

What To Do When Someone Mispronounces Your Name

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What to when someone pronounces your name wrong?

It depends.

But what you do *matters*.

It can make the difference between being a confident, respected individual... Or someone whom people pay little attention to.

This article will teach you how to correct people pronouncing your name wrong in a powerful, confident way.

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Power Dynamics of Mispronouncing Names

Some people mean well and mispronouncing your name wrong is simply a mistake.

But some people do not care about your name because they believe you are “inferior”.

Some people might even mispronounce your name on purpose, just to show they can slight you because they are more powerful -also read [office power moves](#)-.

How to recognize people who are simply making a mistake from those who are doing it as a power move?

Well, one cue is the environment.

People mispronouncing your name after you meet them the first time at a bar is not the same as at a business meeting.

And people who are otherwise friendly is not the same as [people who are being socially aggressive](#).

This gives us four different scenarios:

- Intention of the interlocutor (Warm VS Vicious)
- The environment (Carefree VS Official)

Letâ€s see what these mean.

Carefree Environment

Carefree environments are informal places to let oneâ€s hair down, socialize and have a good time. No-follow brief encounters also fall under this category.

Examples are house parties, bars, check-in counters, cafes where they call your name.

Warm People: Let The Mistake Slip

When your interlocutor mispronounces your name without malice and you're in a carefree environment, it's best to let it slip or, at most, correct it warmly.

If they still get it wrong the same time, your name is either too complex or they just can't do it. Let it go, it's not that important, really.

Focus on adding value

At bars and parties, until proven otherwise, conversations are fleeting and for a good time's sake.

Getting stuck up on correct pronunciation so early makes you sound very self-centered and with an [entitlement mentality](#).

Your focus indeed should be on adding value, getting to know them, rewarding, and connecting.

Basically, don't demand correct name pronunciation, but focus on becoming the kind of person that people want to get the name pronounced right.

And here's a nice bonus on not correcting: [people like people whose name is easy to pronounce](#) (and [Cialdini said the same](#)).

Bottom line:

In a friendly environment and when you have just met someone, don't pretend perfect pronunciation from people you've just met

Vicious People: Hit Back

Few times you will meet people pronouncing your name wrong on purpose.

This is a "softer" version of an [Alpha Male Handshake](#) where your interlocutor is trying to further his social standing by one-upping you.

It's a similar game of pretending to remember your name wrong.

Here's an example from The Aviator with the "cigarette girl":

When people purposefully shun your correct name pronunciation, you must react.

If you don't, you are confirming that yes, they can slight you, that they dominate you, and that you are the subordinate.

Here's what you can do:

- **Do the same with their name**

Human beings have a tendency to kiss up to the bullies.

Resist that all costs!

And as soon as they pronounce your name wrong, do the same with their name.

Just make sure you do it neutrally rather than with a child-like butt-hurt attitude.

- **Ignore and cut them out**

Tell them "nice to meet you" in a very standoffish way. If it's a group, talk to someone else.

If it's just the two of you, try this: ask them a question, act bored as they reply, then leave without replying -or if you really wanna exaggerate, leave while they're speaking-.

Bottom Line:

if someone pronounces your name wrong on purpose, it's a power move and you should hit back.

Official environment

Official environments are business meetings, workplace interactions, formal introductions or job interviews.

You still shouldn't care but here's the kicker: in an official situation you should correct people pronouncing your name wrong anyway (below is why).

And of course, you will also use this occasion to show your social skills by correcting them warmly and tactfully:

Warm People: Correct Them Warmly

You will correct them in a warm way.

Such as, in a way that is more about explaining rather than fixing their mistake.

For example:

Her: "It's great to meet you, Lusio."

You: (with warm body language) "Thank you so much. Lucio is the Spanish pronunciation, my name is Lucio, and it's great to meet you!"

Her: "Oh sorry about that!"

You: "No worries at all! It's good to be here, thank you for inviting me Kate"

Note: some social skills coaches out there advice to correct people indirectly.

Such as, to not correct them directly but to let them understand they've done a mistake by using your own name correctly pronounced.

Like for example "hello Kate, my name is Lucio".

That's not good because everyone saw what you did and people might think that you don't have the courage to address issues directly.

That's very [passive aggressive](#) and comes across as sneaky.

Don't hide. Be warm, but direct.

Why You Should Correct People

You correct people mispronouncing your name because of the message it sends about you.

The message is that you are a person who expects to be treated with respect and that, likely, will do the same to others.

