

The Magic of Rapport: *How to Establish a Level of Trust With Almost Anyone in 5 Minutes or Less*

By Steven Drozdeck

Effective relationship skills are the keys to establishing and strengthening interpersonal confidence and trust. With good rapport skills, people want to work with you and your associates- they will be more willing to have open and honest communications. Without these skills, unconscious defense mechanisms can come into play that may damage relationships. Whether dealing with customers, subordinates, vendors, peers or friends, these rapport skills are key to any successful interaction. This article provides a summary of key concepts which you will find immediately useful.

It is important to realize that you already employ many of these techniques unconsciously in the majority of your interactions. It is wise to consider these techniques as "tools" which you have available for those times when things don't seem to be going right. You'll be able to review a mental checklist to quickly determine how you may recapture the missing rapport.

Note: There are many additional topics on this topic via a free mini-article series available through a partnership arrangement with Financial Forum Bookstore. You can sign up for the free series at:

<http://ffbookstore.com/ar/KK-Rapport.html>

Chemistry is something that can be created – almost at will

What is that certain "chemistry" that exists between some people and not others? What are its elements? Can chemistry be replicated at will? How can you establish an atmosphere of trust and confidence? The answers to these questions are summarized here.

There are many fine books that provide some of the elements of making an initial favorable impression. It has been suggested that an initial impression - good or bad - is made within three seconds. Whether or not

this is fair is immaterial. How we look, talk, and act contribute to the feeling that this person is like me or not like me. Fortunately, we can "package" ourselves to create the image we want to initially project. This package provides the first opportunity to influence others unconsciously. The next opportunity to positively influence a person occurs when we begin communicating.

Communication occurs on both the conscious and the unconscious level.

How to develop, enhance, and maintain rapport on the unconscious level is the subject of the next few pages. *Unconscious rapport is initially dependent upon how you "pace" the other person. You pace another person to the extent that you are in agreement or alignment with him or her. It is being or becoming like other people so that you get their attention and friendship*

There are many ways you can pace another person and thereby establish rapport. The methods presented in this article fall into three basic categories:

- Physical
- Mental
- Emotional

People like those who are most like themselves -- literally and figuratively. As social beings we tend to associate with those people to whom we can most easily and comfortably relate. We respond to people on three primary levels: physical, mental and emotional.

Those to whom we can relate on multiple levels often become friends. If you want someone to form a favorable impression of you or to become your friend, you can increase the odds by being, as much as possible, like them.

Rapport is gained by employing a variety of techniques. In a sense, you already do many of these things naturally. Yet, conscious appreciation of what you already know how to do will permit you to accomplish your task whenever and with whomever you choose.

Rapport has a number of aspects. Each aspect is important, yet it is the cumulative effect that makes it powerful. No single pacing method will automatically establish rapport with another person. However, *the*

cumulative effect of these basic techniques will assist you in establishing, maintaining and enhancing rapport with virtually anyone.

For example, look at the illustrations below and decide whether the left or right stick figures are in rapport.



The vast majority of people will see the figures on the left as being in rapport (or in alignment with each other) and the figures on the right as being out of alignment, that is, not in rapport.

Pacing Physically: Matching BODY POSTURE

Again, people like those who are most like themselves. Matching body posture is one of the easiest and most effective ways of unconsciously influencing your prospect/client.

Matching is just what it seems to be. Match, almost as a mirror image, your prospect's or client's posture, breathing, and gestures. This doesn't mean that you have to be exact, and it certainly doesn't mean mimicking your client by moving as he moves (that would be noticeable and insulting). What it does mean is that if someone were watching you and your client that they would notice many similarities in posture and gesture, as in the left stick figures

Matching body posture is one of the easiest and most effective methods to initiate and maintain rapport below the conscious level of awareness. It involves positioning your body in a way that is similar to that of your partner. If you think of yourself as being a perfect or near-perfect mirror image of your partner, you have the key idea

Leading: a way of Testing for Rapport

After you have matched a person for a couple of minutes, you'll probably find that if you shift your body posture they will automatically re-adjust their body position. **This re-positioning**, which may take between 2 and 40 seconds to occur, **indicates that you have established rapport at the unconscious level**. If they do not shift their posture, merely continue matching for a longer period of time while concentrating on the other methods of achieving rapport described below.

Of course, it is not always possible, and is occasionally inadvisable, to identically mirror someone's body posture. **Cross-matching** – the matching of some part of the person's body with another part of your body - can be used. This method allows you to match a movement of their leg or breathing with a slight tapping of your finger or head. Unconsciously, this indicates that you are in "synch" with them and they with you.

