



What's in a Name?

Five rules to help you remember.



by Joe Takash

HOW ARE YOU AT REMEMBERING people's names? Fantastic? Not so hot? Embarrassingly bad? If you are like most people, you've checked off either B or C. What typically comes next is a litany of excuses like, "I'm good with faces, but not names," or "I just have a block, and I'll never be good."

So why is it that you can meet someone, learn his or her name, and four seconds later, smile at them while thinking to yourself, "I have no idea what your name is"?

Why not say, "I'm sorry, please tell me your name again" when you forget a name?

You forget names for many reasons, but none of those reasons matter to those whom you forget. Your connection with the people whose names you can't recall are weaker than with those whose names you do remember.

These five tips will help you remember names. They are simple in theory, but require practice, commitment and repetition. The results are well worth it for your relationships and your career.

Rule 1. Ask people for names. How many times have you been to the same church, bar or gym, see the same people and never bother to introduce yourself? Think of the personal connections and professional opportunities you could be passing up! When it comes asking people's names, simply think, "jump in the water it's not that cold." Be an initiator and approach others with courage on the outside, no matter how you feel on

the inside.

Rule 2. Spell and pronounce names correctly. Make the effort to clarify (not assume), for accuracy. I was once introduced to speak to 500 people in the following manner: "Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Mr. Joe Takass" (instead of Takash). Taking time to assure the correct spelling and pronunciation is something to attend to in fine detail.

Rule 3. Ask again when you forget. Chances are, all of us forget names immediately 80 percent of the time. By asking people again and again, you are simply informing them that you want to value them and their name is an attachment to that value. If the person

gets upset simply tell him or her, "I'm very sorry, I just want to respect you by getting your name correctly." It's hard to argue with that.

Rule 4. Remember! To lock names into your mental hard drive, use all tools possible. This can include rhymes like

"Dan the man" or associations like "Rhonda from Reno." Remembering requires an eclectic effort. Write names down, repeat them out loud, repeat them to yourself. Work hard and you will get in better name shape.

Rule 5. Use them or lose them. In writing, on the phone or in person, use people's names. When your name is called as someone who contributed to the success of a great team effort, it feels great. When your daughter's name is on the Dean's List, it looks like a work of art. Knowing names increases your confidence, makes others feel great and is a competitive advantage in business.

So, what's in a name? Everything! PE

Joe Takash, founder of Victory Consulting, is a consultant, speaker, and author of *Results Through Relationships* (Wiley). Visit www.joetakash.com or call: 888-918-3999.

ACTION: Practice these five rules.