



Brad Zupp On Memory Techniques & Memory Improvement For All Ages

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Can You Improve Your Memory At Any Age?

The answer is a resounding "Yes!" and Brad Zupp's story proves it!

In this episode of the Magnetic Memory Method Podcast, [Brad Zupp](#) joins us to talk about everything from [language learning](#) and memory techniques to the philosophy of education.

Brad Zupp is a wealth of information about memory, so after downloading the MP3 and reading the transcript below, be sure to check out the [fascinating memory improvement articles on his blog](#). One of the things that makes Brad so unique in the memory field is his candid revelations about [using memory techniques as he ages](#).

As you start opening multiple tabs and start absorbing all of this memory-boosting information, you can also [follow Brad Zupp on Twitter](#) and follow his [author page on Amazon](#) to be notified when the new books he mentioned on this interview appear. I'm all hooked up and as a serious student of memory improvement, you should be too.

Enjoy this episode with the stellar memory athlete and educator Brad Zupp and be sure to say hello in the comments below! :)

Note: At the time of publication, there's something wrong with the Facebook share count button. Developers are working on it, but it should still share the post when you click it. Thanks!)

Will Unlocking *Your* Memory Begin With Names?

Anthony: Brad, thank you so much for being on the Magnetic Memory Method Podcast. As you know, I was really enthusiastic about your book, which is incredible. It is called [*Unlock Your Amazing Memory: The Fun Guide That Shows Grade 5 to 8 How To Remember Better And Make School Easier*](#). I reviewed it. You were kind enough to follow up on that with this interview. So thank you for being here.

Brad: Thank you. It's my pleasure. I really appreciate both the chance to talk about memory improvement and the kind [review of my book](#).

Anthony: For people who aren't familiar with *Unlock Your Amazing Memory* yet, tell us a little bit about your story. Maybe, what's your first memory about being interested in memory?

Brad: The first memory about being interested in memory was when I was myself in about the fourth or fifth grade I was horrible at numbers and names. Names were not helped in that we moved a lot. My dad was an executive in a company. He was he was a fixer. He was someone that they'd say well that division or that office branch is having trouble. We need someone to go fix it, so my dad would get tapped for that. So we moved a lot.

I remember third grade I guess was the first time it really came to me that memory is important. It was the end of the school

year, and I gone to that school for the first time in the fall. The third grade, it was at the end of the school year though the teacher asked me to hand out papers on Friday. We must have written some type of paper or book report or something.

The One Memory Problem That "Freezes" Just About Everyone

She said, "Okay, Brad, you can hand out papers this week." I just froze because I knew I didn't know everybody's names in class. Now as adults, we introduce each other to each other or introduce ourselves to each other. Kids don't do that. Kids will come up and say, "Hi, my name is Sally." So part of it was I had never met people.

But I had a horrible memory with names and with numbers. I was up at the front of the class and I had the papers. I was going, "Oh, Sally you got a B. Way to go." You know, kind of looking up with my eyes to see who of the girls in the class was going, "Oh, I got a B," Because that's how I knew it was Sally. I didn't know people's names.

That continued all my life. Numbers, I was always bad at math in large part because I couldn't remember numbers. I could do the calculations. But if it any of it involved storing a number in my head to add it or anything, I couldn't retain that number

long enough to do the second step of the calculation. If I could write the first part down or use my fingers, I was fine. The calculations weren't the problem. It was remembering numbers was the problem.

There was no solution for me back then. That's in part one of the reasons I wrote the book I did first instead of writing a book for adults first is that there's a lot of kids like that. They can't remember something. Maybe they're good with math, but they can't remember the spelling of their vocabulary words, or they're great with spelling but they, for whatever reason, cannot remember numbers like me. That's why I wrote the book. That's my first memory.

How Do Kids Deal With Memory Problems?

Anthony: This is fascinating. I wonder how do you think that [kids](#) enunciate their frustration with their memory, because you know you were aware of it and that's quite an early memory, but to what extent do you observe that young kids are aware of that as being a memory problem and how do they express it?

Brad: Back when I was experiencing that, there wasn't really a way to express it. I mean I didn't go home to my parents and say, "I can't remember names. Let's get a book and help me or

let's look on the Internet." We didn't have any of that back then. I think it was kind of suffer in silence. It wasn't something that traumatized me, but I remember it very clearly to this day being up in front of class and the embarrassment of the end of the school year not knowing my classmates names. That was just horrible.

These days, kids with the Internet, more libraries, more books available on Amazon and other online availability of books, kids know that they can find solutions online. One of the things I do when I go into schools for presentations, I say something like, who thinks they have a bad memory? Who has studied for a test, been very confident, then you sit down in your classroom, the teacher hands out the test, you look at the first couple questions and go what? Am I in the right class? Am I in the right school? Because you cannot for the life of you remember these things.

Kids as young as seven, eight, nine years old are experiencing that. They're confident, they've worked hard and then they blank out. So they know, I think kids these days are more aware about things like money. They're more aware of this is it working for me, and I can get help with this.

So I think kids these days are willing to tell their parents, teachers or a visiting presenter like me, "Yeah, that's me. I have that problem. Fix it! I want to get better grades." That's one of the joys I have is going into schools and helping kids realize the memory, as you tell people, young and old, memory isn't something we're stuck with. We can improve it.

