

“Remember that a person's name is to that person the sweetest and most important sound in any language.”

~Dale Carnegie

Note: This is an excerpt from Ria's book “Straight Talk: The Power of Effective Communication” available at RiaStory.com and also on Amazon.com

Chapter 7: Winning the Name Game: 8 Tips to Remembering Names!

I meet a lot of people. I meet someone new every day, and sometimes, many people in a single day. I've learned a secret. The greatest way to quickly communicate to someone you care about them is to ask for and remember their name.

I know – some of you will immediately think, *“I'm not very good with names.”*

You won't be good at remembering someone's name until you try. You certainly won't be good at remembering someone's name if you tell yourself you can't, and therefore don't make any effort to do so. Notice you don't have any trouble remembering the names of people you meet who are important, like your new boss, or someone you are excited to meet, like a local celebrity.

Remembering names, especially when you meet a lot of people, is a challenge for everyone.

Here are eight tips that help me remember names:

- 1 **When you meet someone, immediately repeat their name.** If someone at the Chamber Networking event introduces themselves as “Sue,” then respond with *“It’s very nice to meet you Sue.”*
- 2 **Associate the name to someone else you know.** It’s strange how the brain works, but it will help you remember their name if, as soon as you meet them, think of someone else who you know with that name. The brain will cognitively recognize something that is familiar, and it will make it easier to remember their name the next time you see them. Think to yourself, *“Tiffani, like my cousin Tiffani.”*
- 3 **Think of something you can associate with them and their name.** For example, if you meet someone called Sally, think of *“Sally, like Sally who sold seashells by the seashore.”* It seems silly, but it will connect the dots allowing you to remember her name by saying it in a way that causes it to stick.
- 4 **Ask how they spell it.** There is almost always more than one way to spell a name. When you hear it spelled out, stop and visualize how it looks in your mind. This really helps, especially if it’s a name that is not common. I often repeat it back to them. For example, when I meet someone named “Cathy,” I ask if it’s spelled with a “C” or a “K.” She may reply, *“Cathy with a C,”* and I repeat it back, *“Nice to meet you Cathy with a C!”* Note – if the person’s name is very simple, like “Dan,” this is probably not a great tool to use.
- 5 **Write it down.** It’s not always possible, but in some settings this can be very helpful. For example, if I’m getting ready to teach a class and I meet someone new, I might jot their name down on my notes for quick reference when I teach the class again next week. By then, an entire week will have passed, and I will remember the person’s face, but I may not remember their name. I will remember that I wrote it down and can quickly remind myself to check if needed.
- 6 **Ask them to tell you something unique about themselves.** It’s a great icebreaker question anyway. *“It’s great to meet you Melissa.”*

Tell me something unique about yourself.” If the person isn’t sure how to answer, you can follow up with a question like, *“Tell me something you are passionate about.”* Or ask, *“What’s the craziest thing you’ve ever done?”*

- 7 **Associate them with someone famous.** Obviously not everyone will have a name like someone who was famous. But, when it happens, it makes it easy to remember. *“It’s nice to meet you Teresa. Were you named after the famous Mother Teresa?”*
- 8 **Ask how they got their name.** Maybe they don’t have a name like someone famous, but asking where their name originated is a good way to connect with them. *“It’s a pleasure to meet you Miranda. What caused your parents to choose that name for you? Is it a family name?”*

Make every effort to remember a person’s name when you meet them. If you don’t remember, it’s best to acknowledge it, apologize, and ask again. But, if you do this, you absolutely **MUST** remember it from then on. Don’t make them tell you a third time!

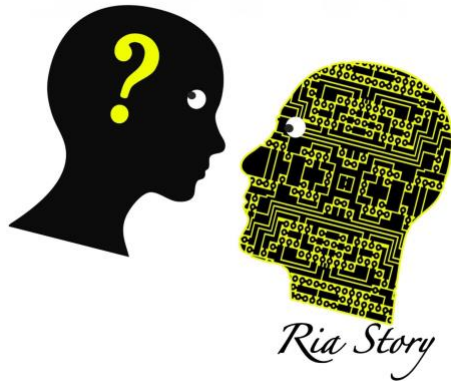
One more thing about names – get into the habit of introducing yourself to someone so that your name is easy to remember. Say it so it sticks!

I think the best example I know of is how my husband Mack introduces himself. He says, *“My name is Mack, like the truck, but smaller.”* It never fails – people remember his name because he gives them a visual image and an emotional connection to tie it to. It may take you a little time to come up with something “sticky” about your name, but it’s well worth it.

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About the author:

Author and TEDx speaker Ria Story is a certified leadership speaker and trainer and has been selected three times to speak on stage at International John Maxwell Leadership events. She has shared the stage with Les Brown and has 20 years of experience in leadership and management.

Like many, Ria faced adversity in life. Raised on an isolated farm in Alabama, she was sexually abused by her father from age 12 – 19. Desperate to escape, she left home at 19 without a job, a car, or even a high school diploma. Ria learned to be resilient, and not just survive, but thrive. Ria works with women who want to increase their influence, develop their leadership, and maximize their results.