What’s Your “Human Ring-Tone”?

By “Pistol” Pete Kaufmann

Unless you live in a cave, you’ll notice that one of the cool functions of today’s cell phones is the option to customize your ring-tone. Not only can you substitute a song for your “plain Jane” ring-tone, but you can assign specific songs to specific callers, depending on what kind of phone you have.

For example, when my wife calls me, the song that plays is “Friends of Mine” by Duran Duran. I picked that song because she is a massive Duran Duran fan, and I like them better than the alternative: New Kids on the Block, her other favorite band. (No offense to NKOTB, but their songs would sound ridiculous on my phone!). This way, when she calls, I immediately know it’s her and to pick up because the “boss” is calling. Back when this function first became available, I had a lot of fun assigning songs to specific friends and family:

• When my buddy Roy Turner calls, “Love Come Down” by Evelyn “Champagne” King plays because every time we’d go on tour together, he would sing this song as a joke before he went to sleep (and we’d all want to kill him).
• When my mother calls, “Run to the Hills” by Iron Maiden plays. (If you knew my mother, you’d know why I picked this one).
• When my younger sister Kristina calls me, “Little Sister” by Queens of the Stone Age plays.
• When my French friend Ollie calls me, “Ca Plane Pour Moi” by Plastic Bertrand plays. (My knowledge of French music is limited).

Even my wife uses this entertaining function when I call her phone. She programmed “Baby, I Got Your Money” by Ol’ Dirty Bastard to play whenever I call. I guess I know my function in our relationship, though I hope she doesn’t think of me as an “ol’ dirty bastard.”

As you can see, my cell phone enables me to link a song in connection with callers’ personalities or specific memories relating to them. Now I know some of you might be thinking, “That’s great, Pete, but why is this important?! What do cell phone songs have to do with me?” Well, let me explain...

When we think of certain people in our lives, family, work, etc., we consciously or subconsciously bring up feelings we have towards these individuals – some positive, some negative. (Just the thought of certain individuals can make me shudder!)

To show you what I mean, I want you to take out a piece of paper and list 5 people in your life. Next to each name, draw a face that represents their personality. If they’re happy and fun to be around- put a smiley face next to their name; if they’re always sad and depressed- draw a sad face next to their name; if they are always angry and bitter- draw an angry face next to their name; if they are boring- draw a boring face (whatever that looks like) next to their name. (Personally, I make it a priority to be around more “smiley face” people in my life, and I suggest you do the same.)
That was pretty easy, right? It’s not so hard for us to judge other personalities, but what about your own personality? How do other people view you?

**Give this a quick thought for a second:** If people had “human ring-tones”, what song would best describe your personality? Is your personality pleasing, or does it repel people? Are people happy to see you, or do you make people run for cover?

Are you a “woe is me” kind of a person that feels sorry for yourself all the time? In that case, your human ring-tone would be a slow jam like “Breath Again” by Toni Braxton, because all you do is cry and represent sadness; or maybe you’re “Don’t Bring Me Down” by ELO.

Are you a happy person who is cheerful and makes people feel good? Then you could be a dance song like “Don’t Stop Till You Get Enough” by Michael Jackson.

Are you a funny person that makes people laugh? Then you might be any song by Weird Al Yankovic, or LMFAO.

Is your personality sexy and sophisticated? Then you’d be a song by Roxy Music or Prince.

Are you a boring person? Then you can be the whole Celine Dion or Kenny G catalog. (Sorry, but I couldn’t resist that one.)

You get the idea. All jokes aside, this exercise helps you become aware of your personality. (I know I’m an over-the-top, energetic lunatic from New Jersey who loves to help people, so if someone told me my human ring-tone was “Live Wire” by Motley Crue or “Rebel Rebel” by David Bowie, it wouldn’t necessarily come as a shock to me.) If you’re not sure what song represents your personality, ask a friend or co-worker and tell them to be 100 percent honest with you. You may be surprised by what you hear.

**Sometimes we’re not always aware of how others view us, and we need feedback.** You may think that you’re awesome, but everyone else in your life may think differently. (Do you know how many bosses have no clue that their employees use a picture of their face as the bullseye on a dartboard?) Time after time I’ve seen careers derailed because of displeasing personalities. As a touring musician, I’ve seen less talented musicians get hired over highly skilled musicians because of their upbeat and cheerful personalities, and their ability to get along with others on the road. Nobody wants to live with and travel with a bad personality. Trust me on that one.

I like to use this “human ring-tone” technique to keep myself in check every time I have to be social, even when I don’t want to be. It helps me step out of myself and look in from an outsider’s perspective. All it takes is one unglamorous moment and others will judge you instantly, especially if it’s the first time people are meeting you.

Before you go in the room, think of a song you want to describe you. Let this song imaginarily play in your mind. I like to carry my iPod on me and play the actual song before I walk into a meeting or room. This works wonders on me, especially before delivering a keynote speech or playing a live show. The point is to let the vibe and energy of the song permeate through your whole being.

Have fun with this idea and shoot me an email at pistol@rockinlifestyle.com to let me know what you discovered about your personality! 🎶

**“Pistol” Pete Kaufmann** is a professional musician, writer, and speaker who spends his time between New York City and Los Angeles. He is also president of Rockin Lifestyle, a company that specializes in inspiration for artists and organizations looking for new direction, change, and fresh ideas for life or business. For more on Pete, go to RockinLifestyle.com, or email him at pistol@rockinlifestyle.com.