Why Memory Improvement Is Easy And Fun To Do

It can be easy and fun to do. It doesn't have to be boring, because I think that's where a lot of the kids, as they get a little bit older, is that they catch on remembering, or they give up they say remembering is hard, studying is hard. I hate school. This is boring. The teacher says, "Oh, you can't remember it? That's okay, just read it again."

If you don't read well, or you don't enjoy what you're reading, which is pretty common I think across the ages, anybody going to school, there's always a few subjects you like why am I learning this. If the teacher says well read it again, you read it the second time you're even more bored than you were the first time, and the teacher says you still don't have it. Read it a couple more times. At some point, you just go no. I'm just not good at this. I'm just going to give up. It's great that people like you and me and a lot of other people are out there saying there's a different way.

Anthony: Right and I think that's one of the things I admire so much as you're out there and you're bringing this message. That leads me to a question that I think everybody who works in memory education encounters all the time. I certainly get it at

least once a week, which is why aren't they teaching these techniques in school? You are actively actually going out and teaching it in schools. How did you get into proactively making sure that memory techniques are taught in schools?

Brad: I was a financial planner for a while. I got really tired of sitting in an office and not being able to use my creative side. Sometimes I struggled as a financial planner with memory, with remembering some of my clients' names. I remembered my top several clients' names. But, if someone just did something with me once, it was sometimes hard to remember their name. So I was already struggling with that. Of course, the number problem continued to haunt me, which is pretty important for a financial planner. But I also just hated it in the office.

One day I told my wife I should get out of this, and I should go back to doing something fun. I had been a professional juggler for a number of years before getting into real estate and then finance. I told my wife I should go back to doing something fun like juggling, but I wanted to do something important. So maybe I should combine them and do a fun show about money for kids. I said it just kind of as a joke to make her laugh, but she paused and said that's a really good idea.

The more I thought about it, the more I realized it was a good idea. I eventually found other financial planners for my clients. I gave my notice. I sat down and wrote a school assembly show about personal finance. I did that successfully for a few years. Then I was thinking, what's another show? Money is so

important for kids.

But what's something else that's so important for kids? If I were back in third, fourth, fifth grade, and I could have any type of presenter come, whom would I have come? I wish I could say my first thought was yeah, someone to explain money, which is what I was already doing. But it wasn't. It was someone to help me remember better –math, science and names.

I thought if I had that problem, maybe other kids are having that problem. I did some market research by calling a bunch of my friends that had kids anywhere from seven to seventeen years old. I said, "Do your kids have this problem?" The universal response was, "Oh my gosh, yes. They can't remember anything from schoolwork to bringing home the parent signature that they have to have the paper signed for their field trip, to pick up their clothes. I tell them hey we're going to do this on Saturday. Then an hour later, they'll come back and say, hey what are we doing Saturday because they were completely forgotten."

So I thought well I might have something here. I just sketched out a few of the things that wanted to do with the show. I realized the way to present this is to make it fun. I can't just go in and lecture kids, because kids don't want to be lectured. I've got to make it fun.

Why The Fun Is In The Pudding (With The Proof)

To make it fun, I really have to demonstrate that I know what I'm doing. I have to be able to do kind of some phenomenal feats of memory. That means that I need to improve my memory, because I don't like just to preach. I want to walk the talk.

How Brad Zupp Went From Bad To Great In Record Time

I said, "I need to make sure this works." It coincided with me turning forty, and my already bad memory in some areas getting worse. I thought okay this is great. I've got this idea for a school show. My memory is getting horrible as I turn forty. I still can't remember numbers. I still can't remember. Let me make sure this works.

I don't want to be going into schools and telling kids yeah do this and then have a horrible memory. I want to have an outstanding memory. I want to go from bad to great and say it worked for me. Here's how I did it. It can work for you.

So I threw myself into memory training. Shortly after I kind of started with this stuff, I remembered reading an article about a memory competition. So I on a lark signed up for that, went and did relatively well for someone with no training. That kind of started my love affair with memory competitions as well, which we can talk about if you want.

Eventually, I got good enough at the memory feats where I felt I could present it in a school, impress the kids and show them that I'm not just some guy talking. I'm some guy who knows what he's talking about and can do it.

I continued writing the show. I started practicing the show in little bits and pieces. I started memorizing the names of students when I would go into schools for my personal finance show. Gradually over a couple years got better at it and good enough at it where I could actually do the show. It took off from there.

Anthony: So a large part of this was learning to teach.

Secret Memory Improvement Ingredient: Be Driven By The Passion To Help Others

Brad: Yes, I mean, as you've shown, we have to be able to do this. There are a lot of memory people out there. I would say

almost all of them, maybe a few aren't keeping up with it, but almost all are really passionate about not just helping others, but also making sure their minds stay sharp as they get older.

Finding the deficiencies where were they struggle and saying, "Well I'm a memory guy. I should be able to fix this. What would I do if I had a coaching client that said I'm having trouble with this? Well, I'd tell them to do this. I'm going to do that. Look, it's fixed. It does work." The next time we have a coaching client, or someone asks us for advice, we can say yeah that happened to me and I fixed it. Here's how you can to.

Anthony: Right and I think that's a great way of going about it. I would say that's almost a scientific way of going about it. You are analyzing the issue, trying something out, checking the results and then improving from there or just going with what works. Would that be sort of a fair assessment?

