

Remembering and Using People's Names

Category: Learning Skills • Day in Book: 2

It has been said that a person's name is the most important word in the world to that person. Using a person's name in conversation is one of the best ways to build rapport. Sounds good, but if you are like most people, the names of people you meet go in one ear and out the other. So step one is remembering the name.

Many memory experts believe that we all have perfect memories. We are capable of remembering just about any detail from our lives no matter how far back and how specific. The challenge is **recalling** the information from our memory.

There are dozens of techniques for remembering names; some work for some people and some do not. For this reason, I am listing many of them for you to choose the one that works best for you. You may want to adapt a few techniques rather than just one. For example, use a visual technique for those you meet face to face, and when they tell you the names of their children, use an association technique to associate the person you met with their children's names. The key again is to use what works best for you.

Here are some steps that should all be followed each time you meet someone:

1) **LISTEN AND PAY ATTENTION TO THE NAME.** So obvious, yet so overlooked. Pay attention to the name when it is given to you and make sure you can recall it 5 seconds later. If you can, you are halfway to putting this name in your long-term memory.

2) **Repeat immediately.** The first sentence out of your mouth after hearing a name should include that name. "It is a pleasure to meet you, Jennie". Use this instead of "Jennie, it is nice to meet you" because saying the person's name right after they say it is often a mindless automated response that does very little, if anything, toward helping you remember the name.

3) **Repeat often.** Be careful with this one. You do not want to sound like a psycho, or worse a pushy salesperson, by overdoing it. However, people love to hear their own name and this technique will keep your listener interested in what you have to say.

4) **End the conversation with their name.** This is the best way to end any conversation. "Jennie, it was great meeting you". This not only once more sinks their name into your memory, but says to the person that you have cared enough to remember their name.

5) **Comment on and/or ask questions about the name.** "Jennie, have you always been called Jennie or do people call you Jen as well?" or "Do you spell Jennie with a 'y' or 'ie'?" If it is a unique name, ask about its origin or say that it is a beautiful name (if you really think it is).

6) **Review.** After the conversation is over with the person, review their name and face in

your mind several times. Do this frequently over the next 24 hours. As you get better with steps 1-5, this step will become less important.

Memory is linked to your senses and emotions. As you incorporate more emotion and more of your senses into remembering a name, the name will become more difficult to forget.

Now here are some techniques used to remember names:

1) **Face association.** Examine a person's face discreetly when you are introduced. Try to find an unusual feature, whether ears, hairline, forehead, eyebrows, eyes, nose, mouth, chin, complexion, etc. Create an association between that characteristic, the face, and the name in your mind. The association may be to associate the person with someone you know with the same name, or may be to associate a rhyme or image from the name with the person's face or defining feature.

2) **Substitution.** Take a person's name and substitute objects that you can visualize with that name. Then associate those objects with the person somehow. For example, "Murphy" can be substituted with "Murphy's oil soap". Visualize the person pouring the soap all over them while dancing the jig. Why dancing the jig? The more outrageous you make the visualization, the better it will stick to memory. Just try not to laugh when making the association, especially if the person is in the process of telling you they have just been fired.

3) **Paint their name on their forehead.** OK, not literally, but in your imagination. Use your favorite color paint and clearly see each letter as you paint it. If you are standing closer than a few feet from the person, do not look directly at their forehead but rather between their eyes.

4) **Association with someone you know.** Associate the person you meet with someone you know or know of with the same name. Then visualize the person you know in the same situation as the person you have met. For example, if you meet a "Will" picture your Uncle Will (assuming you have an Uncle Will) standing there, in that same spot. To make the association stronger, visualize your uncle Will doing something that he is known for doing - like his loud drunken laugh.

If you forget the person's name at any time during the conversation, THIS IS THE TIME TO ASK. Do not be embarrassed to say something such as, "Forgive me but I've forgotten your name..." or "I am sorry, what was your name again?" Remember that most people forget names. Those who make it a point to humble themselves and ask for a name again are seen as someone who cares about learning the name.

The more you do this, the more second nature it will become and remembering names will be an automatic process for you. Using names in conversation will take you a long way in building and maintaining rapport, as well as helping others to both remember you

and like you. You will soon find that remembering names becomes a game and it is really quite fun, not to mention one of the best skills that anyone can possess!

Key Points - Check each statement after you have read it for understanding.

- Listen and pay attention to a person's name when hearing it for the first time
- Repeat the name immediately after hearing the name
- Repeat the name often in the conversation
- End the conversation with their name
- Comment on and/or ask questions about the name
- Review the name in your head several times during the day

Action Steps

Learn the names of the 19 people that follow. Allow at least one hour to pass, then fill in their names on the page that follows.



Mary, Susan, Nora, Chuck, Kalib, Roxanne, Stephen, Yuen, Cindy, Kim, Raul, Marcus.



Chris, Shelley, Tony, Martha, Amanda, Kenny, Karen



1	2
3	4
5	6
7	



8	9
10	11
12	13
14	15
16	17
18	19

In the next three movies you watch, try to remember as many names as possible. Do not do this exercise until after you have watched three movies with the goal of remembering the names of the characters. Write them down here. *Continue with the lessons, but keep this page flagged until the exercise is complete.*

Movie 1: _____
Characters:
Movie 2: _____
Characters:
Movie 3: _____
Characters:

Make your best effort to remember the name of every new person you meet, simply because it makes the other person feel special and important. For the next few weeks, or until you have met at least 25 new people, write down the names of the people you meet here. *Continue with the lessons, but keep this page flagged until the exercise is complete.*

1 _____	2 _____
3 _____	4 _____
5 _____	6 _____
7 _____	8 _____
9 _____	10 _____
11 _____	12 _____
13 _____	14 _____
15 _____	16 _____
17 _____	18 _____
19 _____	20 _____
21 _____	22 _____
23 _____	24 _____
25 _____	

Quiz Questions - More than one answer may be correct, always choose the best answer from the article.

- 1) Why is it important to remember another person's name?
 - a) It builds rapport with the person
 - b) It makes the person feel a sense of importance
 - c) It helps the person to both remember and like you
 - d) all of the above

- 2) Which of the following is NOT a good technique for remembering names?
 - a) Repeat the name often in the conversation
 - b) When you are first introduced, look into the face of the person you have just met, place your open hand on their face and shout their name as loudly as possible
 - c) Review the name in your head several times during the day
 - d) Listen and pay attention to a person's name when hearing it for the first time

- 3) Which of the following is NOT a good idea for practicing remembering names?
 - a) Go through a magazine and learn the names of all the people who have both photos and names
 - b) Learn the names of people in someone else's high school yearbook
 - c) Remember the names of the characters introduced or referred to in movies
 - d) Call random people in the phone book and ask them to send you photos of themselves

Bo's Tip of the Day: *If you are going for formality by adding a "Mr." or "Ms." before someone's last name when addressing him or her in person, be sure you have the sex right.*