

Sheila Love IMPACT-ology Mastermind

“Sheila Love — Where Everything Is Possible”

LESSON 5

Mental Muscles

Position	Lesson 5 of 20
Duration	40–50 minutes
Age Group	12–18 years, Liberia, West Africa
Core Idea	Your conscious mind works through six muscles: imagination, will, perception, intuition, reason, and memory. School trains only two of them well.

1. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Name the six mental muscles
2. Explain why memory alone does not make someone educated
3. Identify which of the six muscles they use least
4. Practice using imagination deliberately on a real problem

2. OPENING HOOK (5 minutes)

Ask: “Who here is good at remembering things?” Let several hands go up.

“Now. Who here is good at imagining things that don't exist yet?”

Fewer hands, usually.

“Both of those are tools your mind uses. School graded you mostly on one of them. Today we look at all six.”

3. CORE CONTENT

The Six Mental Muscles

Everyone has six powerful mental abilities that help shape how they think, learn, make decisions, and respond to challenges. These abilities are called the Six Mental Muscles. The more you develop them, the more control you have over your thoughts, actions, and results.

1. Imagination: helps you see possibilities.

Imagination is your ability to create ideas, pictures, and possibilities in your mind. It allows you to think about things that do not yet exist and imagine different outcomes for your future.

You use imagination when you set goals, solve problems, plan a project, write a story, design something new, or picture yourself succeeding. It is often called the "workshop of the mind" because every invention, achievement, or idea starts as a thought before it becomes reality.

Example: An athlete imagining a successful performance before a competition is using their imagination.

2. Will: helps you stay focused on your goals.

Will is your ability to focus your attention on something important, even when distractions are everywhere. It helps you stay committed to a goal and keep working towards it.

Strong will allows you to concentrate on what matters instead of being pulled away by social media, friends, worries, or other outside influences.

Example: Choosing to finish your homework before playing games requires willpower and focus.

3. Perception: helps you view challenges in a positive and useful way.

Perception is the way you see and interpret situations. Two people can experience the same event but think about it very differently because they have different perceptions.

Learning to change your perception can help you find opportunities in difficult situations instead of only seeing problems.

Example: Failing a test can be seen as proof that you'll never improve, or as feedback that shows you what to work on next. The situation is the same, but the perception is different.

4. Reason: helps you make smart decisions.

Reason is your ability to think logically, evaluate information, and make thoughtful decisions. It helps you decide what is true, useful, or important instead of simply accepting what others say.

Reason allows you to ask questions, weigh evidence, and choose your own beliefs and actions.

Example: Before believing something you see online, you check the facts and decide whether the information is trustworthy.

5. Memory: helps you learn from experience.

Memory is your ability to store and recall information, experiences, and lessons you have learned.

Memory helps you use knowledge from the past to make better decisions in the present. It is also a skill that can be strengthened through practice, just like a muscle. The more you train your brain to remember important information, the better it becomes.

Example: Remembering a maths formula during an exam or recalling advice that helped you solve a problem uses your memory.

6. Intuition: helps guide you when facts alone are not enough.

Intuition is your inner sense or "gut feeling." It is the ability to notice clues, patterns, and information that your conscious mind may not have fully processed yet.

Intuition often works alongside reason. While reason analyses facts, intuition can help guide you when making decisions or choosing between options.

Example: Meeting someone for the first time and sensing that they are trustworthy, even before you can explain exactly why, is an example of intuition.

By developing these Six Mental Muscles, you can become more confident, make better decisions, and take greater control of your future.

The Servant and the Gift

Reason is careful. It checks, it doubts, it wants proof before it moves. It is a faithful servant.

Intuition and imagination work differently. They arrive suddenly, often without proof yet attached. Many people call this a gift, and then ignore it, because it does not arrive on command the way memory does.

A society that only honors the servant, and forgets the gift, produces people who can recite everything and imagine nothing.

What Educated Actually Means

Being educated does not mean carrying a large pile of facts.

It means having trained your mental muscles well enough that you can go and acquire whatever you actually want, using whichever muscle the moment calls for.

**That definition has nothing to do with how many exams you passed.
It has everything to do with how well your six tools work together.**

4. STORY: 'THE QUESTION MR. KOLLIE DIDN'T EXPECT'

THE QUESTION MR. KOLLIE DIDN'T EXPECT

Sekou was not the top student in his WAEC preparation class. That title belonged to a girl named Fanta, who could recall a formula the instant it was mentioned.

Sekou was slower with recall. He knew this about himself, and it embarrassed him a little, especially when Mr. Kollie called on him and he needed a few extra seconds to answer.

...

In the mock exam, one question appeared that nobody in the class had seen a matching example for. Not in the textbook. Not in Mr. Kollie's past papers. A word problem about splitting cost between market traders, structured strangely, with a twist nobody's memorized method quite fit.

Fanta stared at it, flipping mentally through every formula she owned, and found none of them fit cleanly.

Sekou stared at it too. His memory offered him nothing useful either.

...

But somewhere in the staring, a picture arrived. Not a formula. A picture of the actual market, three traders, coins changing hands, one trader with more goods than the other two.

He didn't know where the picture came from. He just followed it, drawing it roughly in the margin of his answer sheet, moving the coins around on paper the way he imagined the traders would.

Slowly, a method built itself out of the picture. Not the method the textbook would have used. His own method.

...

He got the answer. When Mr. Kollie marked the papers, he stopped at Sekou's page for a long time, checking the workings twice.

"This isn't how I taught it," he said, in front of the class.

Sekou's stomach dropped, certain he was about to be corrected.

"It's also correct," Mr. Kollie said. "Where did this come from?"

Sekou looked at his own drawing in the margin, the little coins, the little traders.

"I just pictured it," he said, unsure if that counted as a real answer.

Mr. Kollie looked at him for a moment. "Keep pointing that thing wherever you need it," he said, and moved on to the next paper.

5. ACTIVITY (10 minutes)

Materials: any paper, any pen or pencil.

1. Write the six muscles down the side of your page: Imagination, Will, Perception, Intuition, Reason, Memory.
2. Next to each, write a number from 1 to 5 for how often you use it on purpose.
3. Circle the one with the lowest number.
4. Pick a real problem you're facing right now, in school or at home.
5. Spend two minutes trying to solve it using only the muscle you circled.

6. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which muscle surprised you by scoring low?
2. Where in your own life have you solved something using intuition or imagination rather than memory or reason?
3. Why do you think school mostly trains reason and memory?
4. What is one way you could deliberately train the muscle you use least, this week?

7. FACILITATOR NOTES

Some students will insist they “aren't creative” and cannot use imagination on demand. Reassure them Sekou's story is about following a small picture, not staging a grand vision.

Do not let the exercise turn into ranking students against each other by muscle. The point is self-awareness, not comparison.

If time allows, let two or three students share their circled muscle and why. This often surfaces useful patterns for the group.

This lesson connects directly forward to the Stick Person model next lesson, where these muscles get placed inside the conscious mind visually.

8. BRIDGE TO LESSON 6

Before students leave, ask:

“If these six muscles live in your conscious mind, where do you think your habits and automatic reactions live?”

Let them guess.

“We draw the whole picture next time.”