

Proper Names and the Lifestyle Inventory

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Names provide a sense of identity, a sense of continuity, and also a sense of belonging for people. Formerly, the so-called illegitimate child was considered handicapped because he would be born "without a name." The amnesic patient reflected his loss of identity in his inability to remember his name. Childless couples often lamented the fact that there would be no one to carry on the family name. Naming a child requires serious thought for most parents, and books have been written to assist parents in this endeavor. Names communicate, and, if we can comprehend the communication, we can often discover clues which will assist us in formulating the lifestyle. Some of the clues which we derive from names appear below. For additional study the reader is referred to Rom (1946, 1947, 1950), Ansbacher (1947), Strunk (1958), Rossi (1965) and Seagull (1967).

First Names

Generalizations about first names can not always be made simply. However, when we observe certain types of names, it is profitable to conduct inquiry about the meaning or the style of the name.

1. *Jr., III.* Such names often reflect socioeconomic status. In other instances they reflect family tradition. Many parents purchase immortality through naming their children after themselves. Many children bearing these find the name a burden in that they feel that they must live up to some standard. Some find the nickname "Junior" demeaning and infantilizing, and others chafe under what they apprehend as having no separate identity.

2. *Naming a child after a saint (e.g., Bernadette, Francis Xavier, Muhammed Ali).* Children born in France must by law carry a saint's name and such a name may reflect no more than adherence to the law. In many Catholic families this form of naming may represent wishes or beliefs similar to those involved in naming a child after a great person. In some cases the child receives the name of the saint on whose Saint's day he was born. In other instances the child may receive the name of a saint whose protection is invoked.

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3. *Naming a child after a great person (e.g., George Washington Carver, Grover Cleveland Alexander, Judge Abraham Lincoln Marovitz).* Often these names are designed to honor or memorialize an ideal of the parents. When a great figure dies, for example, many parents name their children for him. Aside from the parents' ideal there is often the implicit wish or superstitious belief that the child will grow up to be like the ideal. The child may experience this as a demand.

4. *Names which are "named after."* The choice of name for a child is often based on the wish or obligation to honor or memorialize another, usually a relative, who bears the name. This sometimes results in conflict between the parents who either disagree on who should be so honored or, agreeing on honoring one person from each parent's side of the family, cannot agree on which name should take precedence. Such incidents, sometimes leading to serious conflict, may be elicited when one questions for "Nature of Parents Relationship" on page 4 of the *Lifestyle Inventory* (Mosak & Shulman, 1972). Occasionally relatives feel snubbed or aggrieved because they or someone from their side of the family has not been so memorialized.

"Naming after" involves other issues which must be understood. In some families, when a child dies in childhood, a subsequently born child may be given the same name. This may result in confusion when collecting lifestyle information if one has not inquired for dead siblings in the early stages of data collection.

In some ethnic groups there is the superstitious belief that certain names for some mysterious reason do not "hold." Several children in the extended family have been given this name and they all have died in childhood. It is considered courting disaster to give a child this name.

In Ashkenazic (Central European) Jewish families children are not named after living persons. These Jews do not name children "Junior," although among Reform Jews, the latter practice does exist. Sephardic (Mediterranean Jews) do name children after living persons, even parents. Among Ashkenazic Jews, a son named after his father would be presumed to have been born after the death of his father.

In addition to honoring or memorializing another person, the person so honored or memorialized may represent an ideal or certain standards which we have discussed earlier.

In Slavic families, but not usually among Slavic-American families, a person's name also contains the name of a parent. This is also true of formal Hebrew names.

5. *Names usually associated with the opposite sex (e.g., Davida, Theodora).* Many of the more common names in the genre such as Georg-

ette, Roberta, Victoria, and Louisa have become conventional names and possess no special significance. Other names such as Davida and Theodora often reflect a parent's wish for a boy. Again these names may be seen by the child as a demand, and girls with such names get the message. Some choose to become tomboys; others feel like disappointments to their parents. It is less common in a masculine-oriented society for boys to be given girls' names, but it does occur and the practice has recently been celebrated in a song about "A Boy Named Sue."

