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Dr. David Phelps

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David Phelps: Good day, everyone. This is Dr. David Phelps of the

Freedom Founders mastermind community and Dentist Freedom Blueprint Podcast. Today, we're going to talk about memory, why memory is important, what it can do for you in your personal and business relationships, why

it's so important to keep your, your mind, your brain

working all the time. With me, I've got today the two-time USA Memory Champion, Mr. Ron White. Ron, how are

you doing, sir?

Ron White: Well, I'm fantastic, and it's an honor to be on your

podcast. I get your monthly mailers all the time, and they're always full of such great information. It's just an

honor to be here.

David Phelps: Ron, it's an honor to have you here. You may not know

this, but just for our listeners benefit, I first met you about 10 years ago. You were speaking at a conference for a mutual friend at an event. I didn't know who you are. You certainly didn't know me. But I remember before you

spoke on that stage, you were making the rounds. You

were at breaks. You were going around, and you

introduced yourself and asked for our names. Small little chit chat, and you moved on.

I didn't know who you are, I know what you're doing. I had no idea. Then you went up on the stage and did a great presentation about memory, and during that, you called out... Now, there was probably 700 people there, but you called out probably over a hundred people by name just making those rounds. I thought, "Okay, this guy's the real deal because there was no set up there at all." You had me intrigued from the get-go.

But let me get people a bit more of your background because I think it's really important to know where you came from. I said two-time USA Memory Champion. You've held the record for the fastest to memorize a deck of cards in the USA. For the last 27 years, you traveled the world giving the talk Triple Your Memory, Triple Your Business. Your strategies have helped people to build relationships by remembering names and faces, remembering what they learn, and developing quick, sharp, and powerful brains. You've been seeing on the Fox TV show with Mike Tyson, Superhuman, Good Morning America, Fox & Friends morning show, front page of the Wall Street Journal, the History Channel's Stan Lee's Superhumans or dozens more shows over the last decade.

In 2010, the University of Texas scientists conducted an MRI on your brain as you memorize and done it, 35% more of your brain is activated when you memorize than the average person. Ron, you're going to share specifically how you do this and how you can engage 35% more of your own brain's capability. You're an author

and an exciting new memory training program titled Black Belt Memory. Your goal is to help everyone meet and remember a hundred new people in the next 12 months. In what you teach, what you talk about, Ron, you help people learn how to develop a quick, sharp, and healthy brain as you use it to be more productive and profitable.

Also, Ron White, thank you for your service. Ron served in the US Navy from 2002 to 2010, completed a tour of Afghanistan in 2007, and after you completed that tour in 2012, you set out on your greatest memory challenge ever, and this is something I want people to really recognize you for. Because of your giving your service to the country, you created a tribute, and that was to memorize the fallen US service men and women from the war in Afghanistan in the order of their death. This took you 10 months to memorize the over 7,000 words rank first name, last name of each member who paid the ultimate sacrifice. You have this 52-foot wall that resembles the Vietnam wall, and you travel the country, different events, concerts, celebrations for our country and our freedom, and you, by memory, write the name of every fallen hero.

I can't think of a better tribute for what you do, so I just want people to know who you are. You're a great person. You're a great speaker, and you've got a lot to share. I don't want to steal the rest of the show hear from you, so let's jump in today and talk about the power of memory and where it fits into anybody's personal life, their business, the impact it makes. Go ahead and take it from there, Ron.

Ron White:

Yeah. Well, thank you. That was a wonderful introduction. As far as memory, I think everybody listening right now would agree if they lost their memories, if their memory declined, the quality of their life would decline. If you're not able to remember the events and your family members, time you spend with them, maybe even get an extreme case, their names, but certainly not remember strangers' names, I think we'll all agree if our memory decreases, our quality of life decreases.

On the flip side of that, it would only make sense that if our memory increases, the quality of our life is going to increase. You remember more about your vacation.

