

Mirror and Matching; the basis of Rapport and Communication Skills!

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Rapport and Communication Skills!

By John James Santangelo

Can you remember a time when you met someone for the first time and it just seems to click? An instant bond between the two of you, an instant 'like-ability' or trust. You can literally FEEL, that connection!

That connection is called Rapport! It is the basis and foundation for every meaningful interaction between two or more people. Rapport is about establishing an environment of trust and understanding, to respect and honor the other person's world. This allows the person the freedom to fully express their ideas and feelings and know they'll be respected and appreciated by you. Rapport creates the space for the person to feel listened and responded to, even when you disagree with what the other person says or does. Each person appreciates the other's viewpoint and respects their model of the world. When you are in rapport with another person, you have the opportunity to enter their world and see things from their perspective, feel the way they do, get a better understanding of where they are coming from; and as a result, enhance the whole relationship.

A 1970 study conducted by Dr. Ray Birdwhistle at the University of Pennsylvania concluded that 93% of our communication transpires non-verbally and unconscious. 55% of our communication is our physiology or body language, 38% is tonality or HOW we say our words, and only 7% is the content or words we choose to speak.

Researchers at the Boston University Medical School studied films of people having conversations. The researchers noticed that the people talking began (unconsciously) to co-ordinate their movements (including finger movements, eye blinks and head nods.) When they were being monitored using electroencephalographs, they found some of their brain waves were spiking at the same moment also. As the conversations progressed, these people were getting into a deeper level rapport with each other, and didn't even have a clue to what was going on, this is because we communicate our ideas and concepts at this 93% UN-conscious level, but believe the words we speak actually hold the meaning to our communication.

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NLP rapport skills teach us how to communicate at that unconscious level. Mirroring, matching, pacing and leading skills will enable you to become "like" the other person. Anthony Robbins stated: "People like each other when they tend to be like each other." NLP teaches how to mirror and match that 55% physiology, 38% tonality and 7% predicates or process words.

The key to establishing rapport is an ability to enter another person's world by assuming a similar state of mind. The first thing to do is to become more like the other person by matching and mirroring the person's behaviors — body language, voice, words etc. Matching and mirroring is a powerful way of getting an appreciation of how the other person is seeing/experiencing the world.

Some people find the idea of matching another person uncomfortable and they feel that they are trying to fool or take advantage of the other person. To overcome this uneasiness, realize that matching is a natural part of the rapport building process and that you are doing it unconsciously every day with your close family and friends. Each day gradually increase your conscious use of matching at a pace that is

comfortable and ethical for you. Matching done with integrity and respect creates positive feelings and responses in you and others. Rapport is the ability to enter someone else's world, to make him feel you understand him, and that there is a strong connection between the two of you.

The purpose of the following exercises is to provide some experience with the basic processes and procedures of modeling. They primarily focus on the information gathering phase of the modeling process, and cover a range of modeling skills, including "implicit" and "explicit" modeling formats, and the use of multiple perceptual positions to gather different types and levels of information about a particular performance.

Mirroring Exercise

Mirroring is a method of building a strong "second position" with someone else. It is a fundamental skill for modeling another person and for developing intuitions about the person's internal experience. To get a sense of the influence and effects of mirroring, try out the following exercise.

1. Choose a partner, or person to converse with. Do not tell the person initially that you will be mirroring him or her during the conversation.
2. Enter into a conversation with the person, asking for his or her opinions about various subjects.
3. As you are conversing, begin to subtly mirror the other person's physiology (including voice tone and tempo). [Hint: This can be most easily done in the context of 'active listening'; that is, reflecting back statements the person has made, by commenting, "So what you are saying is....", and then stating your understanding of the person's opinion.]
4. When you are fully mirroring, you will be sitting in the same posture, using the same types of gestures, speaking at a similar speed and volume, and in a similar voice tone range, as the other person. If you are completely mirroring the other person, you may even be breathing at the same rate and pattern as the other. Notice how it feels when you have reached this level of deep rapport.
5. One way to test your degree of rapport is by "second guessing" the other person's opinion on a couple of subjects that you have not yet discussed. Often mirroring will give you access to information that is being unconsciously communicated and received, and you will "pick up" information about the other person without being consciously aware of how you got it. This is why mirroring is such a

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powerful tool for modeling.

6. To get another sense of the influence mirroring and matching has on your interaction; try out abruptly mismatching the other person, in posture, gestures, voice tone and breathing. Both you and your partner should experience quite a jolt if you do this, and feel as if your quality of rapport has changed dramatically.

7. Before concluding your conversation and letting your partner in on what you were doing, make sure you have reestablished rapport by once again physically mirroring your partner.