6. *Ambiguous names.* Many names may be used for both boys and girls. There are, for example, Gene Tunney and Gene Tierney. The lifestyle interpreter must also ascertain the sex of those who carry such appellations as Lee, Leslie, Sydney, and Dana as well as Marian-Marion, Frances-Francis, Loren-Lauren, and Billy-Billie. In families of English origin the names Shirley (e.g., Shirley Povich) and Evelyn (e.g., Evelyn Waugh, Admiral Richard Evelyn Byrd) are used for males and may create confusion for the lifestyle interpreter.

7. *Biblical names.* Biblical names are currently making a small comeback. In some families such names are part of the family tradition. Biblical names are also common among blacks, fundamentalist Christians, religious Jews, and Zionists.

8. *Certain Jewish or Hebrew names (e.g., Alter, Chaim, Chava, Raphael).* Jewish children who bear these names have often had illnesses which might have proven fatal. Some parents give such children additional names for two purposes. The first represents a prayerful plea, as the name Raphael which in Hebrew means "Heal, O Lord!" The other represents a practice from Jewish folklore and superstition. When the Angel of Death comes to take away the sick child, he will be unable to locate him because he will be deceived by the new name the child now bears. These names are carefully chosen. Chaim and Chava mean "life" in Hebrew and Alter comes from the Yiddish and means "old one."

9. *Names denoting geographical origin (e.g., Tex Ritter, Minnesota Fats).* Careful inquiry is recommended in such situations since these names may be adopted and have nothing to do with geographical origin.

10. *Ethnic names.* Names like Jacques, Abdul, Elena, and Terence may point to the country of origin of the bearer or the bearer's parents. In addition, they may reflect ethnic pride. When names like these occur in the lifestyle investigation, they point toward further investigation when one seeks "Other Family Information" on page 5 of the *Lifestyle Inventory* (Mosak & Shulman, 1972).

11. *Dropping the first name and using the middle name.* Woodrow Wilson provides such an example since he was named Thomas Woodrow

Wilson. George Bernard Shaw preferred to refer to himself as Bernard Shaw. Our first inference is usually that the person does not like his first name. They may not like the sound of it. For some boys their first names may have a sissy sound. In some families it is the name of a parent, and the children reject the name, the parent or both.

12. *The use of the first initial and middle name (e.g., J. Edgar Hoover, J. Arthur Rank.)* Much of what appears in #11 above may apply here. Some people use this form because they view it as “different” or sophisticated or sometimes for snob appeal.

13. *Initials only (e.g., T.S. Eliot, O.J. Simpson, P.T. Barnum).* One will not customarily find such names among siblings during childhood. However, the father (the mother only rarely) may be referred to by initials. As with the dropping of first names the person may dislike both of his given names and substitute initials. Some business executives are referred to by their initials, often as a symbol of their importance. Occasionally names are mispronounced so frequently that the person substitutes initials for them.

14. *Three names (e.g., John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Harriet Beecher Stowe).* Four varieties come to mind. First, the use of three names to permit use of the maternal family name as a middle name. Second, people named after great men (e.g., Martin Luther King), where to eliminate the middle name is to negate the intended commemoration. Third, some men use such names because they have an important ring. Fourth, some Southern women, Latin women, and less often others, are given compound names, both of which are used as a first name rather than a first and second. Examples of this are Mary Ann Mobley, Anna Maria Alberghetti. Frenchmen also carry names like Jean-Paul Belmondo.

Parents who are momentarily angry with their children will at those times refer to the child by his full name. “John Paul Jones, stop that this minute!”

15. *Names beginning with the same letter.* J is perhaps the most common. Six siblings may be named Joyce, Jim, John, Jerry, Judy, and Jane. Idiosyncratic reasoning underlies such reasoning and should be investigated.

16. *“Cute names.”* Names like Merry Christmas and others which appear sporadically in newspaper feature articles. While they may be rationalized as an effort to endow the child with a unique name, they are always attention-getters and often bad jokes. The Texas philanthropist after whom the Hogg Foundation, a foundation dedicated to psychological research, is named, named one of his daughters Ima. Children who receive “cute” names not only receive attention in the form of “Where did you get a name like that?” but they also become the butts of jokes and teasing. e.g.,

a. Her name was Virginia. They called her Virgin for short but not for long!

- b. "I named my son Marmaduke."
 - "Why did you name him Marmaduke?"
 - "Because I wanted him to be a fighter."
 - "What's Marmaduke got to do with being a fighter?"
 - "With a name like that he'll have to become a fighter?"