Maybe you went to South America, and you remember, you just remember more about that, or you have patients that you see six weeks later, not in your office, but out in the store or something, you're able to call them by their name. It really makes a difference to have a good memory, and it enables you to build friendships and relationships. It can reduce stress and anxiety because you're not worried about, "Oh, my gosh, did I forget to do this," or, "I can't remember that name." There's a lot of kind of hidden side benefits to having a good memory that most people don't think about.

David Phelps:

Yeah, Ron, you brought up something that's very personal to me and affects me as... and this is where I could use help because you talked about relationships. It's so easy to, when you're meeting people to be thinking other thoughts. They say their name, and then, I mean, 10 seconds later, I can't remember their darn name. Or as you said, I've got patients or people I do business with here and there, and I see them out, and it's almost like I want to turn it away because I'm embarrassed. I'm

embarrassed because I can't think of their name, and I want to go up and talk to them, but... or introducing somebody that you should know. You're in a place where there's somebody that you've done business with, you know them, and then it's like you should be the person who introduces, connects. If you can't say that person's name, it kind of takes away from that opportunity in those relationships. I mean, lots of contexts here where memory can play a very important role.

Ron White:

Yes. When you can remember a name, it builds a relationship, It builds a friendship. It's really easier than you think. A lot of people will shake somebody's hand, and two seconds later, they don't remember their name. If you think about it, that's not a memory problem. In other words, you're not forgetting a name in two seconds it is a focus problem. I mean, you never even heard the name. Oftentimes, we'll be walking towards someone, and when we're walking towards them, we're thinking, "Have I seen that person before? What do they think of me? What do I think of them? What business deals are we going to talk about? Is my shirt buttoned? Do I look okay?" "Hey, my name's Ron." Then they say their name. You never even hear it because you've got all this other conversation going on in your brain.

I tell people to do this. The next time you're walking towards somebody, anybody, whether it's a social situation or a business situation, as you're approaching them, ask yourself this question: What is their name? What is their name? What is their name? What is... Now, don't say that out loud. But as you walk towards them, ask yourself that question. They have not said a word to you at this point, but because you have focused your brain

with that question, when they do say their name, you're going to hear it. That's the biggest step.

David Phelps:

Now, beyond that, Ron, so now I've got their name, what other cues or clues could you give us to attach something of significance to that person? Again, now we got the name, the face, but what else are we listening for so we kind of remember that... because that's another piece of it, right? You know the name, but what about keeping something that makes that relationship tighter? Do you remember something about them, they go, "Wow, that guy's amazing. He remembered this or that about me. I relayed that to him several months ago when we were sitting at lunch or at a conference, and my gosh, that Ron White or David Phelps, amazing." How do we do that?

Ron White:

Think about your desktop on your computer, and let's imagine you had no folders on your desktop. It was just a bunch of 2,000 icons of different files. You're never going to be able to find the data. But if you have folders, and you segment the data in folders, it's very easy to go to and get the information. In a way, what we need for our brain is folders, places to store data, and in regards to names, the folder is on their face. You look for something on their face that is a unique feature, something that stands out, and that becomes the folder.

For example, maybe they have big ears. That's their folder. If I have a beard, maybe my folder would be my beard. Maybe there's creases in my eyes right there where I'm always going like that, and it's made a natural crease. When I met you 10 years ago at this event, I was walking around the room looking for unique features on everybody's faces. Imagine this. I'm walking around the

room. I see somebody with a beard. Boom. Immediately I think his folder is the beard. I extend my hand, and I say, "My name is Ron." Give me any common name for a man.

David Phelps: Bill.

Ron White: Bill. Instantly, dollar bills are flying out of his beard. I

mean, just, are they to shooting out of his beard. Now, if he had big ears, I would have imagined the dollar bill shooting out of his ears. Now imagine this. I walk over to a woman. She has really pretty eyes. Give me a common

name for a female.

David Phelps: Judy.

