

Akbar Gbajabiamila's Dad Taught Him That Names Are A Source Of Strength | Clips | Dad Saves America

3 MIN · YOUTUBE · [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=0JXWN3HOXU0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0JXWN3HOXU0)
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SUMMARY

The conversation centers around Akbar Gbajabiamila's experience with his Nigerian name and the lessons imparted by his father about embracing one's identity. He reflects on how his father's advice to "make them say your name" transformed his embarrassment into pride, ultimately shaping his confidence and self-acceptance.

- Akbar's father emphasized the importance of asserting one's identity through their name.*
- Growing up, Akbar faced teasing due to his Nigerian last name and initially felt embarrassed.*
- His father's advice helped him pivot from embarrassment to pride, influencing his classroom interactions.*
- Akbar learned to control the classroom dynamics by encouraging teachers to pronounce his name correctly.*
- The experience instilled a sense of ownership and confidence in Akbar, impacting his academic and athletic pursuits.*
- He connects this lesson to his role as a father, aiming to guide and protect his own children in similar situations.*

(swishing)

- Now I understand that your dad believes that it's really important to say your name. - Yes. "Make them say your name." (John laughing) I always have to use my dad's accent. My dad, growing up, reminded me of James Earl Jones' character, King Jaffe Joffer, ruler of Zamunda, 'cause my dad had the same size and that deep voice, and growing up here in LA, I used to get made fun of a lot, and so I was embarrassed of our Nigerian last name, and I was like, "Man, I wish I could have just a regular name," and so I remember coming home one day upset about the kids teasing me at school, and my dad was like, "Make them say your name," and the way he said it was kind of frightening, (John laughing) and then after a while, there just was a pivot in my head, where, "No, I'm gonna make you say my name."

So when teachers would try to get out of it, nope. "You can try. I'm not gonna be offended, but you're gonna try," 'cause the kids would laugh when they would try, and no kid wants to be the butt of the joke, you know what I mean, but then I flipped it and like, "No, I'm sittin' here, and I'm gonna milk this all day, even if it takes an extra

30 seconds of class time." - Well, that should make you the kids' favorite because you get a chance to put the teacher in the hot seat.

(John laughing)

- Yes, yes, and I would, and I would do that. I was just telling my kids this because they're at the point where they're experiencing. Middle school can also be very, very rough. That's a rough period for any kid, and I said, "You know what? You can kind of control the classroom, especially if you got a substitute or they're doin', like they're doin', and you just sit there and be like, "I know you're trying to say my name, but I'm just gonna wait till you say it all the way through."

- What is it about that,

"Make me say your name," that you think he was getting at there? What was below the surface? - Oh, boy. I think every father gets to this point where you see that your kid is struggling in their environment, and so I think, even

for me as a father now, I now look back and go, I think a dad's DNA is to direct and to protect, right? You wanna constantly direct your kids, and I think in that moment my dad was, A, trying to protect me and direct me on what to do in that moment, and I will never forget.

I think it was like fifth or sixth grade, where it was a switch about how I felt about myself, and from that point, it started (indistinct) 'cause I was embarrassed. Can you imagine just walkin' around just embarrassed like, "Oh man, I raised my hand after Garcia." I knew my name was coming after. I'm G-B. I knew I'm coming after Garcia, right? (John laughing)
Maria Gar- I still remember her name, Maria Garcia. "Oh, I'm next, me, me, me, me."

That was me early before then 'cause I didn't want my name to be said so I didn't have to get everybody laughing, but that's what my dad instilled, and so from that point, it instilled pride in me. I took ownership of who I was 'cause I can't change that. So that's what my dad did for me, and it helped me academically. It helped me athletically in being able to have confidence, yeah. (swishing)
- If you enjoyed this clip, we've got more where that came from.

Be sure to check out my full conversation with Akbar Gbajabiamila, and one of the best ways you can help support us is to subscribe to the channel so you won't miss our interviews and short videos as they come out each week. (light music)
(swishing) (swishing)