17. *Names of adoration.* Children are given names or acquire nicknames like Angel, Princess, Sugar, and Dolly. These names are usually girl's names. Excessive spoiling and insufficient parental expectation accompany these usages. With males such nicknames are adopted by men rather than boys and reflect status, general or masculine, rather than adorableness, e.g., Nat "King" Cole, John "Duke" Wayne, Count Basie, and "Colonel."

18. *Names of virtues.* Similar to names of adoration are such names as Joy, Chastity, Nechama (consolation in Hebrew), Hope, and Faith. Such names are little used currently. Many names in common usage do have reference to virtues. Parents may consult lists of names (Browder, 1976; Nurnberg & Rosenblum, 1951; Smith, 1970) to select names possessing such virtuous references.

19. *Twins' names.* One still hears the old jokes about the people who named their three sets of twins Pete and Repeat, Kate and Duplicate, and Max and Climax. Twins named with "matching" names, e.g., Joyce and Judy, often are so named by parents who in other forms also treat the twins as a unit, dressing them alike and glorying in strangers' inability to tell them apart. Parents wishing to treat and have their twins treated as individuals give them names which bear no resemblance to each other.

20. *Mispronounced names (e.g., Totie Fields).* In some families a younger sibling, especially one learning to talk, will mispronounce the name of an older sibling, and this name will stick. Thus, Marilyn may forever carry the name Mal and Libby may always be acknowledged, at least in the family circle, as Nibby.

21. *Fancy spellings (e.g., Shirlee, Edythe).* These names more often are given to or adopted by females. The goal of being different constitutes one possibility. Another goal may be to call attention to oneself. One may constantly have to correct others who are misspelling one's name. A third possibility lies with the assumption of vanity in that the name is an affectation.

22. *Unique names.* These names are one of a kind and are in many instances designed to be special. In some instances, however, they may be names which are repeated within a family, e.g., Adlai E. Stevenson. Other names are unique constructions and reflect "I just like the sound of it." Still others represent compromises like "My father wanted to name me Samantha, and my mother favored Rita, so they named me Samita." People's responses

to singular names and their vulnerability to neuroticism are discussed by Ellis & Beechley (1954), Houston & Sumner (1948), and Wells & Savage (1948).

23. *Diminutives*. Names in almost every language have their diminutives and some names or nicknames are diminutives. In the former group we have names such as Tommy, Richy, Dicky, Robby, Katie, Dottie, Kathy, and Rosie while the latter contains such names as Buddy, PeeWee, Tiny, Junior and Doll, Baby, Mamele (Yiddish), Chiquita (Spanish). Many of the first group have been absorbed into language as nondiminutives, especially in the entertainment world (Sammy Davis, Lenny Bruce, Minnie Pearl) and sports (Richie Ashburn, Bobby Hull, and Billie Jean King). While there seem to be differences in meaning between such names as Richard and Dicky (e.g., As President of the United States, “an imperial Presidency,” he was Richard M. Nixon; to his detractors he was “tricky Dicky”), the meanings are not always transparent. For males, there appears to be a desire to be “one of the boys,” informal, a commoner. Thus, in a “people’s Presidency” we have Jimmy Carter rather than James Earl Carter.

In the second category the diminutive appears to be a method for infantilization. We see this in the suffix “boy” attached to certain names (e.g., “Oh Danny Boy” and “John Boy” of the Waltons on TV). The usage appears to have originated in the U.S. South, and when used toward blacks is now considered pejorative. Occasionally a name like Tiny is used paradoxically for the largest player on the football team.

24. *Nicknames* (Shankle, 1955). Nicknames for some people are more important than their given names. Nicknames may reflect physical characteristics (e.g., Red Skelton, Fats Domino, PeeWee Reese and Blondie) and physical deficiency or handicap (e.g., Banjo-eyes, Gimp, Four-eyes, and Scarface Al Capone). These nicknames occur more often among boys than girls. Some nicknames are borne with pride while others, especially those related to handicap, may make their bearers the object of derision and torment. These nicknames are often given on page 1 and more frequently in the section headed “Physical Development” on page 3 of the *Lifestyle Inventory*.

Some nicknames (e.g., Stash, Moish, Paddy, Trini) reflect ethnicity but also reveal whether the family is a first-, second-, or third-generation family. Such nicknames tend to disappear as the family becomes assimilated in American culture.