Ron White: Judy. I'm chewing tea. I got tea, and I'm chewing it, like

chewing tea bags, but it's in her eyes because her eyes is

the distinguishing feature, and I don't just imagine

chewing tea, I imagine the taste of it. I imagine the smell of it, and I center it on her eyes. It's focusing your brain with a question, picking a file folder on their face, and then turning their name into a picture. Seeing the name

as a picture is huge.

David Phelps: Okay. So just like anything new, any new exercise,

initially we're going to be clumsy doing it because now you've got me thinking about the face, something unique, and then taking their name, and creating some kind of visual image. That's going to take me a little time the first time I do that so I shouldn't probably try to go out and do a hundred of those the first time I try it. Try a few of them, right? Because here's what I'm thinking, Ron. I'm really focusing on the name, as you said, developing the folder, and I'll put this together. Then I'm going to look pretty

stupid, because like you said, normally, I'm thinking about what's the next thing I'm going to talk about, so now I'm refocusing on something. How do I not be too clumsy in my next social setting when I'm trying this out?

Ron White:

Yeah, yeah, that's good. I'm 46 years old. I started doing this 28 years ago when I was 18. When I was 18 years old, I had my first speech. I had to go out and give a speech as the memory expert. I'm an 18-year-old kid. I'm walking in the door. I looked like I was 12 years old. I said, "Hi, my name's Ron. I'm with the Memory Institute." They said, "Oh, great, Ron. When the speaker gets here, let us know. We'll all go in together." I said, "I'm the speaker," and they'd be like, "Are you still in high school?"

I'll never forget that meeting. I walked in that day, and there was five salesmen in the room. I was speaking to only five people. I only asked three of them their name, because as the memory expert, I was not confident I could remember all five names. I knew I could get three, but I didn't think I could get five. Today, if I speak for a conference that has 300 people, I'll tell the organizer, "Oh, that's awesome. I'm going to memorize everybody's name, and I'm going to repeat all 300 names," they're like, "What?"

I'll say this to you. Everyone listening who's thinking, "This is cumbersome. This is going to take time," you're right. It took me time. I'm in the same boat you are, but this is how I did it. Every time I met somebody for the next two or three months, I turned their name into a picture. You're at the grocery store. You look at a name tag, turn it into a pitcher. Your bank teller, turn it into a picture. Your

waitress, turn it into a picture. A name on a billboard, turn into a picture.

Develop the habit of always turning names into pictures so then when you meet people, it becomes easier and quicker and faster. Once you determine Bill's a dollar bill, use that for every Bill. Once you had determined Judy as chewing tea, use that for every Judy. If you'll commit two or three months to this of just turning everybody's name into a picture you meet, you will get crazy good at names. Now, one last thing I'll say on this is you need to review. You need to ask yourself, "Who did I meet today? Who did I meet yesterday? Who did I meet three days ago? Who did I meet last week?" If you don't review, it won't go into your longterm memory. That's very important.

David Phelps:

So 10 years ago when you met me and got my name, just curious, so David, so what's my distinguishing feature? What's my folder?

Ron White:

Well, I remember you had those chains all around you, those chains around your neck, but can't use that because that's temporary. For example, you don't have it now, so I used your glasses, and I used a divot. You know when you golf, David, is divot, so I'm golfing on your glasses.

David Phelps:

What have you come up with somebody who has, maybe it's a foreign name, not a name common to us here in the US. Is that a little bit trickier to-

Ron White:

Oh, yeah, from 2010 to 2015, I would say 30% of my speeches were out of the country. I would say a lot of those were in Asia. I was giving a speech in Jakarta, Indonesia, and I memorized everybody's name in the

room. A guy in the front row crossed his arms, and he was all skeptical. He said, "Okay, Ron, I see how you can do this with Indonesian names. What about foreign names, like Japanese?" I was like, "Are you serious?"

But here's the thing, we all think that because if we're Indonesian, oh, turned into "Indonesian names is easy," or if we're American, turned into "American names is easy." Here's the deal. It's the exact same process. You just break it down by how it sounds. Chen Shui-bian was the president of Taiwan a couple of years ago. For him. I used Chen and then shoes and he's buying stuff. But I'll be honest with you, if you asked me to speak tomorrow... I spoke in China two weeks ago. I was able to remember, in a room full of 50 people, I focused on memorizing 10 names because I just couldn't go as fast.

