

The 7 Reasons You Can't Remember Names

By Bill Clennan

Did you ever wonder why you can remember faces and you can't seem to remember names? Can you even remember faces? Some people have no ability to remember faces a condition called prosopagnosia. But more than 98% of respondents to our Memory Survey have said they always remember faces and never remember names. Almost everyone has a horror story of not being able to remember names.

This can be so debilitating that people will miss events just because they know there will be people in attendance whose names they will not remember. A friend of mine whose family owns several companies with hundreds of employees stopped going to the Christmas Parties because everyone knew him and he could not remember them. Certainly this is forgivable because he only sees them once a year, but for him it was too much, year after year going to these events and having everyone come up and greet him by name and not being able to respond, or introduce his wife let alone try to remember the name of their spouse.

1. The most immediate reason you don't remember names is, you don't think you can. "If you think you can, or if you think you cannot, you are probably right." It is almost impossible to do that which you think you can't do. And when you think you can't remember names you don't even pay attention let alone put forth the effort. This is a self limiting misconception, and can only be corrected by proving to your self that you can REMEMBER NAMES.
2. Often you don't even hear the person's name. It could be that they are not speaking clearly, it could even be they have one of those powerful hand grips, and crush the fingers of everyone they meet. What is comical about that is, they use the strong pressure just so you will remember them. The problem is once you do not hear their name your brain takes the position "We already forgot that name." Now you have to work extra hard just to defeat the position your brain has already taken .
3. More often than not you are thinking of something else, like what you can do for them, how you can help them, what they can do for you. But do you say "I wasn't listening", no cause that would sound like you don't care, so instead you say/think "I can't remember names". Do this a couple of hundred times and that is what is playing in your mind at the moment you are meeting people.

4. Since you do not already know the person you are meeting they just are not important to you yet. So you do not do anything to make sure you re-member. You must value them before you hear their name to enhance your chances of remembering. "The probability of creating a memory is enhanced by the activity of value systems." (*P 98 A Universe of Consciousness G. Edelman & G. Tononi*)

5. Sometimes you are just overwhelmed, you are meeting so many people that you think, you cannot remember them all, so in democratic fashion you forget them all, just to keep everyone equal.

6. You aren't using the brain the way it developed. For the vast majority of the history of our species we did not have written words. We remembered everything by rhythm, and chants, and dance. Now almost everything we learn is through the written word. We allow our keen ability to learn by listening to atrophy, social conditioning plays a role "Never believe anything you hear".

7. Probably the worst reason of all is, you think you can fool people so you don't have to remember their name. On one internet blog the statement goes something like this, "When you don't remember someone's name just ask "How do you spell your name again? And if you forget it again just use the same technique and they will never notice." This is like adding insult to injury. What can be a rather small injury, unless of course this is one of your best customers, friends, or worse, is turned into an insult. Read (You are not smart enough to know or notice that in fact I forgot your name AGAIN).

The good news is, your brain is totally plastic, it is not hard ware it is squishy ware, and your neurological resources are not rigid they are capable of substantial improvement. Through practice you can remember almost everyone you meet.

Learn more about your memory at www.EvaluateYourMemory.com

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This article was written by Bill Clennan, who has been helping people improve their memory performance by speaking at more than 10,000 meetings since 1969. For your next meeting have a memorable program go to www.BillClennan.com