

Cases of Mistaken Identity

Mom's home healthcare aid called

Just as I was preparing to leave home for today's meeting, the phone rang.

"Hello," I answered.

"This is Margaret, your mom's home healthcare aid. I really need your help. Your mom invited 50 people over for dinner this evening. She is busy straightening up the house, setting the table, and getting herself together. I'm doing my best to take care of the cooking and baking, but we need groceries."

"OK, prepare a grocery list."

"Beside the groceries, we need you to pick up some of the guests who do not drive."

"OK, who are they and where do they live?"

"You're a lifesaver, Ruth!"

"Ruth?"

"Yes, Mildred's daughter Ruth!"

"I'm Gertrude's daughter Judy."

"Does that mean you're not coming?"

This phone call started me thinking about cases of mistaken identity and their repercussions.

Mike Diamond, Jr. / Sr.

Over the holidays, I was in my home town, and got together with a few high school classmates. “Let’s see who else might be around now and have a reunion.” Well, we dug out the yearbook and identified those we thought were still in the area. I called those on the list stating, “We’re gathering other classmates for a party Saturday. We hope you can make it.”

Well, we made nametags from the yearbook photos and had fun greeting our guests. Let’s just say that more years than I care to admit have passed since our high school graduation, and we laughed when we compared the photos to the real deal who walked in the door! Gray hair, less hair, no hair. Rounder, heavier! Furrowed brow, other lines and creases!

I greeted one man at the door, asked for his name, and gave him the yearbook photo. The real deal before me looked eerily similar to the photo – really just the hairstyle and dress were off! I looked quizzically at this very youthful man! As he looked at me and the others in the room, he offered, “Let me give you the phone number for Mike Diamond Sr.” Then Jr. politely left.

Summary

Had Margaret, the home healthcare aid, not assumed that I was Mildred’s daughter Ruth, she might have saved herself quite a letdown! Had I asked Mike Diamond Jr. what year he graduated from high school, Mike Diamond Sr. might have arrived sooner than later.

Avoid jumping to conclusions! Close the gaps, not with your imagination, but by asking questions and paying attention to context.