

90% Learners: High Leveraged Retention

I have a dream!

That one day words associated with “*learning*” in church settings will sound like this: “pleasant,” “joyful,” “great hobby,” “exciting,” “relaxing,” “growth-stimulating,” “lifelong passion” and “absorbing.”

Why not us? Why not now?

Our learning culture orbits around a recent study: “*How do learners best retain information so we can put it into practice?*” This realigns our learning design with God’s creation-design. Here are several ways to receive.

What **percentage** of learning in each of these methods do you think we **retain**? Give it your best guess. Take a stab to make this active.

- we hear,
- we read,
- we do,
- we also pass-it-on to others.

Some studies show, and observation supports, that we retain around 5% of what we hear, 10% of what we read, **70%** of what we hear and do and **90%** of what we hear, do and pass on to others. Actively listening and asking/answering questions in a learning community with the commitment to put the learning into practice and pass it along to others is the model for natural learning, like Jesus taught.

Let’s make this concrete.

Say that a directive teacher is superb and holds us spellbound ...a “100” on the scale of 1 to 100. What retention rate does this “listening only” style normally have? $100 \text{ times } 5\% = 5$ effective retention quotient.

Now, let’s say I learn to teach naturally. Let’s also assume that I am a very mediocre teacher, say even way below average, a 40 out of 100. Since the retention rate is 90% for this style, what would this compute to? $40 \text{ times } 90\% = 36$ effective retention quotient. Learning with this mediocre teacher would be **seven times** more effective than just listening to a brilliant, directive preacher.

Put it into practice in your own life an increase retention to **70%**. Further increase learning to **90%** by passing on what you are learning to another. The Hebrew culture knew what we are only now relearning, namely, that putting truth into practice is the leverage point for change. Notice carefully Ezra’s approach

Ezra had committed himself to studying the Revelation of God, to living it, and to teaching Israel to live its truths and ways. (Ezra 7:10, The Message).

It’s not accidental that experts are now discovering that Ezra tapped into a retention level of 90%. Ezra set his heart with a **determined**, lifelong effort (yes, learning takes effort)...

- to learn God’s Word (listen and read, 5%-10%),
- to live his life consistent with it (do, 70%), and then
- to give it away to God’s people (pass it on, 90%).

Wise learners find the maximum “*leverage point*” for change, that point where effort is rewarded with maximum return.

*What about you? And **how** are we changed?*

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect ["behold" NASB] the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18; also 17).

Simple! We are changed as we gaze on the glory of Jesus Christ, especially as revealed in the NT. The Spirit changes us into this glorious likeness of Jesus Christ, one step after another. As we take our eyes off ourselves and fix them unwaveringly on Jesus, the Spirit transforms us. As worshippers, "we become what we behold."

God never pushes the "reset" button on our minds when we are saved. The old mind with its negative thought patterns pulls us down with its self-occupation, self-absorption, craving for sensation, lust for excitement, and appetites for counterfeit life. All this must be doggedly identified and replaced with a passionate pursuit of what releases authentic life. What are we inputting into our minds? What occupies our leisurely thoughts? How are we reprogramming our thought patterns?

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:4b-5).

The Word of God purges dead things from our lives and shatters fortresses. Now the Spirit has additional space to work His transforming power into our lives (Romans 12:2). Then we can finally experience the **freedom** God designed us and recreated us in Christ for, and deeply desires for each of us. The Word of God possesses an inexhaustible depth and gives us the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:6). Of course, only in conjunction with our transforming **responses** to partner with God in His works, His way, and His words. "God's part, and our part." Make these Philippians 3:12-14 choices with our Team-of-Three.

Assuming the studies are fairly accurate, if one learner listened to good, solid, Bible-based, life-impacting sermons 30 minutes a week for one year (with a **5%** retention rate), he or she would listen **26** hours, equaling just over **1 hour** of effective learning (26 hours times 5% rate, which is 78 minutes).

If another learner took full ownership in a 2-hour, interactive module for just **5 weeks**. However, we come with full buy-in and ownership as an active learner (**90%** retention rate for listening/reading, doing plus passing it on), the 10 hours of natural learning would garner **9** hours of effective learning.

1 hour effective learning over *one year* or **9 hours** in *one month*. And if you did both, your growth rate would spike even more.

What is your choice?

Do you want to be a stone where 95% runs off or a sponge where 90% is absorbed?

Be a good Ezra, an ancient/new learner committed to a 90% retention rate by leaning, doing and giving it away to others. Do you believe...really believe...that there is a revolution in learning afoot that will shatter our false beliefs? My answer is "*yes indeedy!*" I am committed to giving my life to this.

But unless **you** also believe this personally, you will probably stumble over the obstacles to *natural learning* and not push through to realize our destiny as a learning community. Catching a passion and a love for the Word of God is even more important than learning the skills of how to

study the Bible. More is caught than taught, so demonstrate to each other your authentic love for God's Word. Jesus said...

"For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:20).

Let's choose to learn in a way where Jesus has promised to bless us with His presence.