrase or sentence after sentence until the entire section is learned. Think of a personal reward – even if it's as simple as throwing a fist upward, shouting, "Yes!"

Refer to the Ritual

Whenever you are trying to say a passage from memory and find yourself "stuck", do not hesitate to refer to the ritual immediately. In this way you will not perpetuate errors.

Take the Needed Time

Allow plenty of time to learn the material. Avoid cramming! Don't try to memorize information that you haven't worked on right before a performance. Such invites a counter-productive anxiety.

Plan in terms of weeks and days, rather than hours. Avoid procrastination. Break big parts into simple small parts. Don't plan to learn a long speech all in one sitting. Break it up into manageable parts – per your personal definition of "manageable." Learning one part at a time gives your sub-conscious mind time to consolidate what has been learned before going onward.

Say It Aloud

Read it from the printed material first; then recite as much as you can remember, by shutting your eyes and reciting the part(s). Then, as we memorize, we may repeat the material mentally until it is fixed in our minds. We cannot be sure that we have mastered it until we say it aloud – from memory. If you get stumped on a portion, recite it; or even write it over and over – until personally satisfied.

Use a tape recorder, if one is available. You can then listen to your voice and follow with the open book to pick up the little errors and lack of exactness that can otherwise be easily overlooked.

Read aloud the material that you are studying from; then recite as much as you can remember, by shutting your eyes and reciting the part(s).

If you get stumped on a portion, write it or recite it over and over – until personally satisfied.

Standard of Approval

If possible, find someone whom you trust; and would want their acceptance & approval. They will not only be able to ‘set’ the idea of your memorization/performance as being commendable, but can make any needed corrections, before giving you that long awaited pat on the back, with the message: ***“You’re ON, get out there!”***

Just get started!