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A doctor who achieved a near-perfect score on the medical board exam shares his 6 best strategies to memorize any kind of information



Dr. Sudip Bose.

- **Dr. Sudip Bose is a former major in the US army and is an [Iraq war veteran](#).**
- In 2002, he achieved a near perfect score on the medical board exam. To prepare, Dr. Bose would quiz himself frequently, spacing out information and scrambling the order in which he learned it.
- **He told Business Insider how he uses those same [memory](#) today tricks to remember names or give presentations as a public speaker.**

The human brain has 100 billion neurons making trillions of connections - but somehow, you still can't remember your new coworker's name.

"I remember things in ridiculous ways," Dr. Sudip Bose told Business Insider. "I mean, I have a mnemonic to get dressed in the morning, like UPS: underwear, pants, socks."

In 2002, Dr. Bose achieved a near-perfect score on the medical board exam, out-scoring 3,650 other test takers. To prepare, he would quiz himself frequently, spacing out information and scrambling the order in which he learned it. Dr. Bose is also a former major in the US army (he's an Iraq war veteran known for treating Saddam Hussein after US capture), and he told Business Insider a lot of his memorization techniques came from military training - he would picture his drill sergeant in front of him when he studied.

Today, he uses the memory tricks he learned as a student to remember names or give presentations as a public speaker. Here are his go-to strategies:

First of all, relax

A lot of learning is unconscious, and relaxing about a subject makes it easier to learn.

"If you're like 'I gotta memorize this, I gotta memorize this' it makes it harder. So I think one thing is finding relaxation," Dr. Bose said.

Make the information matter to you

When Dr. Bose was in high school, he said history bored him to the point of drooling puddles over his textbook. But as he learned more about his connections to history - his father was a history buff and grandfather was a freedom fighter in India - he began to care more.

And medicine, he remembers, became very real to him when we went to combat. "I have to learn this stuff," he remembers telling himself, "because someone is going to be in front of me and they'll die if I don't know it."

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Create visual or sensory association

"Work with the memory," he said. "Think of the memory like a scratch pad or dry erase board and play with it. Make associations, draw pictures - not just reading with a highlighter, but actively working with the material. And then when you're working with it, make associations: visual, auditory, gustatory, olfactory."

Pay attention to what you're learning

It may seem obvious, but Dr. Bose said it's important to pay attention in the first place.

"We've all been in that situation where it's like, 'Hey I'm Tom, nice to meet you,' da da da and 30 seconds later you're like, 'what was his name again?'"

He continued: "You have to focus on the person's name, actually pay attention when they're saying it, and then you have to repeat it. Like, 'Hey, what do you do Tom? Do you prefer Tom or Thomas?'" Dr. Bose said.

Repeat it

It's easy to remember something for a few minutes, or even hours at a time. It's much harder to recall your memories after time has passed.

"Sitting there reading it with a highlighter underlining, there's only so far that will go," Dr. Bose said. "Maybe that will get it into short term memory, but then allow yourself to forget it and be retested on it - and in a different format."

He compared it to learning a dance routine: Instead of practicing from the beginning every time, it's more effective to practice small pieces out of order until you're familiar with each combination of steps.

Embrace the discomfort of learning

"The people who struggle more with the knowledge actually remember it more," Dr. Bose said. He explained that quizzing or repeated testing (though uncomfortable!) makes a big difference in whether you can recall something later.

"When I study something," he continued, "I work with the material, I apply it to something, I relax about it, I test, I forget it, and then come back to it and really work with the discomfort of being like 'shoot, I don't remember this.'"

"Whatever your career is, or if you're just living your life, the act of learning, lifelong learning, and memorization is a big component," said Dr. Bose. "It never stops."

<https://www.businessinsider.in/a-doctor-who-achieved-a-near-perfect-score-on-the-medical-board-exam-shares-his-6-best-strategies-to-memorize-any-kind-of-information/articleshow/66596593.cms>