As we have already observed, some nicknames are names of adoration. Some nicknames are associated with last names. Thus, the surname “Rhodes” often invites the nickname “Dusty.”

Parents and grandparents carry a variety of titles and nicknames. At the simplest level there are Pop, Papa, Mom, Mama, Dad, Daddy, Grandpa,

Grandma, Gramps, Gram. Generally these provide little assessment information. The major exception is Daddy which may be used by the type we call "the baby" (Mosak) and by people raised in the South. Papa and Mama tend to be used more within ethnic families while Dad is preferred by the American-born. At a more complex level, many names convey the status and authority positions of parents, e.g., Chief, Doc, Big Mac, Guv, and Himself. Teenagers who wish to deride their fathers allude to them as Clyde. An English lady, small in stature, was Mini-Mum to her children. Such information should emerge on pages 4 and 5 of the *Lifestyle Inventory*.

Nicknames may be conventional (e.g., Lenny, Jerry, Babs, Dotty) or may refer to almost any characteristic—wealth (e.g., Diamond Jim), masculinity (e.g., Mac, Big John, Tank, Stan the Man Musial), positive traits (e.g., Cutie, Lucky Luciano, Smiley) negative traits (e.g., Cry Baby, Stinky, Bugsy Siegel, Leo the Lip Durocher). They may be geographic (e.g., Dutch Schultz, Irish) or regional (e.g., Texas Guinan, Tennessee Ernie); animal names (e.g., Goose Tatum, Meadowlark Lemon, Bear Bryant, Kitty Carlyle, and Ladybird Johnson). Nicknames may reveal the demands others place on the bearers and the treatment afforded them by others.

Last Names

While first names either may be given or chosen, surnames (Dellquest, 1938; Pine, 1967) are most often familiarly transmitted and therefore less significant in lifestyle assessment. Under certain circumstances people exercise the opportunity to select even their last names, and this choice may reveal lifestyle data. Rom (1946) nevertheless points out that the reaction of people to their names may reflect lifestyle goals.

1. *Children's names which differ from their parents.* At the simplest level this difference may merely reveal that one or the other has changed his name for reasons to be considered below. In some families it invites us to discuss a broken home. In second marriages where the child has not been adopted, the child may bear his natural father's surname rather than his stepfather's. Children of feminist mothers who retain their maiden names have different names than their mothers, as do children whose mothers retain (or choose) their names for professional purposes. Exploration may provide insight into parental values, child training, role expectation and training, early family upheaval, and family climate. Such children may experience confusion or be subject to constant questioning by "outsiders."

2. *Ethnic (and indirectly religious) and geographical names.* Names like Schmidt, L'Enfant, Castellano, Roncali, Ben Gurion, Davidowicz, and U Nu gives us a starting point for investigation of ethnicity, religious faith, religious "anomalies" (e.g., a Mexican Quaker, a Peruvian Mormon), religious training, ethnic pride (e.g., the Hebraicization of names in Israel, and the Gaelicization of names in Ireland), and religious pride (e.g., the Muslimization of names by

Black Muslims). When in 1803 central Europeans were required by edict to adopt surnames, many adopted the names of the localities in which they lived, e.g., Bialystoker, Warshawsky, Berlin, Pariser. This did not represent a new practice. For example, almost three centuries previously the Spanish painter was called El Greco. This may provide a point of entry for discussing some of the above variables.

3. *Names associated with family pride.* The importance of preserving the family name can be observed in many practices. Some people deplore that they have no male heir and that the family name will die out. Genealogical curiosity and research and heraldry convey the same emphasis. Banding into clans as for example in Scotland, also reflects this importance. Naming practices based on family pride assume several forms. Some families perpetuate the family name by giving their offspring who do not have the family name this name as a middle name, e.g., Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Some women carry the family name as a middle name once they are married, e.g., Alice Roosevelt Longworth. In certain Southern families, the spelling of the name will constitute a source of pride. A name without an "s" is the "master's name" while the same name with an "s" is a "slave name." Thus Tower is a "master's name" and Towers is a "slave name." In a few instances, one may learn about both "pride and prejudice." Names with a "von," "de," "di," and "de la" lend themselves to family pride coveters. A similar aristocratic form is the Spanish "y." Thus, Goya's full name was Francisco Jose de Goya y Lucientes.