You Don't Have To Be A Scientist To Benefit From Performing Memory Experiments On Yourself

Brad: I think so. I don't usually think of myself as a scientist, but I certainly experimented on myself through this whole process. Because for me, it's not enough to read the scientists say this, or the scientists say that, or another memory guy I

once read said this or said that, I really have to prove it for myself.

If someone says well this works, well I'll try it. The things I've continue to show others are the things that have worked for me. I do keep in the back of my mind, as I think you've said with a couple things in your podcast, this this may not work for you. This is how it works for me, but here are some other ways that don't work for me that might work for you. It's important whether it's a yoga class or a dance class or whatever to say, okay if you're having trouble with this part, do it this way. Oh yeah, that works for me.

It's important to know what works for other people as well. But for me, it really has to work for me or I can see how it could work for me if my situation were little bit different before I'm on to share it with someone else.

Anthony: I think we're having a great shift in education due to the Internet. So we've had an authoritative education system where people really needed someone to say this is how you do it, these are the steps and now follow them one, two, three. Where we're now online and we're getting a much more demonstrative education system or education networks that are people really living out what they want to learn and then just showing their journey and opening doors into many possible avenues.

That seems to me to have a lot of pros but it also has the cons of no real authoritative guidance. As someone who teaches young

people, what do you think is, if there is, the ultimate point of entry to memory techniques? Specifically, for young people and if it's universal to everybody, what would that be or what would be a better point of entry for adults to memory techniques?

How To Understand Need Versus Desire When Seeking Memory Improvement

Brad: Well that's a good question. For me, in my life with anything there has always been both a need and desire. So I might desire to learn to speak French because I'm going to go to Paris for a week's vacation. But if I don't really need to learn how to speak French, well I always have my phone, I can I was type something in the phone, it will give me a translation and they'll speak English anyway, then there's no learning.

If I have a need, like I really need to learn some minutiae about computer programming or something, but I don't really want to, I could probably hire someone to do it instead. Yeah, I'm going to do that. If there's a need but no real desire, I don't learn either.

So for me it's need and desire. I think it's a typical bell curve. Usually, at least in my experience at schools, there's a group that knows they need it because their grades are suffering, and

they want to have better grades. So they're receptive.

Then there's a bunch that their grades are suffering and they don't really care. Maybe their home life isn't supportive of getting better grades or they just don't see the benefit of it. They're really not motivated to learn.

There's another group that they already get good grades. They've somehow stumbled upon either our techniques or a way that they have done it themselves and it just works. They don't think about how to remember they just read a couple times and for some reason they got lucky and it sticks. So they don't really see a need.

So I think need and desire when they combine. If someone is out of shape physically and their doctor tells them well you know you should probably lose ten or fifteen pounds is that often enough. Not usually in my experience, but when the doctor says that and you know the kids say that and they have a heart attack scare, then it's usually time to make a change in our lives.

Does a Healthy Body = A Healthy Memory?

So I equate a lot with the same question about physical health improvement. What's the point of entry for that? Because we

see are we see our bodies in the mirror every day, and for the last sixty years or so, fifty, sixty years since the mid-sixties, early seventies we've been told [eat better](#), exercise, do this, do that, floss, brush your teeth, see the doctor, all these things. There are still people who don't take care of themselves physically.

I think it's an even harder uphill battle to say let's take care of ourselves mentally, because we can get away with faking it, outsourcing our memories to our phones and going oh yeah I remember your face better forgotten your name. Oh, I have a horrible memory and everybody goes along with that. We do that for years until all the sudden we're much too early being faced with memory being a real problem.

At that point, it's even harder to kind of pick up the pieces and start learning these techniques. They still work. It's just at that point, it's kind of like instead of being twenty pounds overweight, it's being two hundred pounds overweight and now it's time to start exercising. It's just a lot harder to get there.

Memory Techniques 101 With Brad Zupp

Anthony: There's so much in what you just said that I want to unpack, but the thing I really want to leap on first is that you

use the phrase "our memory techniques," which to me is a beautiful way of phrasing that. But how would you describe our memory techniques more specifically.

Brad: I think to me the techniques come down to what many of us talk about and what you talk about, and then we all put our specific spin on them. Basically, converting the information into a picture, associating it with something you already know so you can then reclaim it easily and reviewing it on occasion to it to tell your mind basically hey this this part's important let's transfer this into long term-memory. Then we put our particular spin on it.

My little spin is making sure people identify where they're going wrong first, because back to the physical. If you want to look like more physically fit with your upper body, it's important to do a full body workout but do you really want to be doing squats for hours on end if you want to have larger biceps. No. You want to do arm exercises if you want to have larger biceps. You may do squats occasionally to stay kind of whole body healthy.

The Need For Specific Memory Training Arises When ...

But if you want something specific, you need to do a specific

type of training. So if you're having trouble, you think you have a bad memory, you need to identify the problem. Is my problem getting the information? Am I not focusing well enough? Am I multitasking? Am I not pay attention to what my kids say and that's why I can't remember what they told me yesterday?

Am I getting the information? I pay really close attention but my mind is so disorganized that it goes in there and there's really no system for holding onto that. It's just kind of just everything gets piled up in there. It's kind of like piling everything up in a closet.

Yeah, you can get it out of there, but if you need to get something quickly and you don't know if that the top of the pile or the bottom pile or the middle pile you're throwing things around trying to find it, you're not going to get it. If your problem is that, you really need to focus on finding a method to organize your mind and your storage.

