

# Science Lesson #12

## *Lions and Tigers and Bears - Oh My!*

(Naming and Categorizing Breads)

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### Introduction to Fables and Science

I call this lesson “Lions and Tigers and Bears - Oh My!” because today, I want to talk about Naming, Labeling and Categorizing. If you hear that there is a lion or tiger or bear nearby, the words alone can produce a visceral reaction. But they are words - the reaction comes from you. Sure, they are names of animals that come from a very scary category of beasts. But whatever you believe about those labels will be the cause of your reaction. So, my point is that the name or label or category is not the reality, yet while you are thinking of it, it is.

Scholastic subjects like science or math can have a social impact; they can hurt or heal. They can teach you to get caught up in scary names like chemistry or algebra - or they can help you to stare reality in the face - and not get caught up in the name of something. Let me show you what I mean through a story about Robert. Robert (we'll call him - that was not really his name) was of a race, sexual persuasion, age and religion that was not respected in his hometown, with his wife and children, nor in the prison, where I met him. On top of this, he was absolutely convinced that he could not do algebra - the very thing I was hired to teach him in order to enter a college and get two years of free support upon being released from prison that very year. I wrote about him in the book, [Chapter 6 "Math Phobia" from the book, \*The Next Version of You\*](#) (Bickart, 2018).

There is another story, where I was teaching a science and math courses that had several names and categories that had to be memorized. While this was great for the purpose of communication - it constantly challenged our ability to keep our wonder and awe. It was like we stopped looking at something, once we categorized or labeled it. It was like we knew it, simply because we named it.

“Science and education have a terrible habit of naming things like atoms, matter, gravity, electricity, relativity, and the like. And the silent majority has a terrible habit of thinking we know something when we hear a name. It is then that we stop looking, stop wondering, and become less of who we are” (Bickart, 2018, p. 73).

But it's not the fault of the science or math, itself. There simply is a lot of terminology! It is the job of the learner to name, then look back at that which has just been named. Instead of becoming a know-it-all, you have to look back with the eyes of one who does not really know - one who is ever learning, if you want to still have a connection. I tell this story in [Chapter 8](#).

“Emerson, Dewey and Pat” from the book, *The Next Version of You* (Bickart, 2018).

Let's practice. We'll look at a science lesson on bread that will categorize all kinds of breads from crackers to cake. We will name the ingredients and see the chemical effect of each. On the video, I will use the chart below to quiz you while making one of my favorite breads, JELLY ROLLS (normally "Crepes"). For the answers, see the chart filled in while you watch the video.

<b>Crackers to Cake</b>							
	Flour	Water	Milk	Yeast or Baking Powder	Egg	Fats or Oils	Sugar
<b>Crackers</b>	✓	✓					
<b>Flat Bread</b>	✓		✓				
<b>Bread</b>	✓	✓		✓			
<b>Pasta</b>	✓	✓			✓		
<b>Crepes</b>	✓		✓		✓		
<b>Pancakes</b>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Cookies</b>	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
<b>Cake</b>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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Here's a provocative thought...

If you want to ask about the time humanity started Naming, Labeling and Categorizing, perhaps it was when we began to communicate with words - to write and read. Though we fell in love with this ability, it seems that human history is punctuated by stories of times past where people could experience the simple things more deeply, without needing sensational entertainment to thrill them. I know that for me, today, words reduce experience! After all, would you choose to read about the best moments in your life or experience them? So, humanity had an advance and a loss occurring at the same time! This happens. My provocative question is ... now that we are great at writing and reading, is there any way to regain the ability to be present to things as well as we might have before we started to handle them as secondhand experiences?

Perhaps your childhood is the parallel to humankind's childhood. If so, can you remember how you could experience the world when you were very young? For me, it seems that colors and beauty and tastes and comradery were sweeter. What if we could regain those abilities? Is that a foolish wish or something to aim for? So, my provocative idea is that maybe we need to learn from our childhood and humanities' childhood, in addition to learning from the frontiers of our new science and technology.

We often take for granted that humankind, in its present condition, is at the greatest height of our existence. Some people might even think that we are the pinnacle of all of the beings that we see. But are we? Is it possible that we have lost something in our headlong pursuit of our modern version of humanity? Compared to our earlier versions, is there anything our ancestors had that was better than us? And what about if you compare us to plants and rocks and animals. Do we have nothing to learn from them? And to get even more provocative, are there beings that we have not yet been able to see, that not only exist, but also have things to teach us? Well, all of these questions prompt me to want to stay awake and watch and listen ... basically to try to

regain the presence of our ancestors and the children who did not spend so much time naming and labeling and categorizing - but simply experiencing.

Here are some fables that deal with Naming, Labeling and Categorizing: [[Fable #20](#)] [[Fable #24](#)] [[Fable #25](#)] [[Fable #26](#)] [[Fable #32](#)] [[Fable #44](#)] [[Fable #53](#)] [[Fable #63](#)] (Bickart, 2020a, Volume 1; 2020b, Volume 2; 2020c, Volume 3). And below is one of my favorite fables that reminds about looking back, after naming.



## #25 *The First Name*



*A Cherokee grandmother was teaching her two granddaughters their names. She turned to her first granddaughter and explained, “You are ‘Adahy’. It means ‘lives in the woods’.” Turning to the second granddaughter, she went on, “And you are ‘Ahyoka’, which means ‘she brought happiness’.” “Names can be beautiful, just like you” she continued, “but always know this. A name can also do harm. There was a time before names. The little girl who received the very first name came into a village. The people were so intent to learn her name that they soon forgot to see HER!” Suddenly, she faced Adahy, while turning her back on Ahyoka. “How would it be if I said the name ‘Ahyoka,’ or even said, ‘she brought happiness’ - but forgot to see YOU? Would this not hurt? Would the name be enough?” Turning back to Ahyoka, she emphasized, “A name is never enough. You must always turn back and look again to the one you have named.”*

**LEARN THE NAME, BUT KEEP LOOKING**

# *The First Name*

## Why Use Fables to Teach Science?

### Conversation Starters

- What is one of your favorite names? What or who is it a name for?
- Do you like your name? Do you ever think of having another name?
- What do you think you would feel if someone turned a back toward you?
- What do you think could be one meaning of saying, “I see you?” Could this meaning pertain to a plant or rock or an object?
- Can you think of any science experiments where you do not look anymore because you already know about it? Can you think of people with whom you do this?

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### References

- Bickart, J. (2018). *The next version of you: 12 stories that highlight the use of intuition to update your life.*
- Bickart, J. (2020a). *Bickart's Just-in-Time Fables (Volume 1)* (Vol. 1). Asheville, NC: Red Shirt Interactive Group.
- Bickart, J. (2020b). *Bickart's Just-in-Time Fables (Volume 2)* (Vol. 2). Asheville, NC: Red Shirt Interactive Group.
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