One way to help rapport to develop is to mirror the micro-behaviors of those we wish to influence. Any observable behavior can be mirrored, for example:

Body posture

Spinal alignment

Hand gestures

Head tilt

Blink rate

Facial expression

Energy level

Breathing rate

Vocal qualities (volume, tonality, rhythm)

Key word phrases or predicates

Anything else that you can observe...

To mirror another person, merely select the behavior or quality you wish to mirror, and then do that behavior. If you choose to mirror head tilt, when the person moves their head, wait a few moments, then move yours to the same angle. The effect should be as though the other person is looking in a mirror.

To mirror a person who has raised his right hand, you would raise your left hand (i.e. mirror image). To match this same person, you would raise your right-hand (doing exactly the same as the other person). Some practitioners see a time difference between mirroring and matching. For example, if someone makes hand gestures while they are speaking, you would wait until it was your turn to speak before making similar (matching) hand gestures.

The fact that you've read this far means that you can see the benefits of increasing your rapport skills. Reading is sadly not enough – practice is the key to building skill, so do the exercises. When you first start the practice of mirroring, you may have to pay some conscious attention to what you're doing. After a while, however, you will start to catch yourself doing it unconsciously. This is where you really begin to build rapport elegantly!

And at times when a gesture is idiosyncratic to that person or otherwise to obvious, you can do crossover matching. Meaning, if they adjust their glasses, and you don't wear any, then just move your foot. When you crossover match/mirror, you match/mirror a portion of the other person's body, with a different portion of your own body. This is best to do when you are matching someone's rate of breathing. You can use your finger to pace the rhythm of their breath. When matching or mirroring

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someone's voice, do that with their tonality, volume, and the rate at which they speak. And remember you don't have to do all of these things, just one or two will be enough to create rapport in most cases.

Skilled communicators have a wide range of behaviors they can mirror to build rapport. You can find a way to mirror virtually anything you can observe. When this is done elegantly, it is out of consciousness for the other person.

- However, a few notes of caution are appropriate:
- Mirroring is not the same as mimicry.
- It should be subtle and respectful.
- Mirroring can lead to you sharing the other person's experience.
- Avoid mirroring people who are in distress or who have severe mental issues.
- Mirroring builds a deep sense of trust quickly, so use it with responsibility.

Practice with friends and family members to start and begin to match different aspects of their posture, gestures, voice and words. Have fun with it and notice if they begin to respond to your matching. At work or social events, start by matching one specific behavior, and once they and you feel comfortable, begin to add on another. With people whom you already have a sense of rapport, notice how often you naturally match their posture, gestures, tone of voice or words, This is because matching and mirroring comes naturally. Your outcome then should be to create rapport with anyone at any given moment, having it become automatic whenever you wish to deepen that sense of rapport.

Exercise 1

Practice mirroring the micro-behaviors of people on television (chat shows & interviews are ideal.) You may be surprised at how quickly you can become comfortable as you subtly mirror the behaviors of

others.

Exercise 2

Choose a safe situation to practice mirroring an element of someone else's behavior. When you have mirrored them for a while, and think you are in rapport with the person, scratch your nose. If they lift their hand to their face within the next minute or so, congratulate yourself – you have led their behavior!

Exercise 3

Increase the range of behaviors that you can mirror, and introduce deliberate rapport-building into situations where it will benefit you and others. Use your common sense and choose low-risk situations to practice in.)

Exercise 4

During a conversation with another person; choose one of their behaviors (e.g. breathing rate) to cross-over match with one of your behaviors (e.g. speaking rate.) Notice how quickly the sense of connection develops!

Backtracking is another excellent skill to learn in order to maintain and deepen rapport. When you are

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in conversation with another person, whether it be business or personal, take the opportunity to recite back to the person the information you're receiving. This lets the person know that you were listening and you understand without judgment. It also allows you a chance to ensure your understanding and/or ask for clarification. Backtracking is the thread that tightens and deepens rapport. Backtracking is repeating back the essence, not verbatim, of what the person is attempting to communicate. There will be times when you're backtracking, and the other person will add on or correct you. Being corrected will only strengthen rapport because you'll then backtrack again and have the person really feel you understand. There is also the possibility being corrected will cause you to lose rapport. However, losing rapport is just like losing your balance. You falter, recover, and get back into it again. When you do lose rapport you'll find a way to regain it. There may also be times you want to be "out" of rapport with someone. For example if it isn't healthy for you to be around certain people, you are held hostage at a cocktail party or you are doing it for effect. Typically people think the way to break rapport is to be demeaning or disagree. Although that may work I recommend mismatching. This means intentionally mismatch posture, breathing, key words/gestures, and voice quality. Rely on mismatching the nonverbal communication and you will be out of rapport. For those of you who like experiments try this: Disagree strongly and maintain rapport. Or agree completely while breaking rapport. And all experimenting should be done in a non-critical environment without judgment.