You're concentrating well. You're getting the information. You've stored it well, but when you're put on the spot, you blank out and you can't recall the information. But soon as the person walks away, you go, "Oh, his name is Anthony!" and it's too late. If that's your problem, you need to work on that.

Find Out Where You're Going Wrong

My particular take on it is identifying where things are going wrong, helping people figure that out and directing them toward that. But I think our memory techniques pretty much go back thousands of years to placing interesting, crazy, memorable pictures in a certain order or location using Memory Palace technique, linking them together or just associating the question with the answer. You know going back to students. I know you work a lot with students and vocabulary words for foreign languages.

You know you don't necessarily need a Memory Palace for that, though that can work in certain circumstances, but if you can just associate the English word with the [German](#) word. If you can picture the two together and create an outlandish image, you'll have that. You will have that bridge to long-term memory.

Anthony: This raises an interesting question because for me the number Memory Palace is essential to memorizing vocabulary. Just as a quick example. I was in Tel Aviv and recently got back. Just as you mentioned that, I just thought of phrase that I learned there which is "Where's the washroom?"

When I learned that, I used the spot that I was in right there as a Memory Palace. I placed that image right there which gives me an additional chance to find that image in my mind. That's one of the major powers of the Memory Palace and why I advocate and use it so much myself. Because now it's almost ten days since that I first learnt that and I can still recall it just by

having revisited a few times.

Brad Zupp's Harry Loryane/Japanese Connection

I raise the point or I jump on the point also because I want to go out on a limb. In additional research that I was doing with you, and not having taken any notes, if I remember correctly you have some history with Japanese.

Brad: Yes.

Anthony: Something was connected with [Harry Lorayne](#) there.

Brad: Yes, that's true.

Anthony: I would love if you would tell that story a little bit and talk about any language learning experience that you have with memory techniques and if you tried a Memory Palace and how you would see building out a vocabulary memorization approach on master phrases or what's your language learning story with mnemonics?

Brad: My language-learning story with mnemonics is exactly what you correctly recalled, very well done. After my struggles as a student, really the next time I delved into memory improvement was when I was working in Japan. I was there

seven different times over the course of five and a half years, seven different trips for a total of about three years living there. The first trip was ten days or so. Then a month or two went by and I was going back. I was going back for six months.

I'm a big proponent of if you're going somewhere we should make the effort at least to learn some of the language, as much as we can. That was daunting at the time. I said, well I need help with this. It was Japanese. Everybody perceives as a very hard language to learn.

"It's Just Pure Memorization" ...

I went to the college bookstore and I got a book, a basic how to speak Japanese book and learn Japanese. I also found a book at a bookstore by Harry Lorayne about memory improvement in general. It really piqued my interest because there was a there's a whole chapter on memorizing foreign languages. I'm like that's great.

I don't have time to do this now, but I'm going to be there for six months. When I get there, I'll have lots of spare time. I will take these two books and I will learn as much as I can. A week or so into it I got out both the books. Reading just the Japanese book here's how you say this and here's how you say this. It was

a pronunciation guide with some simple vocabulary. This is just like any language, there's really no sense, especially if it's not a Roman type language, there's really no sense to it.

It's like why does that equal that. It doesn't sound alike. It doesn't start with the right letter. There's no rhyme or reason. This is just pure memorization. Well thank goodness I brought this book. I read Harry Lorayne's book.

It said you want to do this, if you want to learn this, do this. So I started basically picturing a word in English and then finding that word in Japanese, translating it as you suggest a lot in your training, and we have that in common. I think you take it to a better level of breaking the word down into things that I can picture, syllable by syllable if necessary.

It's better if I can do a bigger chunk, but if I have to picture more that's fine. If I have to take it two letters at a time, whatever, I can make a picture out of that. So I started picturing and connecting them together. I think it was kind of bad. I don't even think I read the rest of the Harry Lorayne book. I just read that section.

**Hold The Presses:
You Might Not Even Need A Memory Palace!**

I didn't learn about Memory Palaces. It wasn't even in my vocabulary at the time. I just said I'm going to picture this word in English. I am going to picture of these syllables in Japanese. I am going to create a funny picture together and go.

I have these cute little things in Japan. I don't know if you have seen them. You will see them in your travels. They are like a little key ring and a tiny little flash card not even the size of like half of my finger. You write down on one side the one word, on the other side the other word and it's a little key ring you get like fifty or a hundred of these at a time.

I just got a bunch of them and I started filling one of these up a day. In between writing out the Japanese word and the English word, picturing the crazy combination, and then reviewing them and testing myself at the end of the day, I was learning fifty to a hundred vocabulary words a day. Language experts I've read often say that to be conversationally fluent you need about two thousand words. If you learn a hundred words a day, it doesn't take that long to get conversationally fluent.

People were spellbound, the Japanese people I was working for, and the English-speaking people I was working with. At the end of the first week when I had four or five hundred vocabulary words, they are going how are you learning to speak Japanese. How are you doing that?

Why Memory Techniques Are Easy - Even For

Japanese

They were saying you're a genius. I'm like no, I'm not a genius, trust me. I'm like here. Let me let me show you. See with this word I pictured this, and then I pictured this. They were like oh, that's pretty easy. I would teach them five or ten words and they learn them.

