

REMEMBER PEOPLE YOU MEET! VERBAL STRATEGIES



MEMORY BUILDER 1 | *Remember People! Naming Names*

This Memory Builder reviews the application of the Repetition Strategy and introduces the Practice Strategy for enhancing name learning, with an associated “Pair Up” activity that bolsters use of the Practice Strategy.



LEARN THE SCIENCE

Let’s get started on today’s first Memory Builder, “Naming Names.” So who in this room is guilty of name-dropping? And by that I don’t mean slipping in the names of famous people you happen to know in conversation. I’m talking about forgetting names. In some ways it’s surprising that remembering the names of other people can be such a challenge. In general, we learn names the same way that we learn other information. If we pay attention when we first hear the name and then practice it — rehearse it — it’s likely to stick with us.

So why do so many of us find remembering names to be such a particular challenge? There are a few reasons for this “name-dropping” phenomenon:

- **We’re Distracted.** We often get a name in an environment when it might be particularly challenging to focus our attention effectively such as in a meeting or at a party.
- **Our Lifestyle Takes Issue.** Names, like anything else we need to retain, can be harder to learn when we are sleep deprived, have trouble hearing, or anxious.
- **We Only Get One Chance.** Usually we hear someone’s name just once. And quickly! Just think about how long it takes to say your name. Not even a full second, right? It’s easy to miss a name that first time, and once we miss it, we’ve missed our chance to learn it. As Dr. Green, founder of the TBH programs, often jokes, “it’s a getting problem, not a forgetting problem.”
- **We Don’t Strategize.** Remembering names is hard. You can think of them almost like a “pop quiz” for your memory. You need to remember it when you might not expect to! Rarely do folks use memory strategies to help bolster their recall of names. Yet there is no better situation to apply such strategies, as using a memory strategy for “remembering the people you meet” can make a tremendous difference in your ability to do just that.

So how can we be more effective at remembering names? Just by applying that good old A.M. Principle! We can boost our chances a lot just by paying better attention when we learn a name and leading a memory healthy lifestyle that supports better focus. Next we can use a memory strategy to give that name more meaning and make it easier to remember. As we’ve seen in this program, these memory strategies can be simple to use yet have a powerful, lasting impact on our ability to retain information. All you need to do is figure out which one works best for you, and then make it a habit to use it whenever you need to learn a name.

So what memory strategies work best for names? Let’s begin with one you know and one that is new – the Repetition and Practice Strategies.

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Repetition Strategy. The Repetition Strategy is by now familiar to us. With names, you use it by simply repeating the person's name until you've learned it. This strategy requires attention, and uses rehearsal to build retention of the information. It's easy and straightforward to use, which makes it one of the most accessible strategies in this program. In fact, it is sometimes referred to as the "every person strategy." One reason many people like this strategy is because you can apply it while you continue to carry on the conversation, so it has a lower "distraction" potential. Get into the habit of weaving the person's name into the conversation (not too often as you don't want to seem strange!) or repeating it to yourself silently over that time. If you're on the phone with someone whose name you've just heard, jot it down. You can repeat it to yourself in your head during the call.

The Practice Strategy. The Practice Strategy is similar to the Repetition method, but uses rehearsal in a more structured way. Here, you repeat the name, but are given four specific ways to do so:

1. **Spell the name.** Spell it to yourself or out loud. If you are unsure of the spelling, or it is an unusual name, you can ask the person how their name is spelt as a way of weaving this step into the conversation.
2. **Make a comment about it.** Compliment a pretty name, remark about an interesting name, or make a reference to someone else you know with that same name (for example, if you meet Rosemary, you might quip about Rosemary being your favorite herb).
3. **Use the name at the beginning of the conversation.** Include the name at least once at the start of your discussion or chat.
4. **Use the name at the end of the conversation.** Be sure to circle back to the person's name as you wrap up your time together as one last chance to rehearse that information.

Take all of these steps will force you to pay closer attention to the name and also allow you to rehearse it naturally throughout the conversation.



NOW DO IT: PRACTICE TIME (A "Pair Up" Exercise)

Now that we've learned these simple new strategies, let's try one together. In a minute we will break into pairs and perfect our practice of the Practice Strategy. We will take a few minutes to work together and use the four steps of that method to learn each other's middle names.

You can use the handout for today's class as a reminder of the 4 steps of this strategy. Make sure you leave enough time for each member of your pair to have a turn. Ready? Let's begin.

Break your class into pairs. Allow them a few minutes to use the Practice Strategy to learn each other's middle names.

OK! Who wants to introduce their class partner using their middle name? Go ahead!

Go around the room and have each person in each pair to introduce his or her partner by middle name and talk a bit about how it felt to use this strategy.

Great job, everyone.