Imagine the other way around: an interviewer pronounces your name wrong.

And you let it go.

Later she finds out she's been mispronouncing your name the whole time.

Ouch!

First of all, she feels bad.

And second, it makes her wonder if you didn't have the courage to correct her in the first place.

Or maybe you are just a bit sloppy.

Either case: you come across poorly.
Nip it in the bud, correct it right away.

Vicious People: Let The (Social) War Start

This category is for [bad bosses](#), terrible neighbors, in-laws, long time [frenemies](#) whom you already corrected many times but still keep mispronouncing your name day in and day out like they couldn't care less.

Note of caution: only a tiny minority of people fits in this category.

So before you start considering people as "enemies" ask yourself:

- Is my name just too complex for them?
- Did I correct them and do they know I care?

If the former, give them more slack. If the latter, make yourself clearer.

But if you made yourself clear and they still snub you, they're basically insulting you every time they mispronounce your name.

And you can't let that happen.

And if you think the below solutions are a bit too much because he's your boss, or your in-law, or whatever you have, then it means you are *endorsing* their point of view and you are offending yourself.

Please don't you do that yourself and do one of these instead:

- **Issue a last call**

If you've corrected them but were a bit weak, make one last extra clear effort:

You: James, I realize my name is complicated but we've known each other for while now and it makes me feel insulted and demeaned that you keep pronouncing my name wrong. My name is Lucio, not Lusio. Please call me Lucio.

- **Don't reply when they call you**

Do not reply when they call you with the wrong name.

- **Correct them every single time**

Every single time they pronounce your name wrong, you correct them. Not angrily, but coldly. And keep dealing emotionlessly with them.

- **Threaten tit for tat**

Tell them, in private, that if they keep butchering your name you will start doing the same with their names, effective today. If they don't get their act right, start.

- **Implement tit for tat**

if none of the above works and they continue to show disrespect, start mispronouncing their name *every* time you need to speak to them.

- **Cut them out of your life**

You don't need in your life people who can't show you a bare minimum of respect.
Let them slowly but surely disappear from your life.

When Someone Asks YOU to Pronounce Their Name Right

Some times it can be you who is pronouncing someone's name wrong.

In that case, you might end up in a situation where someone gets hung up on you getting their name right. Consciously or subconsciously, that's a power move and you should not repeat their names on a loop until you get it right.

You have just met, they have no right to demand so much effort from you.

Just look at how Deniro does it in a similar situation:

Mindset: look at the bigger picture

Taking care of getting a name right *does* show respect, and itâ€¦s what high EQ people do (read: [Emotional Intelligence](#) and [Emotional Intelligence 2.0](#)).

But many otherwise good people are not high on EQ.

That does not make bad, just a bit clueless when it comes to people and building rapport (or [emotional connection](#)).

Basically, as yourself this: does he mispronounce your name but heâ€¦s otherwise kind, respectful, and caring?

Then why are you so hung up on pronunciation?

Your name does not *define* you.

Sure, you care because of the power dynamics and because you have life ambitions and goals.

But you shouldn't care because it hurts your ego.

If someone steals your identity tomorrow they don't steal your soul.

People with an [anti-fragile ego](#) and healthy self-esteem shouldn't get hung up on flawless pronunciation.

Iâ€¦ll give you one funny example on never correcting a mispronunciation in an otherwise positive and caring relationship:

We were sitting on a bench -albeit not in an open field :-). I liked her, and she liked me too.

It was not much after the one month mark, but it had been passionate. And she was already giving the usual hard time girls give you when they want a more serious commitment.

Funny thing was, she had been pronouncing my name wrong since we first met and I had never corrected her. Never saw the need and, plus, I found the â€¦new nameâ€¦ amusing.

As we have â€¦the conversationâ€¦, I tell her weâ€¦ll keep it the way it is until the end of the year because we both feel itâ€¦s great, and then weâ€¦ll decide. She agrees.

And then I add â€¦and by the way, my name is Lu-cio, you want a relationship and you donâ€¦t even know my nameâ€¦.

Long, speechless pause.

That was a fun one :).

SUMMARY

You learned that how you react to people pronouncing your name wrong depends highly on their intentions and the situations.

Follow these steps to know what's the appropriate reaction:

1. Make sure you clear out *your* ego issues first
2. If they're friendly, let it go in informal scenarios and correct warmly in official settings
3. If they're Power Moving, mispronounce their name as well or cut them off

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