4. *Anglicized names.* Some people change names because they cannot be pronounced easily or spelled correctly by others. To ameliorate the situation for others or to have their names spelled or pronounced correctly "for once," the name is shortened or sounds which do not occur in English are eliminated. In this way Ouellete may become Willet. In some instances Anglicization reflects a desire to indicate assimilation in the American melting pot or a desire to conceal origins. We find the latter in the story of the man who changed his name from Czeski to Kelly and on the following day petitioned the court for permission to change his name to Smith. When the perplexed judge inquired, the petitioner replied, "Right now, if they ask me what was my name before it was Kelly, I'll have to reply 'Czeski,' but if you grant my petition, when they ask, I'll be able to say 'Kelly.'"

5. *Compound names.* Compound names such as Adolfo Lopez Mateos are common among Latins and reveal data about ethnicity and family lineage. The first surname is that of the father and the second that of the mother. In this manner both family names are perpetuated. In this compound form, should the name become Americanized, the maternal name is dropped.

Another circumstance in which both names are used is when adopted by certain feminists. Here the maiden name, while used as a surname, perhaps even hyphenated, resembles the middle name usage of a family name

described above, and the appropriate questions to distinguish between the two usages should be asked.

6. "Mixed marriages." Asking for parents' names on page 4 of the *Lifestyle Inventory* may reveal that a Cohen married a Kelly. If so, we inquire about the effects of such a marriage. Were the parents interested in religion? Did they get along? How did their own families of origin react to the marriage? How were the children raised? Was there religious confusion? These and a host of other questions may be followed up.

Our reference to "mixed marriages" is not necessarily restricted to what are literally "mixed marriages." The marriage of a Daugherty to a Szymanski, although both are Catholic, invites similar inquiry.

7. *The Jewish "priests."* Those Jews who trace their lineage to Moses' brother Aaron, the first high priest of the Israelites are members of a religious caste who to this day perform certain priestly functions. Since the Hebrew word for priest is Cohen, those with surnames of Cohen, Kahn, Kahan, Kagan and Kogan (the Russian alphabet contains no letter "H," and a "g" is substituted for it) and Katz are almost always priests. In stereotype they are alleged to be prideful and to have bad tempers. Those who choose to adhere to the stereotype make this a matter of pride or else use their priesthood as an excuse to exercise these traits and avoid individual responsibility. It comes with the territory.

5. *One name* (e.g., Liberace, Pele). These are encountered rarely and are usually reserved for a few people who have their mark in the worlds of entertainment and sport. Occasionally such people are identified by a single given name, e.g., Groucho, Hildegard, Elvis, the Babe.

Like and Dislike of Names

As Rom (1946) writes, there is no magical connection between name and personality characteristics. To the extent that names symbolize identity, invite certain social reactions; and reflect the standards and expectations of others, people find their names to be assets or liabilities. "A good name," we learn from Ecclesiastes, "is better than fine oil." Clinically, we observe that more clients comment on names they dislike than on names they like. Likes are generally mentioned within the context of family and ethnic pride. People dislike their names for a variety of reasons. Among these are (a) dislike of the sound; (b) dislike of the religious or ethnic identification; (c) difficulties with respect to length, spelling, and pronunciation; (d) the masculine or feminine ring of the name; (e) the uniqueness of the name; (f) the name is *passé*; (g) the dislike of the person for whom they have been named; (h) loss of identity, as for example with some Juniors and twins; and (i) rejection of a parent or the family. The dislike of some names is not based on the name itself but on its alphabetic position. There are advantages as well as disadvantages to having a name at the beginning, the middle, and the end of the alphabet.

Change of name does not necessarily imply dislike of name (Basch, 1977). Many other reasons for changing names must be considered. Names may be changed for business reasons. Israelis often Hebraicize their names. People attempting to avoid creditors or the police may adopt new names. Amnesics lose their names with their identities. Multiple personalities endow each "personality" with a different name. Aliases and *noms de plume* are also generally adopted for reasons other than dislike.

Summary

The significance of names for understanding the lifestyle does not reside in a one-to-one correlation between names and lifestyle. Nor is their significance for the investigation of the lifestyle usually contingent on the etymological derivation of these names. Attention to the person's name may not provide answers but rather point to questions which should be asked of the client in order to construct a more accurate "portrait" of the client. A number of forms of proper names, both first and last, have been discussed to illustrate the types of information which can be derived and the questions which can be asked.

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