

# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction: “Why Read Minds?”

Minds are like parachutes—they function best when open.

—Lord Thomas Dewar (1864-1930)  
*Scottish philanthropist*

### *I Read Minds: And So Do You!*

Now there is an unusual title for a book. I will bet you, like most people, immediately think I am going to teach you some magic, something out of the ordinary, something “psychic.”

Not at all; in fact, I am going to do just the opposite. I am going to offer you some very practical information that will, if understood and practiced, help you learn to “read minds.” *Especially your own!*

My truth is I am convinced everyone is already reading minds. Think about this. While I am in conversation with someone, am I not using my mind to understand (read) his or her mind? When I think and search my memory for an answer, a solution, a fact, or use my creative abilities to design a new idea, am I not truly reading my own mind?

Are not the persons to whom I am communicating also reading their own minds as they look for connections to my communication? I think the answer to all of these questions is yes!

The words, the gestures, and even the movements of my eyes are communicating a thought from my mind to the mind of the viewer or listener. Of course, as a people, we have agreed that certain sounds, gestures, and facial expressions have specific meanings. But the question still remains. From where are my thoughts emanating? Are they not produced in the area of my brain that has been labeled as my mind? And where are my thoughts and

communications being received? I would say they are being received in the mind of the person(s) to whom I am communicating.

Of course I realize I am proffering a unique and indeed an unusual point of view of mind reading. I also realize when people think of mind reading they are talking about knowing the most secret thoughts of someone else. To know exactly what they are thinking. Perhaps even word for word.

Well, I suspect I would have to be a very special soul to be able to consistently and accurately read the minds of others. However, being able to read my own mind is a challenge worthy of my time and effort. I am certain I can accomplish this fascinating goal. And that is what this book is all about.

Over the past twenty years I've taught hundreds of thousands of people how to improve their memory habits. Although I have been speaking to audiences about a wide variety of mind skills, I have become especially known as a memory expert.

However, what I have really been doing is showing them how to use their memory abilities to increase their understanding of themselves, to communicate more effectively with one another, and to become more successful at whatever profession they pursue, whether it's marketing, doctoring, management, or selling.

I am clear that helping people to improve their memory abilities is a simple and straightforward way to encourage them to also open up to the possibility of enhancing additional mental skills. If you have seen one of my more than five thousand memory presentations, you know that after I demonstrate what I call "perfect memory," I teach you how to accomplish exactly what you saw me do.

I take great pleasure as I witness the smiles of joy on your faces as you experience instant success. I see the excitement of accomplishment in your eyes. You begin to understand that while learning to improve your ability of memory and recall you can also achieve tremendous improvement in your ability to concentrate, to experience more accurate perceptions, to communicate more effectively, and to produce better choices and decisions.

I know this because so many of you have talked with me after my presentations. You tell me what you have learned from

listening to and interacting with me at other meetings. Some tell me how they applied what I taught them and how good they feel about the success of those experiences. Others tell me how they taught my systems to their children and how it helped them achieve higher scores on their exams. They tell me that what I taught them opened them up to life skills far beyond improving their memories—to self-discovery and to greater personal and professional success.

For more than twenty years, many of you have asked me: “Do you have a book?” “No, but I’m thinking about it,” I would answer. I thought to myself, “I really should do that one day.”

However, I kept putting it off. All for what I thought were good reasons. I was too busy making a living. I didn’t have the time. I needed more time to gather and understand my information, or maybe, the truth is I didn’t know if I could do it—after all, I barely graduated from high school.

But then, one day I decided to change the way I was viewing this project. After all, I suggest to others that they are limited only by what they choose to believe about themselves and what they think they can accomplish in their lives. It was time to follow my own advice.

So here it is.

I offer my book to you as a tool to help you learn more about yourself so you can become more successful at whatever you choose to do.

## **Memory as the Link to All Other Mental Skills**

I offer you a collection of techniques for improving your memory as a catalyst for enhancing your mental skills—concentration, creativity, intuition, and sharper and more objective thinking. In turn, these enhanced skills will free you from old mental scripts and programming, will point you along the path to self-discovery, and lead you to achieve greater personal and professional success.

My reasoning is simple. I believe my self-esteem, my self-concept, my self-confidence, how I perceive, how I communicate, how I concentrate, how I visualize, how I use my imagination, and even how I think are all directly connected to and dependent on my memory. My memory is truly a door to my inner self. I have designed this book to help you and me unlock, open, and move through that door.

Those who have learned the basic techniques by attending my sessions can use this book to learn even more. Those who have not yet seen or listened to my presentations will find I am helping you to open doors to improved self-esteem and to making more conscious and accurate choices.