Pacing Physically: Matching the RATE OF SPEECH

People generally feel most comfortable with those who speak at the same rate that they do. If you've ever had someone speak too quickly or too slowly for you, you probably also remember having a slightly uncomfortable feeling during that conversation. If you were affected this way, others may have had a similar reaction to you if your speech pattern was substantially different from theirs. For the person that was too slow for you, you were too fast for them and vice versa. Thus, both of you were experiencing a slightly uncomfortable feeling. Differences in speech rate contribute to what might have been called "bad vibes."

Rule-of-Thumb:

People prefer to listen at the same rate as they speak.

You'll find that after you initially match their rate of speech, they'll begin to pace you. That is, if you incrementally slow-down or speed-up your rate, they will often follow with a corresponding change in their rate. When this happens, you have verified that you have established rapport. When you combine this with body-matching, you have significantly

increased the probability that both of you would feel comfortable with each other.

Pacing Mentally: Matching WORDS AND PHRASES

You've heard people using phrases such as "*It looks good to me,*" or "*It sounds good to me,*" or "*It feels good to me.*" These phrases and others like them, provide useful information about their thinking processes and an excellent way in which to communicate even more precisely.

In the previous paragraph, the phrases had a visual, auditory, and kinesthetic (feeling) orientation, respectively. Some people think by using images in their mind, others may mentally talk to themselves, while others determine how something feels to them. Whatever method they rely upon, they will express their thoughts using words and phrases most closely matching how they think.

People tend to utilize some senses more than the others. They therefore become most aware of the preferred sensory component(s) of an experience and will usually remember those components first and most clearly. Our thought process is then determined by the sensory data most easily available to the conscious portion of our mind. Eventually, we may even specialize in how we think and process information and use words most closely correlated with what we are experiencing or thinking.

Since we choose words which most closely correlate with how we think, we "understand" words and phrases most closely correlated to our thinking process. *The difference between being understood by others or not is sometimes simply the choice of words that you might use. This determines whether or not you are able to motivate them or to gain their acceptance or cooperation.*

If you want to communicate clearly with someone who uses a particular mode of thinking, you would best use words that match how they are processing the information. Try it out! You'll be amazed at the level of understanding that occurs when you match these *sensory-oriented* words -- called "**PREDICATES**", versus the difficulty created when predicates are mismatched. This may be the difference between comprehension and confusion on the other person's part. It can mean the difference between acceptance and rejection of your message.

For example: Let's assume someone is talking to you about some project in which they want to become involved. The conversation may sound something like this: "I was *looking* over the proposal they submitted and it *shows* a number of interesting things that had not yet been brought to *light*." Your responses could be:

- A) "It certainly *looks* like a good idea to me. How does it *look* to you?",
- B) "It certainly *sounds* like a good idea to me. What do you have to say about it?"
- C) "It certainly *feels* like a good idea to me. How do you *feel* about it?"

The three responses all mean basically the same thing. Yet, the first response more precisely matches the way the person presented the information. By matching their mode of thought, they will realize that you are "seeing things the same way." Responses (B) and (C) may cause them to think that you "don't have the picture." Matching your words to theirs significantly enhances the communication process. Mismatching the predicates often increases the barriers that may exist between two people. Remember:

Matching predicates allows you to communicate on the same wavelength.

The Three Houses - how you describe something can turn people on or off

The following *experiment has been conducted with over 20,000 people* and we have found the results staggering. Each group was to imagine themselves in the market for a house. Each person is told that he/she can choose *only one* of the three houses based upon the descriptions below. The houses are identical (size, location, rooms etc.) in every other aspect.

"There is a house which I'm sure you would like to see. The first house is in a beautiful neighborhood and is very picturesque. Even the doorbell has a unique design. You'll certainly see for yourself that the rooms appear large and have the right colors. If you go to the balcony, you can see some really nice scenery. I'm sure you'll perceive this as an excellent choice.

Yet, there is another house that I'm sure you would like to hear about. This second house is in a quiet neighborhood and is of very sound construction. You'll certainly say to yourself that the rooms are large and have the right tones. If you go to the balcony, you can hear the birds chirping and the sound of the breeze. I'm sure you'll tell yourself that this is an excellent choice.

There is one more house that I'm sure you would find satisfying. This third house is in a warm neighborhood and is very solidly built. Even the doorbell gives a welcome feeling. You'll certainly sense that the rooms are spacious and have the right touch. If you go to the balcony, you can feel the warm sun and a light breeze. I'm sure you'll feel that this is an excellent buy."

