

Brand You: Engage Your Brain

My friend Dan Coyle wrote a book called *The Talent Code*. And somewhere near the beginning there was a fascinating little exercise. I'm going to tell you about the exercise, and then I will try to explain *why* I'm telling you about this exercise.

You get a list of words. You look at the list for sixty seconds, ninety seconds, whatever, and then five minutes later, ten minutes later, we ask you to recall as many of those words as you can. Okay. So you get your list, you look at your list of words. It's got twenty words on it. You know, two minutes later I'd say, "Tell me as many of the words as you can," and you remember three, which is probably pretty damn normal.

Okay, now I'm going to bury the list a little bit, okay. And I'm going to have a list, or some other guys are going to read from a list, and it's going to be exactly the same words except every word is going to become—is going to have one letter missing. Like you'll see kitchen, but the "t" will be missing, and there will just be a blank underscore where it is.

Okay, you look at that list. Letter missing in each word. Five minutes later, whatever the metric is, I ask you, "Tell me how many words you can remember." It's bizarre. Test after test after test, the statistics are sound. *You remember three times more of the words that had missing letters than the ones that didn't.* Now, why am I telling you this story? For the simple reason: it is a fundamental description of what happens when people's brains are engaged.

Somehow or other your brain has got to put together—or put the "t" back into the kitchen. But, fundamentally, the notion here is people who are engaged in general are, in fact, more engaged, if you will. The brain is working. You're paying attention. And it's a big, big, big, big story, even though it's reportedly just about a couple of lists of words. Huge deal. Think about it.