

CHAPTER IX

WHAT'S IN A NAME?



An awful lot! And way back in 1936, Dale Carnegie said it best in his renowned book: Names can be one key to *"How to win Friends and Influence People."*

Indeed, he was so right. Deftly and repetitively using other persons' names in your contacts with them is a winner.

Our Names are Music to Our Ears

That too, is often said, and correctly so. Prove it to yourself, by trying the following:

The next time you're in a store being served by a pleasant clerk, notice the name on her or his nametag, shirt, or blouse.

Let's say it's a young lady, and her name is Kathi. And you quickly note to yourself, two things about her name: You think it's cute, and it's spelled uniquely. So, here's a script:

You: *"Hi, Kathi. Boy, what a pretty name you have. Is it spelled that way on your birth certificate?"*

Kathi: *"Yes, it is."*

You: *"It's so different. Who had the imagination to spell it that way, Mom or Dad?"*

Kathi: *"It was Dad's idea. He's creative."*

You: *"Well, it's such an attractive, uniquely spelled name. I'm sure you now feel it was well worth having to spell it in school so many times for teachers and other kids."*

Kathi: *"Yeah, that was a pain. But now that I'm older, I really like that it's so different."*

And so your brief chitchat will go. And during it, you'll see Kathi's face light up. You might even see the glint of a charming, sweet smile. That's because, in the humdrum monotony of a workday, some one is showing some interest in Kathi as a person. She's not just a store fixture.

And you can bet your bottom dollar that if Kathi can help you in some way, she'll go a second mile to do so. If she sees a box in your cart that is a bit damaged, she'll see to it that you get another. Or if there's a coupon for a item you bought that you don't know about, Kathi will produce one and give you credit.

Indeed, these are the kinds of potential benefits that you can reap by using a people skill that gives deserved recognition to another person. And it all starts with a name.

Repeat Encounters

Let's now cover instances where you every now and then run across the same persons. This could be in places like offices of your doctor or dentist.

Now, the first time you meet these persons, try to learn their names and identify them in your mind. In doing so, you can use the same skill as in the Kathi script. But for repeat encounters, you will have to employ another learned tactic that requires work and discipline: It's

that of readily being able to refresh your memory as to these persons' identities and names, as well as particular information about them.

This is so important! And down the pike, we'll get into how best to do this.

But first, we need to discuss the rewards of having this fabulous people skill in your quiver of talents. You walk into your dentist's office and greet the office manager, whom you met on your first visit there. "With a big grin, you say: "*Hi, Mandy, good to see you. How's Todd [her son] doing now that he's in high school?*"

Or at your doctor's office, when her assistant comes into the room to take your blood pressure, you greet him with: "*Aloha [also means hello in Hawaii, where he's from], Lawrence, when are we gonna get on a flight to Paradise?*" (That's what Hawaiians call their islands.)

Thus, you can imagine how persons in establishments that you visit regularly, will treat you when you greet them with that kind of warmth and attention instead of a rote, "Hi, how ya doing."

And in the case of Mandy, the dental office manager, if ever there is a question about whether a crown that comes apart after just one year was your fault, she'll give you any benefit of doubt. As to Lawrence, whenever you need a faxed copy of a record, he'll bust his butt to see that you get it.

Indeed, those kinds of things can be the rewards of knowing names and identities, and treating and respecting individuals as the unique, special persons they are. And as said, it all starts with their names.

Also crucial, are rendering people who regularly serve you, courtesy, kindness, and consideration. Ahead, this need is covered in detail.

But for now, even though it's a tad off-point to the power of name remembering and use, let's take one example:

Say each week during the grass-growing season, one or two persons come to mow and trim your lawn. You not only know their names and regularly greet them with friendliness and interest in them, but you also provide them bottles of water or soft drinks along with little snacks. When you employ such acts of kindness, you can bet the barn, your lawn will get the best trim and cut of the block.

Back to Remembering Names

But let's return to the no-small task of recalling names and associating them with individuals and the roles they play in our daily lives. For some of you, few though you are, doing this is a piece of cake. You come by it naturally.

The rest of us can only envy you. For us, recalling names is really tough. And we tend to succumb to defeatist thinking like, "*I'm just not good with names. I can't do it.*" But we have to tell ourselves, "*Baloney, yes, I can!*"

And the way to convince ourselves is by reviewing the above examples and accepting that mastering this skill can really pay big dividends.

The How To

OK, let's say you're convinced. How do you do it? First off, as the old saying goes, "*There's a price of a ticket to every show.*" In other words, you really have to work at it. And one of the best ways to start, is to take heed of still another proverb, "*The palest ink is better than the best of memories.*" Hence, you should write a name down immediately after you first hear it.

That means you always have to have some scratch paper and a pen handy. For women, because of their purses, this is easier. But for men, it's difficult. They will have to keep a little piece of paper along with a small pen in their pockets. And with some pants, because of styles, this is not easy.

But no matter how inconvenient it is, writing down names and identities right after first hearing them is a must. Just the mere writing of them helps etch them in our minds. It's a first step and a mighty big one.

Then, you preserve that writing. And one of the best places to do this is on a cell phone. Most have a "Notes" feature in which you can create folders, like for your doctor, dentist, et cetera. You make a folder for each establishment you regularly visit, and in it you enter names and key info that you wrote down on your first visit. And you regularly update these folders when there are changes.

Then, when you revisit that place, just before you leave your car, you get out your cell phone and refresh your memory as to persons, names, and info. And then do it a second time when you're in the waiting room.

Now all this sounds like a pain, a lot of bother, and it really is. But it's definitely worth it and will pay off. You'll be delighted with the way these people will react to you, because you remember their names as well as personal info about them. This makes them feel good about themselves and you a big hit with them.

On the Phone Too

And you can also reap benefits by recalling things about the persons

behind the names in telephone conversations. For example, the phone rings: you see on caller-id, it's your dental office, and odds are it's Mandy calling to remind you of your appointment the next day. Because you have her and her name well etched in your mind, imagine how pleased and surprised she is, when before she utters a word, you say, "Hi, Mandy. *I'll see you tomorrow at 3.*"

So, put this magical skill to use.