You see I have really written this book for us. I am, and always will be, “a work in progress.” I believe that is also true of you, the reader. As I began to write this book I asked myself why I wanted to do it. I came up with several reasons (listed as they came to mind, but not necessarily in this order). First, people are interested in knowing more about me and how I’ve developed into the character they see onstage, and they want to hear more about the concepts of mind about which I speak; second, I like the attention it will bring to me; third, I love to share knowledge; and fourth, I truly want to know more about myself, why I think as I do. I want to learn and to continue growing. Writing this book has, in a sense, forced me to align many different thoughts, theories, and concepts I have been reading and learning about over these past thirty years.

I first became interested in the workings of my memory when I came to the realization that all of my life I had been stuck with the notion that I could not remember information, especially for taking tests in school. I also grew up having trouble remembering people’s names. In fact, even though I have always believed I have a keen mind and have always been a fast thinker, I chose not to go to college. Now I’m not suggesting I’m proud of that choice, but it is a part of my history.

When I look back, I see the single most important reason for choosing not to attend college was that I did not do well on

exams. I had difficulty absorbing and remembering information, and I didn't feel at all confident about what I did recall.

For many years I thought my problem with not passing exams was mostly due to the lack of time I had to study because I had a rather unusual schedule for a teenager.

I left my stepparents' home and began living on my own when I was fifteen years old. I'm certain my early learning years in parochial school (Saint Anthony of Padua in Greenpoint, Brooklyn) gave me the discipline to stay in school even though I had no adult supervision.

During my last two years of high school I lived at the YMCA in Knoxville, Tennessee, and was enrolled in a program called DE (Distributive Education). The program was designed to allow students to leave school early each day to gain experience in the workplace. I attended Young High School from 8:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. at which time I would take a bus downtown to open up the local Bijou movie theatre, where I was the manager. I closed the theatre about 11:00 p.m. and headed back to my room at the Y. With such a schedule, I really did not devote much time to study.

I guess it would be fair to say that I was a bit distracted. In addition to my full-time job managing the Bijou theatre, I had to deal with being the only kid in school who had a Jewish name, Joey Feldman. As I mentioned on the acknowledgment page of this book, Joseph was my middle name at birth, and Feldman was my first stepfather's last name. Keep in mind this was the early fifties, and kids' tolerance for a Jewish kid with a Brooklyn accent and the chutzpah to perform as the MC of a live, weekly, Saturday-morning teen show on the stage of the two-thousand-seat Tennessee Theatre didn't help matters. The truth was I couldn't wait to be done with the hostility and the rejection from many of my schoolmates. I really did wing it through those last couple of years of school.

Now that I've had time to reflect and learn, I've come to understand my poor study habits stemmed not only from being so distracted, but also because I had poor habits of concentration

and memory. I just did not know how to learn. I did not know how to read well. Oh, I knew how to read words and sentences, but I had no concept of how to comprehend and retain what I was reading.

Looking back today, I realize how my newly learned skills at memory have helped to change my entire life.

## **Perfect Memory Abilities**

An important understanding I now have about memory ability is that, barring ill health at birth, I am born into this world with good, if not perfect, memory capabilities. In fact, again assuming good health in my brain, when I leave the planet I will still have the capacity for perfect memory ability. I'm convinced it is possible to memorize and recall any amount of information we choose, and to do it at will and at any time in our lives. However, it takes a lot more than merely learning a few mnemonic (a method for memorizing) techniques. Be sure that I will make every effort to reveal throughout this book the necessary steps to accomplish this simple, yet seemingly difficult feat.

I'm also convinced that many of my problems with how I used my memory stemmed from how I was taught to memorize, or should I say *not* taught to memorize.

In my early years of schooling I never participated in a class designed specifically to teach me how my mental capacity for memory worked or how to use my ability to memorize and to access information.

I was in my mid-thirties before I attended a training session teaching me how to effectively use my powers of concentration, visualization, and imagination, all of which are important to the active process of memory and recall.

No teacher ever taught me any exercises about how to focus, about the skills of how to listen, or for that matter, how to think. Did any of your teachers ever spend class time teaching you specifically how your mind works, how you process

thought, or what role your emotions play in the processing of thoughts that lead to your actions? Probably not.

Well, I've asked these same questions of tens of thousands of people from all walks of life, and the overwhelming majority, I'd say in the range of 95 percent, answered *no* to each and every one of those questions.

Isn't that astounding? I find it truly amazing that from the earliest grades on, we are told to listen, to concentrate, to memorize, to be creative, to study, and to think.