David Phelps:

Yeah, it makes sense. It makes sense. All right, so what about when we're attending conferences, seminars, workshops, we want to... Certainly, a lot of us, we take a lot of notes. We were writing a lot of notes down, but how do we actually use our memory in training that you teach to actually take in some important concepts that we want to just actually take in and have part of our part of our brain, I mean, important concepts that I don't have to go back and look at notes. How do you do that?

Ron White:

Number one, at a conference, take notes. Don't try to memorize as the speaker's talking. Take your notes, relax, and get the information in. Then I'm going to recommend you use a technique known as the Mind Palace, the Mind Palace or the memory palace. Here's what the memory palace is. It is a system where you

number pieces of furniture in your home, and these pieces of furniture become a folder.

Let me use my home here for an example. This flag up here on the top could be number one, my number one folder. This column right here could be number two. Normally I don't like picking stuff so close together. Normally, I would just make these shelves number one, since you can't see my whole place, this is an example, so that's one, that's two. This cabinet over here would be three. You might be able to see it over there. There's a table right there. That table would be four.

One, two, three, four. Now, do this in your house number about 20 pieces of furniture, 25. Actually, I'm not going to say that. I'd say do 20 as a minimum, but what I would really tell you to do is do five in a room, and so if you have eight rooms, do 40, but do five in a room in every room in your house, and these will be file folders. Then take notes in the conference. Then when you get home from the conference, take your notes, and take what's on your notes and memorize it by visualizing it right there.

Let's say that this is a notes on how to make more money, so your first point is how to make more money. You imagine money flying out of there. The second tip the speaker gave is you got to be a good communicator, so now all of a sudden, you see a telephone, and you imagine a telephone. Then the next point is you need to be a good time manager, so all of a sudden, you put an alarm clock inside that cabinet, and the alarm clock is going off.

This is how you memorize, and I know it sounds silly, but it really does work. This summer, I was on Fox & Friends

morning show. I memorized the entire United States Constitution word for word, 4,500 words. I did it in four weeks, and I did it with this technique. I numbered 50 pieces of furniture in my house, 50 pieces of furniture at a restaurant. I live in downtown Fort worth. 50 pieces of furniture in a restaurant in downtown Fort Worth at a hotel. I walked all the way around downtown Fort Worth, and I filled up this, this is what I call Mind Palace, with the United States constitution. I know I'm kind of giving you a three-minute answer to a 25-minute answer, but that's the general idea of how you do it.

David Phelps:

I know you give a lot of talks, presentations, speeches. I mean, that's a big part of your life today, and doing this training. For those of us who also like to where we have the opportunity to speak... There's that I was saying about death by PowerPoint. I used to do that. It used to be one of those guys when I was first starting out, my PowerPoints were what led me through, and it's boring and wears people out. To be a better speaker and have the talking points, the concepts, the stories in your head so that you don't need much to trigger you... In fact, I actually like speakers that don't use PowerPoints, Ron, that just come out and just speak spontaneously. I think that makes for a better connection. What can we do with your techniques now people that speak have the opportunity to talk in front of people for whatever purpose?

Ron White:

Well, I think this is a great technique for speakers because I just showed you how you could remember what you could learn from a class. Let's say you're a speaker, and you got a speech to give tomorrow, and you got 20 things you want to say in your speech. What I would

encourage you to do is number 20 pieces of furniture. Let's say that you know the first thing is money, the second thing is be a good communicator, the next thing is be good time manager. You've got these things on the pieces of furniture in your house, so the next day, you get up in front of the group, and you think back to your house.

The first thing you say is, "Guys, I want to talk to you today. I want to talk to you today about how to make more money. We've all got some good ideas on making more money, so let's talk about it. The first key to making more money is being a good communicator, whether you're on the phone or in person. We need to learn to ask the right questions and listen properly. Not only do we need to be a good communicator, but we need to manage our time effectively. We need to become better time managers."

