

Senior BrainMinders Presentation

Adapted by Barbara McKenzie of the Pilot Club of St. Lucie County

Your Club should customize the introduction to fit your club. This is an ideal place to give a brief overview of what your club does in the community and what it means to the members. See the introductory letter from the initial BrainMinders for Seniors for additional ideas.

“What were you thinking?”

Wise Old Owl:

Good afternoon everyone. Have you all had a good dinner? We sure hope so.

My name is Barbara McKenzie, and I am a member of the Pilot Club of St. Lucie County. As you know from past dinners a lot about our club, I will not take time now other than to remind you that our Pilot International Signature project is BrainMinders which points out ways to protect your brain for life. We present educational safety programs for children and teens and informational programs for Seniors.

There are two handouts...does everyone have both?????

Let me introduce our characters:

I am the Wise Old Owl...

Tulip Pig is played by:

Gerald Giraffe is played by:

Martin Monkey is played by:

Fiona Fox is played by:

Penny Panda is played by:

Bob Beagle is played by:

Danny Deep is played by:

Hero Horse is played by:

Captain Kitty is played by:

Tulip Pig:

Boy, oh boy...this is the day I've been saving for...I'm excited!

Wise Old Owl:

Do tell! (then in a stage whisper to audience) – I love it when folks get excited.

Tulip Pig:

This is that Brainy day I've been saving for! Ye-e-s-s-s- I said BRAINY because we want to share some ways you can avoid “Brain Drops” and we ALL know that we experience brain drops every now and then.

Wise Old Owl:

Would you mind explaining to me what you mean by Brain Drops? I think I know but I want to hear it from your lips.

Tulip Pig:

Sure...how many times have you walked out of a room to get something and as soon as you walk through the door “BAM” you have a brain drop and you forget what you were going to do? *(look quizzically at Wise Old owl – like – “what were you thinking??!”)*

Wise Old Owl:

O-h-h-h...I've got it. *(looks questioningly around at audience)*

Has anybody here ever had a Brain Drop??? (*Pilots hold up their hand*)

Tulip Pig:

Usually if I turn around and go back into the room I just came out of...I remember why I left in the first place.

Wise Old Owl:

I guess we all have a lot in common when it comes to Brain Drops. Did you know the problem isn't so much a bad memory...it's more like a memory that's never been trained to remember? It's true...no matter what our age we can train our memory to do more.

Gerald Giraffe:

Hey...I'm all for Brain Proofing my head! What's the secret? I'm up for some training!

Martin Monkey:

It's really about observing. I think it was the baseball player and coach Yogi Berra who said, "The more you observe, the more you see." (*pause*) Think about it...He's right!

If you have a watch on your wrist...I want you to cover it up right now...without looking...with your other hand...

Now, without thinking too long, I want you to guess...is the number 9 on your watch? Numbers, roman numerals, just a mark or a stone??? (*pause*)

Did you answer correctly? Most people cannot answer this question correctly because they have never carefully observed their watch...they have only looked at the time. They have seen it many times, but have not observed what was on their watch.

So...your first key to a trained memory is observation.

Gerald Giraffe:

Albert Einstein said that, “Imagination is more important than knowledge.” (*nods head*)

Martin Monkey:

Well...that was easy for him to say.

Gerald Giraffe:

To remember...you have to observe...right? The next step to remembering what you observed is to imagine a way to associate what you observed to create the memory. It helps to have a creative imagination. It is much easier to remember pictures than words. If you can associate something with a picture it is much easier to remember. Here’s a quick example...if you had to draw a map right now of China, England, France or Italy...which would you choose? (*look around the room*)

And... why would that be??? Yep...some boots were made to resemble Italy...we learned that in grade school.

Fiona Fox:

Speaking of Einstein...he believed in putting a problem that he wanted solved in his mind before going to sleep...he would tell his brain to work on it. He said he always had good luck with this technique. Usually, while shaving the next morning...he would have one of those “AH-HA” moments.

He believed in telling his mind to work around the clock. He was always confident that his mind would solve the problem and that he did not have to consciously worry about it...it just took care of itself.

Penny Panda:

You don't have to be an Einstein to have a limitless memory. Most of us put limits on our memory without giving it a fair chance to remember.

Fiona Fox:

True...There's no such thing as a “bad” memory...your memory is either trained or untrained...or just (*wave hands wildly for emphasis*) running wild.

Penny Panda:

Think about it...every memory you have is associated with something...consciously or subconsciously.

Fiona Fox:

When you were born the neurons in your little brain were making over one billion

connections a day. Your brain was drinking in every sound, smell, sight, touch and impression available...All of which has served as the very basic architecture of your brain...these are all at the foundation of your live experience...

Penny Panda:

Hmmm...that explains why my childhood memories are still so vivid...I was learning something new every day...

Fiona Fox:

Yes...and if you had any experiences or adventures that were associated with emotions...whether it was love, a sense of awe, or fear – those memories are especially strong.

Penny Panda:

When I think back I believe my childhood was my first memory book...You know like a photo album with cute pictures and words. Gosh...I have probably five memory books so far of the good, the bad, the ugly and the in-between. The rate I'm going I'll probably have a whole bookshelf of books.

Fiona Fox:

Well...my book is in chapters and I guess I am up to about twenty chapters starting with early childhood...teen-age years (yeah, I used to be one too); college, my first job...getting

married...jeepers...the list goes on and on and on...

Penny Panda:

Jeepers??? Let's take a moment...I'd like everyone in the room to think about how many books or chapters you already have stored in your memory...