Yet there apparently are no subjects, at least in the early grades, structured specifically to teach us *how* to increase and improve these fundamental functions of our minds.

I recently asked my daughter Laurie, who is a dedicated elementary school teacher and who currently works in her district in staff development, if my statement still holds true today. She told me today's curriculum does allow for teaching some of these skills. For example, students learn comprehension strategies such as use of prior knowledge, inferring, summarizing, imaging, clarifying, and monitoring. When used, these strategies allow the student to think about his/her own thinking process, which is known as metacognition.

However, she explains that these strategies are usually taught within the context of reading, language arts, and the sciences rather than as specific subjects called memory, concentration, listening, or perception.

As I understand it, the big difference in today's methods of teaching is that the use of rote memorization is balanced with strategies that also teach comprehension.

What I do recall is that I was instructed, although without explanation, to use the rote system to force information into my brain, so at some future date I



could spit it out, word for word, to participate in a class project or to pass an exam.

The rote system does work. After all, we do learn the alphabet, how to add and subtract, the multiplication tables, and eventually how to read, write, and spell through the process of repetition. But look at how long it takes and how tedious it is to learn with this old-fashioned method.

Mnemonics was not taught in the school systems I attended, and so I continued to use the rote system of memorizing throughout my schooling. When studying for an exam I would read and repeat specific words or numbers aloud over and over again until I felt I had them in their correct order. It was the only method I knew.

Today I understand that what I was doing is commonly referred to as cramming. Given my time restrictions, it seemed as though I was always cramming. It's not what learning should be about.

In fact, my dictionary defines “cramming” as preparing for an examination in a hurried, intensive way. The operative word here is “intensive,” which can be defined as strained and filled with action or emotion. For me the action was procrastination, and the emotions were anxiety and fear.

When using the rote system of memorizing, if I happened to forget one or two words, or place them in the wrong order, I was apt to go into a trance with worry. Then factor in having to complete the test in a specific amount of time, and I just found it too difficult to recall any part of the information at all.

## **Memorize by Rote or by Comprehension?**

Research indicates that I can learn mechanically by rote, or I can learn by understanding. Mechanical learning is good for remembering simple tasks, but it does have its drawbacks. Rote memorization, especially of something that has no significance or meaning to me, will not be retained by my memory, at least not as long as information I truly understand.

If I want to remember something for a long time, then it pays to first comprehend it.

Another point to consider is that memory in everyday life is rarely based on rote retention of detail. Instead, it relies heavily on remembering meaning, for example, the meaning of a passage, the meaning of a conversation, or the meaning of an event.

If I'm absolutely certain surface knowledge is enough, I really don't want to know the information, I just want to remember it; then I can rely on simple mnemonic techniques.

Sometimes using both methods pays off. My recommendation when studying for exams or a speech is to first read the material for enjoyment, for interest, and for comprehension. Mark any information you may want to store away with a highlighter. Then go back over the material and use the memory system I will describe in chapter 5 to store away those points you want to access from your memory banks at some later date.

By the way, the memory techniques I will be describing have been available to us for several thousand years. I don't claim authorship for them. In fact, almost every good book or recording about mnemonic techniques will describe basically the same methods.

Naturally, all authors or speakers bring to their discussions their own style of composition and personal charisma. Hopefully I have added a few twists and turns that you may find new and refreshing.

## **Am I Psychic?**

Now, just before I begin to offer you insights as to the tools required to "read minds," I want to clear up what I see as a common misunderstanding about the term "psychic."

I recently asked an audience, "How many psychics do I have in this room? Please raise your hand if you are psychic."

One woman raised her hand.



“Just one?” I noted. “Well, that’s very interesting—we have approximately one hundred fifty people in this room and only one person raised her hand.”

It was no surprise to me. It happens every time I ask an audience that question. I’ve come to the conclusion over the years that people don’t raise their hands because they’re not really confident about what it is to be psychic nor do they want to be thought of as “flaky” or as a “kook.”

So I pushed my audience further. I pointed to people and asked, “What does it mean to you to be psychic?” Here are some of their responses.

“I think it is having some insights into things that are not obvious or apparent.”

“To know something before it is going to happen.”

“Unspoken communication, to read minds, to project and receive thoughts.”

“To find lost objects—to locate and then move or bend objects with the mind.”

These are virtually always the kinds of statements I hear when I ask people to tell me what they think it means to be psychic. There is often a connotation of charlatan, fake, and on occasion, a notion of entertainment running through it all.

In fact, we have become so accustomed to discounting the word “psychic” we have disassociated ourselves from being psychic. It’s time for me to spell out what the word “psychic” really means.

