

# The Significance of Names and Naming

## EXISTENCE

Occasionally you'll be walking down a hallway with someone approaching you. You instinctively move to the side, but the other person does the same. After a second time unintentionally blocking each other, you both chuckle. What is this experience called? Until it has a name, it's only an image and not an idea. Naming gives it an existence it never had before.

## CREATION-RECREATION

In the 1984 movie *The Neverending Story* from a 1979 fantasy novel by Michael Ende, the world of imagination is called Fantasia and is symbolically embodied in a young empress. As the story begins, Fantasia is dying, giving way to "the Nothing." The only way to restore and rejuvenate it is to rename the Empress.

*The Childlike Empress:*

Bastian. Why don't you do what you dream, Bastian?

*Bastian:*

But I can't, I have to keep my feet on the ground!

*The Childlike Empress:*

Call my name. Bastian, please! Save us!

*Bastian:*

All right! I'll do it! I'll save you! I will do what I dream!

[Climbs to the window and yells out in the storm:]

*Bastian:* MOONCHILD!

## ESSENCE

"Your name is the most important thing you own. Don't ever do anything to disgrace or cheapen it."

— Ben Hogan, famous golfer.

## DESTRUCTION

In Arthur Miller's 1953 play *The Crucible*, the main character John Proctor falsely confesses to witchcraft. When required to sign the confession document, he's unable to put his name on paper.

"Because it is my name! Because I cannot have another in my life! Because I lie and sign myself to lies! Because I am not worth the dust on the feet of them that hang! How may I live without my name? I have given you my soul; leave me my name!"

He knew it was a life-death situation. The church elders hanged him.