That's where it comes back to earlier discussion about the need and desire. They didn't really have the need because we had interpreters, nor did they really have the desire. The technique was there, the concept was there, but they never bothered to pursue it because it wasn't important to them.

But for me, I am a vegetarian. I've been a vegetarian since shortly before I went to Japan. This was essential. I needed to know how to say fish, how to say meat. How to say I can't eat this. I can't eat this. Does this have fish broth in it? Is this pork? I needed to know all that stuff as quickly as possible. The translators and interpreters didn't go out for dinner with us. I needed to be able to say please bring me this type of thing.

So there was a real need and a desire there. That's how I picked it up. After the first month or so, I was answering the phone in our office room in Japanese. The Japanese people that were calling would say, "Is so and so there?" I was like no she left. Okay, will you give her the message when she comes back?

Here's the message and thinking I was a Japanese person.

I'd take down the message and the Japanese person would come back in. I would say so and so called (all in Japanese) and this is what they said to tell you. The first time that happened, she picked up the phone and called. It was one of our higher-level bosses and he was confused. He said well whom did I talk to? She said well you talked to Brad.

He said, she related it to me later, she said Brad the American, well not the American, the foreigner. She said yeah. She said no you're wrong. I spoke to a Japanese person. No, you spoke with Brad. Really! They were just amazed. Especially, back at that time in the late 1990s, that an American, a foreigner could learn to speak their language that well that quickly.

I'm not a genius. I totally attribute it to Harry Lorayne's teaching and the Japanese textbook I got and just needing and desire to get it done.

The True Definition Of Genius

Anthony: I think there is genius in actually taking action and following through. Just to share a little bit of my own story. I've never been mistaken for being a Chinese speaker, but in two and a half months, I went to China. I was able to say to my

future father-in-law that I liked his daughter very much and asked his permission to marry her in Chinese. He knew what I was saying. It's just desire, as you're saying, and action. But I think the genius is in actually following through, taking action and then having techniques that get you the result you want. I myself would call you a genius for doing that.

Brad: For that part, but not for the other parts. You could ask my wife if I'm a genius. But see, you get into a good point there. We were talking about the educational system earlier. That's the really tricky part, because here in America we have common core, and the last, even before common core the last several years if not the last decade or two there's been a real discussion about whether memorizing is important. When I went to school, we had to memorize certain speeches. We had to memorize poems.

I go to some schools still to this day where they make memorizing an important part. Where in fifth grade usually in the early spring, March or April, they have to do – in in higher education we call it thesis – but it's not that in depth but basically, an in depth book report about a topic. Then they have to get up in front of their class, just their class, not the whole school, just their class of twenty to thirty other students, and talk for five to ten minutes about their topic and what they've learned. Not just off the cuff, but they have to give a speech.

The Two Things That Terrify People Most About

Giving Speeches

That terrifies people because they can't remember their speech, (a) because of the pressure, and (b) because they don't memorize. A lot of students and from what I hear, the parents push back and say memorization isn't important. We have computers. We have our phones. We can Google anything we want. Facts aren't essential. This is stupid. We don't need to teach kids to do memorization.

That's kind of something I get once in a while when someone will call about my school show. They will say well I really want it because my kid struggles with remembering, but you got to help me sell this to the other parents in the parent teacher organization or to the principal because we don't ask kids to memorize things anymore.

Memorizing facts, memorizing formulas isn't important. Knowing how to use the formula is important, but we don't say memorize this formula and use it on the test. We say here's the formula. Do you understand the math concept behind it enough to get the correct answer? Show us your work.

I think both are valid, but for me the essential part is that while we may not need to memorize facts the way we used. Well any fact, because it's relatively easy, my phone I can just enter "what's the population of Denmark?" How many whatever is in whatever? I don't need to know that. So there's

an argument to be made for that.

Why Memory Is About So Much More Than Facts

But memory is about so much more than facts. I know I'm preaching to the choir here with you because as you know this as well. But for others who may have considered that, memory is the feel of the air as summer turns to fall, remembering that. Remembering to look not just in the rearview mirror as you change lanes, but to turn your head and look as well. It's the smile of a friend or a loved one. It's the directions on how to get home if your phone battery dies.

We use our GPS on our phone to get to where we're going. What if the battery dies or the connection is gone. Can we find our way back? It's not just here's a bunch of facts. Memorize this. Oh, those memory technique techniques might be important. We can use a Memory Palace or visualizing something we need to remember, not just with facts but also with anything in life.

I think all of life is a comedy. I do to some comedy in my act, and I like to consider myself somewhat funny when I'm not talking very seriously. The basis of comedy is being able to associate things and come up with a twist. You take thing A and you take thing B because in your mind, you've connected them

and it's a funny connection. Then you share that and you get a laugh because people have not connected A and B.

The Most Important Part Of Memory Training

So you have to be able to have both A and B somewhere in your memory to then bring your sense of humor to bear and make that connection and share it. If you can't keep things in your mind, you can't make those connections. I think that's the essential part of any memory training.

Yeah, we can learn foreign languages. We can learn all these things, but just being able to keep things in mind whatever they are, whether they are facts that you that you can easily look up on Google or whether there are things that you need to keep in mind just because they're valuable to you. The exercising of the mind is the important part.