Over the years I have looked up the word “psychic” in a variety of dictionaries, and they all provide about the same definition. The word “psychic” comes from the Greek word “psyche,” and its primary meaning is “of the soul, of the mind.” It doesn’t say anything about being weird, occult, crazy, or foolish. It doesn’t say reading minds, looking into the future, or

bending spoons. It simply says "of the mind." It makes a distinction between physical and mental. We human beings are grounded in both our physical and mental worlds.

So, not only are we physical, we are also mental—we are all psychics.

You and I, every day of our lives, are using our psychic awareness, although most of us are doing it unconsciously. My memory, for example, is a psychic function of my mind that I exercise each and every day of my life. My memory is a psychic awareness a mental ability, that amazing ability to be able to store away information and access it at will. Think about it. When I remember something, *I am automatically reading my own mind.*

Some dictionaries also add the language "beyond known physical processes."

Well, aren't my functions of memory, concentration, imagination, and even thought, beyond a physical process? Aren't they, instead, all a process of my mind?

Oh, of course there are chemical and electrical processes taking place in my brain and body, and they are made up of physical matter. I will address this in some detail in chapter 4. But what about my mind? Once all the chemical reactions and interactions take place and all of the necessary electrical impulses occur, isn't the result of all of that mental, rather than physical? Couldn't my mind be considered as being beyond physical processes?

Imagine with me, if you will, that the best way to tap into more of my mind's potential may be as simple as making better use of those faculties of mind I already have working for me. For instance, my ability to store and quickly access information.

Now, what does this tell me? It tells me that the first step to take if I want to learn to read the minds of others is to fully understand how to read my own mind and how it works.

I am not going to suggest that to be an easy task, but it can be accomplished. And that's what this book is all about.

## Conscious or Unconscious State of Mind

I want to be perfectly clear about a few things from the start. I am not suggesting that I know everything about my own mind, let alone yours. However, I have collected a ton of information about mind skills over the years, some of which I have reality tested.

Although I've just attained my sixty-third birthday, I must admit to becoming only somewhat conscious about twenty-seven years ago. When I began my personal journey towards understanding my own mind. It came as a huge surprise to me to learn I was totally responsible for my thoughts and the consequences of those thoughts.

Quite frankly, I've spent a good portion of my life in an unconscious state of mind. By that I mean I allowed my life to be guided mostly by my emotions, by how I felt about this or that. I had no concept of the fact that I was in charge of my thinking and the results of my thinking. I assumed that whatever came my way was that with which I had to deal. Whatever hand life dealt to me was the hand I had to play, and I therefore felt justified in complaining about it rather than doing something about it.

Oh, I knew how to finagle (manipulate) and persuade others to give me what I wanted. But the notion that I could mold my own thoughts and control my emotions never occurred to me—that is, until I came to a point in my life where I was about to lose all I had—my family, my job, my health, and perhaps even my mind. I know that sounds a bit dramatic, but that's the way it seemed to me at the time.

So, what changed? What magic formula did I discover? What turned my life around? In the midst of being an emotional wreck, I was fortunate to meet my wife, Lois. Through Lois and her circle of friends and acquaintances, I discovered another world where people were willing to shed their lifelong baggage and take charge of their lives—to think and behave in ways that produced positive results.

By the way, the story of how Lois and I met is a perfect personal example of a true “psychic” experience. It’s really a terrific story, and I do intend to tell it in another chapter.

It is my intent to make a huge impression on you from the start so you will look forward to reading every page of this book. Most importantly, I really do want to provide you with valuable information and interesting ways to challenge your thinking, beliefs, and perceptions. Hopefully this will lead you to insights about your own thinking, how you may enhance all aspects of your mind, and—who knows—perhaps how to consciously read the minds of others.

## **This Book**

The best way for me to share with you what I know is to first offer you a few basic tools. Once you’ve mastered those you can really roll up your sleeves and get to work.

In chapter 2, “Mind to Mind: It’s All about Communication,” I will provide you with an overall framework for thinking about the tools as you learn them. Reading minds is really a form of communication. And the communication process is more complex than most people realize. In this chapter, I will describe the many facets of communication—the many elements that influence both my ability to communicate to other people and my ability to comprehend what they are communicating to me.

Given this framework, I will set the stage for mastering those tools in chapter 3, “The I/You Concept: Beyond My Self-Talk,” by introducing to you a concept I’ve been thinking about and working with for twenty-five years. It is a different way to look at myself and at my relationships with people and the world around me. It is a mental set that has changed my thinking and thus my life. I believe what I call the I/You Concept will set the stage for your total absorption of the positive messages you’ll learn as you read this book.