Analysis:

The same house was described using visual, then auditory, then kinesthetic/feelings terms. *On average, one third of any audience chose each of the three house – which is in line with population norms.* What was both surprising and enlightening to the members of our audiences was that *fifty percent of any group either actively disliked one of the houses, or became confused due to the description.* They could then more fully appreciate the need to appropriately "package" their messages.

Variations of the above have been applied to product descriptions, advertising approaches, persuasive communications and informal meetings with similar results, that is, we have found that if a person's preferred thinking mode is mismatched, miscommunication, confusion, distrust and an occasional complete disregard for the message can occur. Remember, these are unconscious responses. Therefore, if you wish to be an effective communicator, you must ***match the person's preferred thinking modality.*** While not guaranteeing success, it does substantially increase the probability that the message will be understood and accepted.

Try this experiment: An interesting experiment is to practice reading the house descriptions and then read those descriptions to people you know. Most will realize that it is the same house. A few will not have any positive or negative reaction. Yet, many of the people will have a preference for one or two of the houses; while others will not like a particular description. Experiment with it and you'll learn some valuable lessons about their thinking processes.

Pacing Emotionally: Matching MOOD AND EMOTION

Matching a mood occurs almost automatically if you pace someone's body posture and speech rate. It is your choice to maintain your own mood or adopt theirs. Thoughtfulness and appropriateness are the key ingredients here. If they are in a good mood - fine! If they're in an "off" mood you can assist them to a better one by getting into rapport and directing their mind towards better times with "conditioning statements."

The mini-series explores this in greater detail. Follow the link provided at the beginning of this article.

"Conditioning Statements" and the Power of Speaking in Positives

Did you ever have someone tell you "there's nothing to worry about"? What did you do? Chances are you wondered about what you shouldn't be worrying about. Try this experiment for a moment. ... Pause ... and ...Don't think about a pink elephant. Do **NOT THINK** of a PINK ELEPHANT. Chances are that you had to think of the pink elephant, however briefly, in order to consciously dismiss the thought.

Presupposing that the unconscious mind does not deal in negatives OR that our minds are momentarily directed to the unwanted state in order to make sense of a statement, the following communication formula is derived:

	Original Statement
Minus	Negation
Equals	Unconscious message received.

Therefore statements are internally transformed and become something other than what we intend -- whether for ourselves or for others.

Don't *feel bad*. = Feel bad.

Don't *be in a bad mood*. = Be in a bad mood.

I don't *want to gain weight*. = I want to gain weight.

I don't want to sell you anything. = I want to sell you something.
(Instant negative reaction.)

Speaking in Positives is a better alternative. Tell people (or yourself) what you do want rather than telling them (or yourself) what you don't want.

"Feel good."

"I hope you feel comfortable."

"I want to be go od."

It's unfortunate that negative phraseology is such a common pattern in our language. **DON'T THINK OF THE ADVANTAGES THAT YOU WOULD RECEIVE IF YOU MAKE A CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO CHANGE TOWARDS SPEAKING IN POSITIVES MORE OFTEN.** Try this out for a couple of weeks and you'll notice significant changes in people's responsiveness to you.

To learn even more about how to use these techniques even more fully, plus a number of things not included in this article, please visit:

<http://ffbookstore.com/ar/KK-Rapport.html>

IN SUMMARY

"Chemistry" occurs naturally and easily for many people. However, until now, it was a hit-or-miss process. By pacing the other person physically and mentally we more closely replicate that person-- allowing them to be more comfortable with us because we are like them. It's almost as if there's something about us that they like but can't quite figure out -- it's themselves!

The awareness of these techniques gives us a tool to use whenever we choose. If things are going well, forget about it and enjoy yourself. If something isn't quite right, you now have a tool box of rapport generating techniques.

These techniques can be applied in virtually any interaction. They are of special value when active cooperation is necessary. Other specialized applications can include: Coaching and Counseling; Advertising and Marketing; Making presentations to large audiences.

About the Author



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His books include:

The Mega Producers: Secrets of Financial Services Superstars to Lead You to the Top (2003) This book provides the templates of success used by some of the upper ½ of 1% of all advisors and offers specific tools to use to go to the highest levels of the financial profession. The book is written for experienced advisors, not for newer advisors. You can find it at: <http://ffbookstore.com/index.php?PARTNER=ProducerwWEB>

Wealth Management Teams: The Smart Investor's Guide to Evaluating and Selecting a Competent Team of Financial Professionals (2005: Drozdeck & Fisher)

The Trust Equation: Successful Financial Advisors Speak Out on Integrity, Client Relationships, and the Wealth Management Process (2003: Drozdeck & Fisher)

The Broker's Edge: How to Sell Securities in Any Market (1995: Drozdeck & Gretz)