

How cultivating a keen sense of observation can enable you to get the most out of life

By Minoo Jokhi

Maneck and Rustom met at a mutual friend's birthday party. Maneck saw Rustom and asked for his name.



Rustom gave his name. Then Maneck said: "Can you please spell it." Rustom proceeded to spell his name out: R-u-s-t-o-m.

Maneck laughed out loud: "I asked you to spell 'it' and not spell Rustom. You should have simply said 'it' instead giving the spelling of your name!"

This naughty little prank underlines the importance of observation and how being vigilant and alert helps us in life.

What actually makes observation skills so valuable is a person's ability to add meaning to their observations. A person should try to record and consider their observations. Go beyond the things you see and explore more.

Many things go on around us; there is so much to be learnt in life. And learning never stops. Albert Einstein had correctly said: "Intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death." But we humans get so engrossed and chained in the web of our hectic schedules that we do not observe and value the amazing lessons that our surroundings have to offer us. We have almost lost touch with any external observations. In today's era, we have forgotten to harness a very crucial life skill of turning our attention from our internal mental hassles to the outside world.

TIPS TO ENHANCE OBSERVATION

● **Being alert in the moment:** Osho had rightly stated, "If you are intelligent, if you are alert, the ordinary becomes the extraordinary." But people are many times not present in the moment. Science has proved that an

active observation can lead to an increase in memory development.

Even observing something as simple as the number of stairs you've climbed on a particular day and being able to remember this information at the end of the day means that the individual is making an active effort to observe information and retain it later.

● **Ask yourself relevant questions:** Wherever you go and observe things ask yourself the relevant questions to test your observations. Try to be curious to learn new facts and keep recalling them to ensure that you retain what you observe.

● **Try to see the logic:** Understand the logic in anything, identify the "why" in your observations and look for relevant answers. That way your observations get embedded in your memory.

Proper observation helps solve problems: Challenging yourself with tough problems will enhance your powers of observation and decoding complicated data charts would truly help you hone your problem-solving skills. Take up real-life problem

scenarios and solve them and see how you grow by leaps and bounds.

Overcome vision problems: Farsightedness and other vision problems will cause difficulties with attention span and make it difficult to observe well. If the individual finds it difficult to notice and observe things and experiences headaches and other related health issues, you may want to get your eyes checked to make sure your vision is sharp and focused as that is a prerequisite for good observation.

● **Use caffeine in moderation:** Caffeine can help make a person more sharp and alert; but one must have it in control. Also, sugar can enhance your alertness and a glass of a sweet drink can help your memory and also help the person to become alert and observe better. But this has to be taken in moderation and not made into a bad habit.

● **Foods that can help:** Fruits, high fiber whole grains and fish can help a lot to boost brain power. Having nuts and dark chocolate too, in moderation, is beneficial. Eating too much or too little can also

interfere with your mental focus and dull your powers of observation. A heavy meal can make you feel tired, while lack of proper calories can result in distracting hunger pangs. To benefit your brain you must strive for a well-balanced diet full of a variety of healthy foods.

HONING YOUR OBSERVATION

Observation skill is the ability to use all five senses of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch to recognize, analyze and recall your surroundings. This practice is often associated with mindfulness because it encourages you to be present and aware of the details in your daily life.

When you have time, sit in a park or public place which has many people and start observing various people there and what they do, etc. At first, you may even feel you are wasting your time but after some days you will start recognizing people who live at that place and also many people and things related to that area you will observe and enhance yourself.

Sometimes, if you are in a train or bus, observe and count how many people are wearing what colour shirt or pant. This mental jugglery makes an individual really smart. Sometimes while walking or jogging listen to what others are speaking and try to observe some unique talk in those conversations. Also as you begin observing people and their responses, it helps you to become a better communicator, enabling you to structure your message in a proper manner, such that it establishes a connection with the listener. Also try to observe all the items you see in a room and later try to recall them.

Sometimes, try to travel through your city from the urban areas to the suburban area. Take note of the streets in the area

and what shops are where. Do this multiple times in 1-2 months and you'll begin to notice many changes in the city and you can familiarize yourself with what is going on—and where.

Improve your observation by not getting distracted easily. Today we get many WhatsApp messages. Social Media is omnipresent and so many distractions are there so it's a challenge to maintain focus and stay observant and vigilant. Strive for a smarter and more agile brain, which will help you to observe better.

SOME TECHNIQUES

The 'Observe and Deduce Technique' and the 'Observe and Enhance Technique' both help your observation skills. 'Observe and Deduce Technique' is the ability to take small amounts of information, make precise observations and successfully fit all the pieces together, which is the essence of deduction. This can come in handy to:

- Observe the things and the behaviours that are adding clutter to your life.
- Clutter is the behaviour, which unnecessarily bothers people around you and bothers you too.
- Deduce why you are behaving like this and improve yourself and your surroundings.

The 'Observe and Enhance Technique' is where a person observes and identifies things done unknowingly, which works in his/her favour and narrow down what has to be done more often. This gives the individual an understanding of what you need to enhance in your day to day behaviour, actions and career too. It is all about how to enhance what works and deduct what doesn't work from your professional life to be successful.

In conclusion, try to be as alert and observant as possible. It helps immensely for memory betterment and helps immensely in day to day life.

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