

SETTING THE STAGE.....

As a psychologist, teacher, and amateur dog trainer, I have a great deal of mentally stored knowledge about different topics. I often surprise my students (and sometimes myself) by remembering the approximate title, author, journal, and year of an article that would complement their independent study projects. Less often, when I teach dog obedience classes and am stumped by a dog that just can't seem to learn a simple task, I can call up from memory an idea I heard about years ago at a dog training seminar. Obviously, when I remember or recall these pieces of information, I am using my memory.

How do I hold on to information in such a way that I can access it, sometimes years after I've stored it? Consider the vast range of information everyone must have stored in permanent memory. In addition to information regarding events in your life (your sixth birthday party, the time you broke your arm, going to the circus, and your first day of junior high), you have also stored a great deal of knowledge: definitions of the words you know; arithmetic facts and procedures; historical, scientific, and geographic knowledge; and (I hope) even some knowledge of