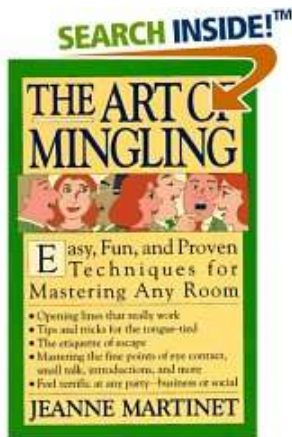


## Introductions: A Recurring Nightmare



Need some tips on how to escape the embarrassing moment of having to introduce someone and completely forgetting their name? We all know it is absolute agony when this happens! Well, instead of turning red, turning tail and running away as fast as you can, try out one of the following four plays:

- 1. Force them to introduce themselves.** This is the smoothest and most effective way to handle your memory lapse. When it is done well, no one will suspect you. If you have forgotten one person's name in the group, turn to that person first and smile. Then turn invitingly to a person whose name you do remember and say, "This is Linden Bond," turning back casually toward the forgotten person. The person whose name you haven't mentioned yet will automatically (it's a reflex) say, "Nice to meet you, Linden, I'm Sylvia Cooper," and usually offer a hand to shake. If you are trying to introduce two people and you can't remember *either* of their names, your problem is more serious. Still you can usually get away with simply saying, "Have you two met each other?" If you smile confidently and wait, the two will introduce themselves (though those few seconds while you're waiting can seem like a lifetime). At the very worst, it will appear as if your introduction skills are a bit sloppy, but no one will be able to tell you've forgotten their names.
- 2. Confess, then dwell on it.** Here's another example of turning a faux pas to your advantage. What you do is admit you've forgotten the name(s), apologizing sincerely. After the introductions are over, let the mishap lead you into a discussion of why it is harder for some people to remember names than others (the left brain/right brain theory, the male/female theory, etc.). Using your own mingling error as subject matter shows that you are comfortable with your mistake; you don't feel that guilty about it. And since people tend to believe whatever you project, no one will hold a grudge.
- 3. Ask them how they pronounce their name.** Okay, so this is a bit riskier. If the person answers "John," you're a goner!
- 4. Introduce them using something besides their name.** Names and labels are highly overrated in our society anyway. Why not say instead, "Jody, I want you to meet a woman after your own heart!" Then you just present the other person, who will offer her name or not. You can also cover up any uneasiness you have about your forgetting names by using flattery: "I want you to meet the most fascinating person at the party!" or "You two should really meet - seeing as how you're both so gorgeous!" If you lay it on thick, it puts up a smoke screen and nobody will notice you've forgotten their names. Of if they do, they won't care anymore.