Anthony: Absolutely. And again, there's so much in what you just said, and I want to pre-book you for the next interview because there's just so much to cover if you're willing.

Brad: Definitely, this is my passion. I love talking about it. To people my age, I think were of a certain age, once you're over forty, and I get people coming up to me going oh I could never do what you do. That's amazing. My memory is horrible. As you

and I have proven individually and with the many, many thousands of people we've helped, as well as other memory coaches have helped, it's totally possible. This can be done. We don't have to accept the natural decline as we get older.

The Ultimate Decision Is In Your Hands

But it does take effort. I'm not even sure it takes all that much effort. I think it mostly takes just a decision to try.

Anthony: I think the most exciting thing for me in helping people is that they're memorizing stuff anyway no matter what. It's just how are you going to do it. How are you going to pay attention to how you're already doing it and then make some slight modifications and shifts based on an education about how you're remembering things already anyway?

Brad: Definitely, but I do see, maybe this is getting a little bit off track, but I know you like to think about these things as well. I do see a lot of people leaning away from wanting to learn anything in general. I stumbled upon a group, and I've gotten really connected with a group of late twenty somethings, early thirty somethings.

How many of them, they are five to ten years out of college, brag about thank goodness I'm out of school. I never have to

read another book, which to me is alarming.

Okay, say you don't want to read a nonfiction book. Really? You don't want to read a fiction book? But especially the number of people I talk to who are passionate about reading, you say, oh no, I only read science fiction, or I only read romance, or I only read thrillers. I can't wait for the next Tom Clancy or the John Grisham book. But no, I don't want to read nonfiction. Why would I want to do that? I'm not in school anymore.

The True Path To An Educated Life

To me just the idea of underlying the memory, taking it back a step further is the willingness to experience more of the world, and one aspect of that are books. Another is travel. I know you are a big traveler. I live in upstate New York. I live about three and a half to four hours outside of New York City. It's a semi-rural area. There are probably a million people surrounding Albany, which is the state capital of New York. But out here, I'm about an hour outside of Albany itself.

I can't tell you the number of people who when I tell him oh I'm going here for a memory competition or I'm going to go down to New York City for this or that. Oh really, I've never been. Oh where? You've never been to China. Oh no, New York City. Well

you're three and a half hours away and you've never been to New York City? Oh no. Well where were you been? Well nowhere really.

I think for some people that is fine. But I think that disturbs me in many ways because I don't think that person is going to be open and receptive to expanding their mind with memory techniques of any sort. Whether it's the simplest here's how you pay more attention so your natural memory takes over, to maybe the next step up of here create a few simple Memory Palaces.

When you're driving down the road you hear a new song and you want to remember the artist, you know picture the name of the artist in the passenger seat of your car and when you get home you can you know look her up because you will remember her name. I think people who are closed off about things like travel or reading, I think that excuse is going to extend to being closed off with learning simple, very simple techniques that can help them remember better.

The Unkown Future Of Memory

Anthony: I'm actually really glad that you went in that direction, because as unanticipated as it was it connects with

some things that are in the air that I'd love quickly to tell you about.

Brad: Yes please.

Anthony: The first is that I interviewed [Tony Buzan](#) last week. He was talking about similar things of this nature. So people listening to this they will have had the chance to hear that about a week or two weeks before that they hear this interview they're hearing now. I think you personally are going to be fascinated with what he has to say. It's near the end of the interview we get into some kind of dark territory. I was quite surprised but with a big hopeful bang at the end, no hopeful whimpering but just amazing Tony Buzan sized bang.

The other thing is when I was in Tel Aviv with [Jonathan Levi](#), which is where I interviewed Buzan from although he was in the UK, I was sitting with some friends and we were talking about you know the coming explosion of singularity and all of this jazz. They were saying you know machines are going to create our art for us, and the machines are going to do this and that for us.

I said, "Yeah and are they going to gamble for us too?" I was kind of being sarcastic in that moment. But for me, the reason that I work so hard at teaching these memory techniques is because I think that we are moving into a place where the human mind is going to become so soft. Those of us who have trained our brains and our minds are going to be the ones who have at least that last hold on owning the machines that may or

may not create the art for us.

Because we're going to be the ones who not only can still create our own art, but we're going to own something, and we're going to be influential on the things that are influential on us rather than just being a consumer. I was just wondering in a loose jazzy kind of way, what you think about all that connecting with what you've been saying.

Brad: I agree. I don't know if you've seen the movie *Wall-E*?

Anthony: Yes.

Brad: In the movie *Wall-E*, it's a great movie, humanity has escaped earth, which has suffered and is uninhabitable. They're in a starship and everything is done for them by machines. So they have nice comfy chairs they recline in. A machine brings them or a robot brings them their soda drink, their food, their entertainment and they're glued to their screens, which is not that far from current reality.

Obviously, they are pictured being physically soft. What's not as well pictured in that movie is the mental softness. I fear us going there. I fear us getting to the place where we don't really need to put that much effort into thinking. We have in America, we probably don't need to get into, but we have a lot of people talk about having a warrior class because there are many wonderful people dedicated to defending our country.

Some of them have expressed to me that they feel under-

appreciated because the rest of society moves on and the small group of people who are dedicated to serving their country have become their own their own caste. It is often passed down from generation to generation where father is in the military, the daughter goes into the military and then her daughter goes in the military. That's kind of a distinct area now where those people are very dedicated to that. I'm grateful for them.

