

Lecture 4 Notes – Introductions, Handshakes, Remembering Names (Baldrige, Bixler)

The only person who can control who we meet are ourselves! Think about your “meetability.” Do you have a warm smile? Do you look alert and pleasant? Do you exude openness and confidence? Think about those people who seem to be able to talk to anyone, anywhere. What are their characteristics and why do people like them? When you are nice to a person, you will not be forgotten.

Introductions are a pleasure! You should always introduce yourself to others; step forward first, extend your hand first. If someone is advancing towards you, that makes you a passive, forgettable person. Like we discussed in the first lecture, attitudes are important, so only say positive remarks.

Remembering names is difficult for many of us; however, the ability to remember someone’s name makes that person feel special. Remembering a detail (hometown, company, hobbies, etc.) will make him/her feel even more special. When you make someone feel special, he/she will like you more.

When you meet someone, ALWAYS repeat his/her name to help ingrain it into your memory. You can also think about symbols pertaining to their name. With difficult names, practice the pronunciation – this also makes them feel special because you are making an extra effort to be correct. With an easy name, remember something special about them to differentiate from the others that you already know.

Introducing others has an important, but simple, protocol: always present the lesser important person to the higher ranking person. A simple way of remembering this rule is to say the important person’s name first. For example, “George, this is my good friend Phil Moon. Phil, this is Professor George Cluff, my strategic planning professor.” Always use their first and last names, titles, and extra information to ease them into conversation. You introduce young to old persons, your company to another company’s employees, junior executive to senior, fellow executive to client, unofficial to official persons, and a fellow American to a peer in another country.

What if you forget someone’s name? If you are meeting them again, confess that you forgot and add something mildly amusing. People understand because we all forget names. Or, you can reintroduce yourself (they might have forgotten your name too!), “I’m Gene Chung, we met at the I-House the other day.” The other person will instinctively re-introduce themselves. If you are with a friend and encounter someone whose name you have forgotten, you can say, “Why don’t you two introduce yourselves?” Or, you can say, “This is my good friend Amy.” At that point, the other person should introduce themselves, and voila, now you know his/her name!

What if you naturally have cold, clammy hands? You can place your right hand in your pocket, or sit on it to warm up. Always hold your drinks in your left hand, which should be done regardless because your shaking hand is left free. You can also quickly wipe your hands on your pants before you shake

When attending a social function, you should shake hands first with the host and then with senior persons. However, if everyone is grouped together, it does not matter who you shake hands with first. Before you leave, shake hands with the host, if possible.

With regards to interviews and company visits, if you are meeting someone in their office, wait momentarily for her to extend her hand because she is the host; however, extend your hand if she does not do so quickly

Lastly, never sandwich a person’s hand!