Bob Beagle:

You are probably telling yourself...no wonder my mind is so full! Yes...it's full...but you still have room. Scientists are proving every day that our brain is capable of much more than we imagined. You can still teach your brain new tricks.

Danny Deep:

Simple things like doing crossword or Sudoku puzzles help keep your mind active. Exercising, walking, dancing, and reading, travel and social interactions are also very good ways to keep your brain connections active. Every time you reach to develop a new skill or expand your skills your brain activity increases to new, more powerful levels.

Bob Beagle:

Here are a few helpful memory tips that will help you remember and may even help increase the capacity of your mind too.

Danny Deep:

How many times have you misplaced your glasses or your keys or something you use fairly often? It is quite natural for us to just put them down while walking in a room. It is quite frustrating when we can't remember where we put them down.

Tip number one...get a basket or a box and put it on a counter or somewhere easily accessible...then...looking at the container tell yourself – this is where all of the keys...glasses...pens... whatever... are going to be placed...you must consciously tell yourself that over the next three days while using it to hold these items.

You will be pleased with the results because the first and second time you recover these items you will want to repeat this and it will quickly become a habit.

Bob Beagle:

Going back to the art of observing...Pay attention! You cannot remember something that you have not observed. For instance...when you are leaving your room...look at the lock in your door as you are locking the door and repeat to yourself..."I'm locking the door."

This simple act will keep you from worrying about whether or not you locked the door. Or...if you don't have to worry about locking a door, you can do the same thing with items in your room like a lamp or television.

Danny Deep:

Keeping a journal is a useful brain activity. If you have a notepad or journal book, try this for a few days. Before leaving your room take a few deep breaths and relax your mind to get rid of clutter. Imagine you are an observer today and you will go about your day observing details of everything around you. Capture the scenes in your mind just as Sherlock Holmes may have.

When you get back home write down five or six things that you saw or heard that you had not observed before. This helps expand your mind and improve your memory. You may even be impressed with your powers of observation.

Hero Horse:

Are you challenged when it comes to remembering numbers? Remember what Bob Beagle said about observing...imagining...and association? (*hold up handout*)

This handout is an adaptation of a method for remembering numbers from the book "*Brainfit*". There is also other information in here for you to save. Each picture represents a number: Zero is an egg; One is a candle; Two is graceful like a swan; Three is ocean waves; Four is a sail boat; Five is a diver; Six is a snake; Seven is a diving board; Eight is a snowman; Nine is a balloon on a string; and Ten is a baseball bat and ball.

You will notice on your hand out there is a blank space on the right hand side of the picture. You are to write in the number and

your version of the picture. Now observe the picture and the number. Visualize or associate that number with the picture...becoming the picture. These become fixed associations in your mind and can be memory boosters.

Captain Kitty:

Alright...we have to test this – if my sister called up and said meet me tomorrow at eight forty-five – I am supposed to associate it into a picture of a snow man on a sailboat with a diver? Huummm...that was easier than it sounds.

Let me try again. My girl friend turns 29 on the 18th for the fiftieth time. So I imagine a swan with a balloon and a birthday candle held by a snowman and because I am her friend I forget the fiftieth part. (*big smile*)

Hero Horse:

This can be useful if you want to remember the last four digits of your social security number. These are the acceptable numbers to share with someone you trust when asked for your social security number. Let's take a minute to make some pictures for numbers – four numbers – 2543 – A swan, a diver and a sailboat on ocean waves.

With some practice you can become good at this – when someone gives you a set of numbers...write them down and observe them...associate them with the pictures...you may even want to draw the pictures...this helps to anchor them in your memory. You

will be surprised at how long you will be able to retain those numbers.

Captain Kitty:

It always helps to review and work at retaining important memories.

Hero Horse:

Before we leave we want to give you a few brain exercises that will help you stay focused and alert. Everyone who can...please stand and take a stretch...You've been sitting for a while...this is also good when you have been riding in a vehicle for a long time...this is a practical exercise for helping you to focus on your task. Standing up straight, stretch...take a few deep breaths...loosen your shoulders and hold your right or left arm out in front of you, shoulder high, now point the opposite leg out in front of you so that opposite sides are out in front...next...switch sides swinging your arms and legs so you have the opposite effect. *(Pilots standing in front of the audience demonstrate this procedure)*

This looks a lot like what they call “goose stepping”. Slowly switch sides back and forth, swinging your arms as you go and speed up until you have completed ten repetitions. You should feel refreshed and ready to go on to complete your task.

Captain Kitty:

**Oops! You are having too much fun!
Everyone please be seated...this little exercise
is a great way to begin your day each morning.
Sometimes...in the early morning your brain
feels a little bit fuzzy. Neuroscientists call this
“Brain Fog”. (*Again here all Pilots
demonstrate*)**

**Hold up both hands, palms facing – and
curl your fingers as if you are going to catch a
grapefruit. Holding that position...raise your
hands – one on each side of your head above
your ears...now with the tips of your fingers
tap each side of your head from the
temples...in a semi-circular motion toward the
base of your skull in the back of your
head...next...over your ears and back toward
the temples of your head...gradually work your
way to the crown of your head and back...do
this at least six to ten times. This actually
stimulated the circulation and helps o wake up
those sleepy neurons so they can start
connecting your day.**

Wise Old Owl:

**Remember, the Pilot Club of St. Lucie
County wants you to Play Safe...Play
Smart...and *Protect Your Brain for Life.***

“What were you thinking???”

The BrainMinders Project for Seniors