

What's in a Name (or Initials)?

Have you ever taken time to contemplate your initials? That may sound like a silly question.

But a lot of people do, and what they consider is not always very optimistic. The University of California at San Diego conducted a study of 5 million death certificates. They looked at men (because their initials generally don't change with marriage) who died in California from 1969 through 1997.

Psychologist Nicholas Christenfeld, who headed the study, said we all have either good, bad or neutral initials. An example of "good" initials would be: ACE, VIP, JOY, WIN or WOW. Examples of "bad" initials include APE, BUM, DUD, RAT or PIG.

Neutral initials would be like mine, BHH.

When all of the research was tabulated, the results showed that men with *good* initials lived an average of 4.48 years longer than those with *neutral* initials, and 7.2 years longer than those tagged with *bad* initials.

Although the results are not conclusive, the findings do seem to support the idea that liking your name and liking yourself may be linked together. Such insight appears to provide a small reminder that a person's view of oneself can impact his or her lifestyle.



You can't go around changing people's initials, although Jesus did change Peter's name and Saul to Paul, but you can change the way they view themselves. You might want to temporarily assign initials to members of your Bible study class or other church group and give them all the same set of letters: YAL, standing for *You Are Loved by God*.

And you are!

I often challenge associates in Life Care and Century Park to repeat the phrase, "*It feels good to feel great!*" Then I ask if they meant what they just said, because each of us is a child of the King, made in His image, and we ought to feel good about that.

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Realizing the truth of that statement should make you feel confident about yourself and the mission in which you are engaged – whatever the initials of your name may be! God's love for you is supreme, and He wants the best for you.

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angles nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:37-39 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter

