

“What’s in a name?”

How many of you remember growing up to Romper Room? Remember when Miss Julie (oops, can’t remember her name. Was it Julie) picked up the magic wand and said, “I can see Billy, and Suzie, Johnny, Mary and there is Jill and Tommy.” Well you just sat on pins and needles waiting to hear your name. I don’t think Lynne every made her list. Dale Carnegie once said, “The sweetest sound to anyone’s ears is the sound of their own name.” And don’t you believe that to be true? I know when someone is talking with me, especially if I have just met them and they use my name my ears perk right up.

Have you ever had anyone say, “Gee, I remember your name, but your face is not familiar?” No, the challenge is remembering a person’s name. It really isn’t known when humans first began using names though the practice is certainly very old. Your name is your calling card. It is what distinguishes you from everyone else. That is why when we go to a meeting or conference we wear our name around our neck....the purpose is for connecting with others through our name exchange. There are some that say there is so much more to learn about a person through their name. They believe your name has inherent powers and that a name can control one’s destiny, good or bad. Reminds of the Johnny Cash song about a boy named Sue.

So, if remembering names is so important what can we do to brush up on our name remembering skills? I had the great fortune to attend a Memory Training Course and they provided some tips for increasing your memory in general. One of the tips was name association. I just read a story about a minister that was using name association to remember the first names of couple that had just joined their church. When he met them he was excited because he associated their names to a children’s story. After church he was talking with them and in saying good-bye he teased, “take care going up that hill.” Well his wife was standing nearby and said, “what was that all about.” He said, “you know Jack and Jill ...up the hill...” And his wife commented, “Yes, but what does that have to do with Dick and Jane.” My point? You must make the right association.

So what are some of the other tips? Well the first thing the trainer did talk about was our attitude. You must have the desire to remember and the belief that you can. Henry Ford had said, “Whether you think that you can or you think that you can not, you are probably right.” And this is true for remembering anything. I know, especially lately, I have been saying things like, “I use to be so good at remembering names and now I can’t remember my own” or “I never remember anything anymore”. I am conditioning my mind with that belief. So, the first thing to do is to condition your mind that you can remember names, that indeed you are very good at it and that you want to remember a person’s name. Next he said look for something that is distinguishing about that person....a scar, birthmark, dimples, eyes, and remember that. Then he says to be sure after you meet the person that you repeat their name, making sure of the pronunciation, even inquiring about their name if you are not positive. Now, be sure to use it while you are in conversation and as you close the conversation say goodbye using their name. The rest of the tips you’ll need to go to the full training to really implement. It was great stuff.

Now, our trainer, Dave, went through the test throughout the 2-day training of remembering names. There were about 200 of us....he was at about 98% accuracy. Very impressive and when I walked in the second day and he did remember my name it felt great. When someone remembers your name, it is special. You hear it in your head and then it goes right to your heart and why sometimes...it may even give you a goosebump.