Now, maybe the next point in your speech is you want to work together as a team, so you imagine the Dallas Cowboys or whatever your favorite team is over there on that table. Maybe the next point after that is "we need to work smarter, not harder," so on the front door you imagine somebody, a human brain over there, a brain pulsating. You put it around this room, and when you get up on the stage, you think back to this room your house. It's called the Mind Palace. It is very effective.

I'm memorized the fallen from the war in Afghanistan, so it's 2,400 people, first name, last name. It's 7,000 words. I number 2,400 pieces of furniture, and when the listeners hear me say that... I'm going to be very, very clear here. I do not encourage you to do that. I encourage you to memorize 50 or a hundred. I went to an extreme demonstration because it's my business, but this is how I

did it. When I write out the wall of all the names, I'm just jumping from a piece of furniture to piece of furniture in my brain.

David Phelps: With the Mind Palace technique, we have the 40 or 50

pieces of furniture are spread out throughout our house. Those are going to be our primary folders for everything we do. I'm just trying to figure out, is my brain going to remember that I used the Mind Palace, the pieces of furniture for a talk that I did versus I used it another time when I was actually taking notes from a presentation I heard. Does the mind get mixed up and go, "Wait a minute, I used the table for this, but now I'm mixing up the

images," or does that just not happen?

Ron White: Let's do an example. Up here on the flag, I want you to

imagine a washing machine. Imagine, I'm getting the clothes out, and I'm putting the clothes in the washing machine, and it's spinning around. Right here, I want you to imagine this is a dam, like a dam on a river, and the water's pushing this gong, and it's... but this is a dam, so

what is this?

David Phelps: A dam.

Ron White: Dam. I want you to imagine a chef is over here. A chef is

cooking your favorite meal. He comes out, and he gives

you your favorite food. A chef. What's right here?

David Phelps: Chef?

Ron White: Okay. We're just going to do two more. On that table, I

want you to imagine medicine. I'm going to take my medicine, and I'm going to put it on the table. What's on

the table?

David Phelps: Medicine.

Ron White: On the door, I want you to imagine a man in a rowboat, a

man crashing through that door on a rowboat. What's on

the door?

David Phelps: Man in a rowboat.

Ron White: Now, let's say then all together. What was on the flag?

David Phelps: Washing machine.

Ron White: Here?

David Phelps: The dam.

Ron White: The cabinet?

David Phelps: Chef.

Ron White: The table?

David Phelps: Medicine.

Ron White: The door.

David Phelps: Rowboat.

Ron White: Right. But these are the first five presidents of the United

States, washing machine for Washington, a dam for Adams, chef for Jefferson, old Thomas Jefferson, medicine for Madison, and man in a rowboat from

Monroe. I can teach six-year-old kids to memorize the 45 presidents of the United States in about an hour. Six year olds. It is so cute. I will run... Everyone I've taught has been a friend of mine or a friend of mine's kids. I would run around their house with them, and we'll number 45

pieces of furniture. They put a water cooler on the 30th piece of furniture for Coolidge, a bunch of hay on a piece of furniture for Hayes. It's so cute, but this proves that your mind can memorize that way.

Now to your question. When you are giving your speech, and it's a business speech, you're going to think back to this room, and you're going to say, "Gosh, we want to make more money. We want to be good communicators. We want to manage our time effectively." You won't say, "We want to be good communicators and Thomas Jefferson." In other words, if you're giving that speech, you're not going to confuse the data because the data is so different. However, if the data was similar, if it was a business speech and then another business speech, you probably would confuse the data. In that situation I recommend you use a different Mind Palace or a different house. Use your office or something like that.