Will You Belong To The Intellectual Caste?

It just got me thinking along the lines of are we getting to an intellectual caste where there's a small but very dedicated group of people who are really focused on thinking basically and learning, and absolving the rest of us from having to do too much of that. Kind of like there's, I think less so, but even an athletic caste where there's a lot of people who are really truly dedicated to physical fitness like the Olympics.

How many of us watch the Olympics, which are wonderful, and use it for inspiration to get out in the next couple days and go do something physical ourselves? How many of us watch the Olympics and sit for four, five, six, seven hours at night and never use that as a motivational tool to do something ourselves.

So I think these are philosophical questions more so than

memory questions, but they're interesting to think about, and I like thinking about this. I like reading for a variety of different approaches and topics and viewpoints. I don't think there's one right answer but it's certainly something to keep in mind and decide individually. Who do I want to be?

I, in particular, don't need to be the smartest person. I could probably do more nonfiction reading, but I try to read at least one nonfiction book a month and think. I like to listen to books on tape, especially nonfiction books on tape when I'm driving to and from my presentations. That's not for everybody and more power to them.

The Power Of Focus

But I think it really shows what we've put our [focus](#) on grows. If we're very focused on physical fitness, our physical fitness gets better. If we're focused on creating art, our artwork tends to get better. If we are focused on creating more connection amongst other people, deeper relationships, bringing people together that grows. So I think that maybe being a little bit of all things is better than being just a memory person or just a physical person.

Anthony: All amazing thoughts and you remind me of my idea

that I really need to get back and read *Republic* again. I don't know if you've read it, [Plato's Republic](#).

Brad: I have not.

Anthony: It touches on these ideas of caste like the bronze people and the silver people and the gold people, and there's a lot in there about who is going to rule and why, and the philosopher king idea. If I recall it correctly, it's been since the 2001 or even earlier 1999 I think since I read it.

The Republic has a lot to do with the difference between being able to juggle information in your mind because you've memorized poetry and you understand poetry. You've learned poetry or philosophical texts because they want to get rid of the poets in the Republic. It's kind of a mixed bag that book, because it's not even clear what they're saying about whether poets should be allowed to write or not.

But nonetheless there is something in there that if you have internalized poetry and the lessons in poetry or literature and so forth, then you are much more suited to being one of the ruling class people, or the gold people. I am really exposing my memory loss on that book. But it's in that direction and I want to reread it. Maybe that's something fun we could do is to book a time to both read it, and then have a discussion about it through the lens of memory because it's well worth your time to read the *Republic*.

Why Memory Techniques Are A Means To An End

Brad: Definitely, I really like how you said that. It brought to mind is the connections. With me, the memory techniques are not necessarily an end to themselves. They are a means to an end. The end is having a very active mind both now and in the future, as I get older. In staying physically fit, which I work on in a variety of ways, but also mentally fit.

The same way we have kids hopefully getting recess, gym or physical fitness class as they get into the later grades. That gets less time devoted to it. Here in America we have a lot of TV ads that encourage kids to get out and exercise or play physically for an hour a day at least. We're encouraging that because we all know the benefits that come into a physically healthy body.

I think reading and just thinking about these things and going oh, Plato didn't know what he was talking about, that's complete bunk, hated the book. But in reading it, whether we love the book or hate it, just you know putting something else in our brain to think about creates more connections.

We go okay that kind of reminded me of what my friend in high school said. Then, you know that reminds me of what my boss mentioned the other day. I don't know how this relates but oh you know they're kind of somehow makes me think of this. We

get all these connections. We have a physically active mind that's thinking and it's not doing the *Wall-E* movie where we're just kicking back in our chair not thinking.

Because I notice, as I get older, that it's harder to want to focus on things. It's harder to want to exercise my mind. I mean it's my job. I really need to do this and even for me for the last year or so as I get closer to fifty, I see that I'm less inclined really to want to buckle down and focus.

How It Feels To Have An Aged Memory

Talking with my in-laws who are both in their late eighties, they've told me about as they've aged what their minds have been like. So it's been wonderful to kind of ask them, well how do you feel? How do you think now? What are you thinking? What are you remembering?

They are very much interested in big picture, and they do have their passions, gardening and some politics and they will learn some detail. But overall, they are kind of big picture people and they need don't drill down, buckle down and truly focus.

I think it's really interesting how that happens. I'm cognizant of what's going on in my own mind and willing to look at that and

see what's going on.

Anthony: That's one thing that I have certainly loved about what you do and in interviews that I've heard with you elsewhere talking about your inner process, your inner experience. That forms part of how you get it out or why that you get out into competitions and I do want to get into that. But I think we should save that for another interview.

But to sort of bridge, what I would love to ask to kind of round off a lot of the things that we've been talking about, particularly the issue you raised about the pedagogical concern between is memorizing learning? Part of competition is memorizing a deck of cards. I have competed once myself. I surprised myself by both how well and poorly I did.

But there was something that happened when I did it that made me understand what it is to memorize a deck of cards. So I would like to know, given what we have mentioned about this pedagogical concern of is memorizing information, understanding and is it learning, I would like to wrap this particular interview up as a bridge to talking about competition in at the beginning of our next to our chat. What have you *understood* by memorizing cards?

