

Business Success

A “New” Way to Read

by Evelyn Levson

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ing you have decided what to cook for supper, or planned what you are going to wear Friday night? This is because you are reading too slowly for your “lightning fast” brain. Your brain wanders off and thinks about something more interesting. With speed reading, your brain stays on task.

• **Comprehension increases:** Comprehension is the whole point of reading. Once your concentration is up, and you are paying attention to your reading, your comprehension improves. Your retention and ability to recall also increases.

• **Overall understanding improves:** If a piece of writing normally takes you three evenings to read, speed reading will allow you to read it all in one sitting: this makes it easier to view and understand the piece as a whole—to put it all together.

• **Keep up with your reading:** You will be able to get through those stacks of important business articles and books that are waiting to be read.

Speed reading has been around for decades. One of the main researchers of speed reading was a schoolteacher named Evelyn Wood. It is told that while brushing off the pages of the book she had thrown down in despair, she came up with a method of speed reading which was called the “Wood Method”, later renamed “Reading Dynamics” in 1958. She coined the term “speed reading”.

There are some famous people who were speed readers. President Theodore Roosevelt was said to read a book every day before breakfast, and occasionally read three books a day. President John F. Kennedy increased his reading speed from fewer than 300 words per minute to about 1200 words. President Jimmy Carter and his wife were also avid readers and enrolled in a speed-reading course while at the White House.

What is speed reading? Three basic speed-reading skills are as follows:

• **Force yourself forward.** Resist the temptation to regress (going back over what you’ve just read). Regressing means repeating words and phrases and causes confusion rather than clarity.

• **Reduce vocalizing.** Instead of speaking all the words in your mind, which slows you down to a speed where your brain is too easily distracted, switch to “instant sight recognition” of the words.

• **Read in word phrases.** Rather than having your eyes stop at each word, group words into clusters of 3 or 4 words. This will result in making fewer stops with your eyes across the line of print.

What are some of the benefits of speed reading? How will speed reading help you succeed?

• **Concentration goes up:** Have you ever gotten to the end of a paragraph or page and realized that while read-

Three speed-reading skills that will help you read faster are

- no regressing
- reducing vocalizing
- reading in word clusters

More knowledge equals greater success. Efficiency is boosted.

• **Enjoy reading more:** Reading comes alive with speed-reading skills. Increased confidence in your reading brings greater enjoyment.