David Phelps:

Okay. All right, good. All right. Here's one more question and this is a little bit personal, but I think it will also relate to probably a lot of our listeners. Our kids. Now, I've got a daughter who's got some special needs. She had some learning challenges and disabilities. Very smart, but just learns differently. There's a lot of kids out there that way that aren't, quote, "mainstream," don't fit in the box. They're kind of like outliers in this traditional school system and memorization and taking tests. It's not their game.

I'm assuming if I got my daughter to learn the Mind Palace that like I was helping her with anatomy and physiology, that's just pure memorization. Just rote memorization. It kind of sucks. I had to do it when I was

much younger. Helping her do it now, same technique. Can I take a child that's otherwise intelligent but just learns differently and teach them, have them learn this technique and become a better student, more proficient at, in this case, exams and make a next move forward in school?

Ron White:

It is a game-changer for kids. It is... A kid who has a 50 or a hundred-room Mind Palace is almost taking their notes with them into the test. It is ethical cheating. It is a game changer. It frustrates me so much that this isn't taught in the school system, and that's one of my ultimate goals.

David Phelps:

All right, so I know you've got training that helps. The website people could go to, I guess, initially would be ronwhitetraining.com to find out more about the training. What are some other next steps that people can engage in, some of the training opportunities you have? Certainly, I would look to... anytime you're speaking somewhere where people would be there, I would say, "Go," but what are some steps people could do to take what we've talked about today, Ron, and start to implement it?

Ron White:

Yeah, so I would also say that I think the website, blackbeltmemory.com would probably be a better one. Ronwhitetraining.com has some great information, but at blackbeltmemory.com, like a black belt in karate, there's actually a free gift there, so blackbeltmemory.com you get a free gift, and then you can find out about the Black Belt Memory course and get it for yourself or your kids.

Honestly, I think that's step one. I think that's the most important, but also, some important things are just take care of your health. I'm drinking water right now. A dehydrated brain can't focus. I'm getting ready to take a

omega-3 pill. After that, build a Mind Palace, number pieces of furniture in your house, five pieces of furniture in each room, and tonight, before you go to sleep, review them and say them forwards and backwards. Every time you meet somebody for the next couple of months, just turn the name into a picture. Make it a game. You're going to be meeting people anyways. Why not turn their name into a picture? Just take an extra five seconds. If you find it cumbersome to try to visualize the name and talk to them all at the same time, then don't. When you're driving away, do the exercises, but definitely turn the names into pictures.

David Phelps:

Great. Ron, Alzheimer's, dementia. Can this do anything to help offset this kind of a terrible trend that we see when we have in this country more and more people, older people suffering from the brain going through the changes in later life?

Ron White:

Well, here's my honest answer: I don't know. But here's my guess: Doctors will tell us that if we exercise our brain and keep a healthy brain by being social and talking to people and just engaging our brain, it can delay the onset of Alzheimer's, so I certainly think exercising your brain in this way may delay the onset of Alzheimer's if you're prone to get it, but the good news on the Alzheimer's front is I gave a speech, and the speaker before me was one of the leading experts in the Alzheimer's field, and he said, "Five years ago, I was telling everybody we'd have a cure for Alzheimer's in five years." He said, "Now I'm telling everybody we're going to have a cure for Alzheimer's in five years." What he was saying is he thinks we're getting closer and closer. Hopefully, in our lifetime, that is

something that we won't have to deal with. It's sad that so many people have.

David Phelps: Yeah. Yeah, it is. Ron, always great to talk to you. This

was really phenomenal information today, and I am 100%

a believer in the fact that having a better memory can

literally change our lives, and it can change other people's

lives as well, and the training that you've done and the research you've done, the presentations and your ability to convey this to other people, what you figured out and practice so many years I think is a game changer, so I would definitely recommend people to take the first step,

blackbeltmemory.com, see what Ron's all about, but appreciate what you do. Appreciate your service for the

country and how you continue to always give back in that

regard no matter what.

Ron White: Hey, you're a great man and great guy. I always enjoy

following you. It's good to finally talk to you again.

David Phelps: Super, Ron. Thanks. Have a great day.

Ron White: Hey, you too.

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