The Truth About Memorizing A Deck Of Cards

Brad: I take cards and the other disciplines that I've worked on, as basically, to go back to the physical analogy, they are weights. They are barbells. They are dumbbells. They are Nautilus and other brand machines.

Memorizing a deck cards is similar to bench pressing. It's a way for me to increase my ability to remember other things that are actually important to me. Again, whether it's something my wife said that oh, there's a new song out she loves. Okay, you know I am want to listen to that. I am going to go online. I'm going to find the video and I'm going to listen to that and see the video or hear it because if it's important to her it's important to me.

I am not the best competitor in the world because I don't see it as the end. It's, again, another means to the end of being able to exercise my mind. So is memorizing learning? I think it can be, but I think just because I know the steps to do something because I've memorized them, doesn't mean I understand it well or could even do it. So I think memorizing is learning and memorizing is not learning.

I think memorizing can help us and certainly knowing more allows us to do more of the connections in our minds. Like I have mentioned before, you can't you can't on Friday talk to a child about the realities of World War II if on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday they don't remember who you told them fought in World War II. So there has to be the foundation

before the higher-level discussions.

I think having a base of knowledge of reading books and meeting people and remembering how the sun changes over the course of the year because you're outside a lot. Oh yeah, it's grayer and darker in the winter. I remember that, having that base that allows us to form higher-level thoughts and have higher-level discussions. Without that base, it's not as much fun.

I mean talk to a child or a young person who hasn't traveled or hasn't learned. It's not as much fun as having a conversation with someone who's traveled the world at whatever age and learned a lot of stuff, because it creates a depth of mind, a depth of thought that is for me personally a lot more fun to talk about and talk to.

**Brad Zupp Leaves Us With The Feeling That
With
Memory Improvement Anything Is Possible!**

Anthony: Absolutely, and to bring this full circle you do have a foundation for people who are dealing with younger students and that's *Unlock Your Amazing Memory: The Fun Guide That Shows Grades 5 To 8 How To Remember Better And Make School Easier*. I want to encourage everybody to pick that up. I

have [a full review of this book by Brad Zupp on the Magnetic Memory Method Podcast](#) if you have any doubts about rushing to Amazon or your favorite book dealer to grab that.

Brad: It's much less deep than what we've gotten into today. It's a very lighthearted, fun, simple book without a lot of jargon or technical things. It just very clearly and simply states how memory works and how we can improve it especially for the young people. I get a lot of people that I present to who are adults who claim they bought it for their child or their grandkid, but I read it first and I loved it. I had to get another copy for them because I'm keeping mine.

We got into a lot of really deep stuff today and just to assure any listeners there's very little philosophy or anything like that. It's just a really fun helpful book.

Anthony: Absolutely. As Tim Ferriss often says on his podcast when he gets into these conversations, he says we got deep into the weeds. That is perfectly fine and wonderful, but what's coming up next for you. I understand that there are some books for a more adult audience. Is there going to be jargon in that or is it also going to be clear and easy to understand for us adults?

Brad: I pride myself on being jargon free. I'm not a scientist. There are neuroscientists who have written some many wonderful books about how the brain actually does things. What I'm good at is saying this is how my brain did it, and how when I helped other people what happened with them and what seems to work best. Give it a shot. If that doesn't work, try this. If that doesn't work, try this because one of these things is

really going to help you improve your memory.

So there are two books coming out. I won't get too into them, but one is going to be for a specific career, type of career, and another one is going to be a more general type of book. That will not be too jargon filled. In fact, it will be a fun book similar to my kids' book but fun for adults.

I have a memory competition coming up in November. I'm going to be doing some teaching at a university in September as a as a guest lecturer, I guess at the end of September or October. In September, depending on when people are listening to this, I'm going to be attempting a world record, which I don't want to say more about now. But hopefully by the time your listeners hear this, or September comes along, I'll have set a new world record on memory.

Anthony: Well I want to catch up on that then in November or December and hear everything about it. Just on a personal note to you, I really admire your writing style. I loved *Unlock Your Amazing Memory*. It helped me in several ways just because every book that I read on memory techniques, particularly the well done ones, I always pick up something new. But in your case in particular, because you write so well, so clearly and with such great direction, it inspired me to pick up my own game.

I'm always working to be a better writer, because in reality I'm not a particularly good one especially when it comes to explaining difficult things. So it is inspired me to pick up my game as a writer. I really appreciate it on that account as well because there's obviously a lot of care and craft in how that you

present these ideas. I know, as a writer, it is not easy to be jargon free. The clarity that you bring is incredible. Again, *Unlock Your Amazing Memory* is great.

I can't wait to hear more about the record that you're going to break and the new books and catch up on everything that we've talked about. I have a list of questions that we haven't even looked at because we just hit the ground running. I know people are going to love this.

So we both, I think, agree that we encourage you to read. So that will be there for you to check out. I really want to thank you for being on the show. Any last words of wisdom from your perspective for people who are suffering with forgetfulness and want to get that out of their life.

Brad: Whether it's my book, your course, Anthony, or anybody else's, I just encourage people to look around and take advantage of Anthony's free videos. Check out my book or anything, even just a Google search on the Internet, because as both you and I Anthony have discovered, shown and taught, memory can be improved and it can be easy and even fun to do so.

Anthony: Absolutely. Those are excellent words. Thank you again, and I look forward to speaking next time.

Brad: Thank you so much Anthony.