The key element in establishing, building, deepening and maintaining rapport is your ability to pay attention to the responses you receive. One presupposition of NLP, or assumed rules is; "Communication is the response we receive back, NOT our intention given."

Lastly; behind any technique there must be an authenticity of caring and real concern for the other person. (See "Technicians Need Not Apply," Anchor Point 1987.) If you practice these skills and have no real interest in the other person, rapport will not develop. If you don't pay attention to the other person it doesn't matter how proficient you become in your NLP techniques. It is the responses you get in return and your own flexibility that hold the ultimate power in establishing, maintaining and deepening rapport.

John James Santangelo C.Ht. nationally acclaimed speaker, seminar leader, and success coach has

been a guiding force in empowering individuals, businesses, and corporations to excel at peak performance. Working with companies such as Learning Annex, CSUN-Northridge University, Mary Kay Inc, Well Point, Xerox, RE/MAX Realtors, the Teamsters Union, and the US Army counter-intelligence team. Whether you're looking to fulfill short-term goals, meeting planner events, or corporate sales/communication trainings, John can help you achieve a new level of success! He is the author of Asking The Right Questions..." For more information on Successful Communication Skills, email

Info@JohnSantangelo.com

or

www.JohnSantangelo.com

How To Create Instant Rapport with Anyone

By Danek Kaus

By Danek S. Kaus and David R. Barron

What is Rapport and why is it so important? Rapport is the foundation of persuasion. It is probably the most powerful persuasion tool you can have in any setting.

With rapport everything is possible. Without it, nothing is possible.

We've all had an experience of interacting with someone where there is an immediate sense of liking each other. It is easier to like someone when you have rapport, but liking someone is not the same thing as rapport. In fact you can create rapport with someone you don't like. Nor is it necessary for them to like you in order to create rapport.

Rapport is not so much liking as it is responsiveness. You've probably interacted with people who've been aggressive, and you responded aggressively. The two of you go back and forth in a dance of hostility. Believe it or not, that is a form of rapport, but probably not the kind you're looking for.

You may have heard the phrase, "People like people who are like themselves." It is easier to have rapport with someone who may share such similarities as culture, education, height and hair color. But what happens when people from different cultures with different hair color interact? How do you develop rapport with someone who is very different from you? You become like that person on much subtler levels. Rapport is created by some of the things you do, by what you say and how you say it.

Rapport can allow you to interact so effectively with someone that you become friends in a very short time. If that is what you are seeking, great. However, if you are trying to make a sale, you may get so distracted talking about other things that you forget the reason for your visit and walk out empty handed. So remember your reason for creating rapport in the first place.

INSTANT RAPPORT

Now it's time to learn some specific techniques that can help you create rapport with just about anyone in a matter of seconds. Two of the most basic and easiest to master are Mirroring and Matching.

MIRRORING

Mirroring is doing the same types of body behaviors as someone else as though you are looking at yourself in a mirror. When you are facing someone, if they cross their left leg, you cross your right leg, in effect creating a mirror image of their body position. If the person you are with leans to the right in their chair, you lean to your left, again creating a mirror image.

WARNING: Do not mirror someone immediately. Wait three to five seconds and then gradually move. If you mirror someone immediately, she will think you are mimicking her and become offended. If you adjust your body gradually, she will not notice what you are doing,. But you have to mirror her exactly.

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MATCHING

Matching is doing the same thing that somebody else is doing with their body. If he crosses his left leg, you cross your left leg, and so on, after waiting three to five seconds.

Some of you may not feel comfortable mirroring and matching another person. Too bad. It is not how comfortable you feel that matters but how comfortable you make the other person feel. If you are not willing to feel uncomfortable, consider the unspoken message of not being willing to mirror and match: "I am only willing to be with you just so much, I am not comfortable enough with you to give up myself."

Ask yourself this question: Do I want to be someone that other people feel comfortable around? If the answer is yes, then start mirroring and matching.

The results will amaze you.

NEXT TIME: Rapport and the Magic of VAK

Adapted from the new book, "Power Persuasion: Using Hypnotic Influence in Life, Love and Business," by David R. Barron and Danek S. Kaus.

David R. Barron and Danek S. Kaus are the authors of "Power Persuasion: Using Hypnotic Influence to Win in Life, Love and Business." To learn more visit

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