Then, beginning with chapter 4, “My Brain: The Nuts and Bolts of My Memory,” I will talk about the physical mechanics

of memory—the nuts and bolts of memory in my brain and about the care and feeding of my brain.

In chapter 5, “NLP: A Window to My Thinking,” I will take you on a brief tour of Neuro-Linguistic Programming, more commonly known as NLP. This topic may sound like a mouthful, but don’t be scared away. NLP gives me some simple-to-use techniques to help me do what I told you I would do for you in the beginning: show you how to read minds, beginning with your own.

Next, in chapter 6, “I Do What I Believe I Can Do,” I will reveal to you my thoughts about the power of beliefs. What I believe, what I assume about people and the world around me, and how I talk to myself in my mind are all powerful determinants of what I do in life.

From there, in chapter 7, “Perception: I See What I Think I See,” I will move to some thoughts about perception. My beliefs are connected to how I perceive the world. How I perceive the world is critical to how I decide to move about within it.

And then, in chapter 8, “Listening: I Hear What I Want to Hear,” I will talk about another form of perception: listening. This topic brings me full circle back to memory. It is impossible for me to remember something if I do not know how to listen! I will describe several simple techniques I have used to improve my ability to listen.

In chapter 9, “Intuition: My Other Sense,” I will discuss still another form of perception: intuition. Intuition helps me make sense of all of the information I absorb every day through all of my other perceptions. At any given moment, I see, hear, feel, taste, and smell much more than I realize. I use my intuition to make quick meaning of it all.

Next, in chapter 10, “Creativity: Expanding My Mind,” I will describe how I use the tools I discussed in all of the previous chapters to expand my mind, to develop my creative skills, and how my beliefs, assumptions, and my “framing” of the way I see things influence my ability to create.

In chapter 11, "A Brief Pause: Recapping the Messages," I will provide a recap—a lineup of the major components to acquiring the ability to read my mind.

In chapter 12, "Reading My Own Mind: I Am a Living Example," I will discuss events in my life that clearly illustrate how I learned to apply all of the principles and concepts I've been talking about in this book at important periods in my life.

Then, in chapter 13, "Understanding and Reading Your Own Mind: All It Takes Is Practice," I will provide you with some exercises that will enable you to read your own mind. Remember what I said in the beginning of this book: the more I know and understand my own mind, the more skilled I can become at reading the minds of others.

In chapter 14, "At Last: Reading Their Minds," you will see how being able to read your own mind will enable you to read the minds of others.

Finally, in chapter 15, "A Work in Progress: I Will or I Will Not," I will conclude this work with some of my thoughts and what I learned during the time I wrote this book. I have much to learn about myself, much to accomplish; thus, I also view this book of mine as a work in progress. Even while I am crafting each page, from the first to the last, I am forever both teacher and student. I desire to convey that dynamic view to you. I want you to know yourself and your thoughts as a beautiful and continually growing work in progress.

As you read through this book, you will see that I have made every attempt to keep it lively, interesting, and filled with insightful exercises to help you nail down what you learn.

My goal is to make this book useful to you, to make it a practical guide for improving your personal and professional skills.

I must admit my present-day thinking and the topics I speak about have been shaped by an expansive variety of books, tapes, seminars, lectures, and personal experiences. The material covered in this book has been compiled from the notes,

videos, memories, audio recordings, and written scripts of the thousands of presentations I have written and delivered over these wonderful and challenging years.

I am confident that if you, the reader, immerse yourself in reading every one of the following pages, perform and practice the exercises as outlined, and absorb the valuable knowledge that awaits you on every page, you will end up a different person. And you will immediately know how to put it to work to help you achieve success at whatever you choose to accomplish.

I have one important request before we begin. I'd like you to seriously consider making up your mind, right now, *to participate in every exercise in this book*. I know firsthand how easy it is to gloss over an exercise, make a judgment about it, and to mentally decide not to do the exercise. It's so easy to think, "it would take too much time," "I'm too tired," or "I already know the solution to that problem," and then move on to the next paragraph of text. You will gain so much more by fully participating.

Keep in mind your primary reason for reading this book in the first place. Hopefully, it's because you choose to commit to learning a variety of concepts and techniques that synergistically will help you to improve your memory and to read the most important mind of all—*your own!* For how can I ever expect to see into the minds of others if I cannot first understand the workings and consciously execute the powers of my own mind?

My personal wish is that the information and exercises in this book will bring to you a bit of wisdom, some laughter and joy, and perhaps a few insights as well.

So please read on and explore with me the wondrous realm of the most powerful and infinite storage system in the universe—our minds. Sit back, relax, read, learn, and please be willing to practice, practice, practice!