



Developing your skills



Rapport-building Skills

Over 90% of a dialogue is interpreted through non-verbal communication. This includes facial expressions and body language. Since we tend to react more to what we think a person meant than to what they actually said, when attempting to build rapport, you need to pay just as much attention to your non-verbal signals as you do to your words. The power of body language is, in fact, so strong that it can literally take less than a minute for trust to be built or eroded based on non-verbal communication alone.

Of course, positive body language doesn't just mean smiling, making eye contact, or assuming an open stance. Researchers say that when you match or mirror the postures, gestures, and tone of voice of whomever you are communicating with, their brain receives unconscious signals that say, "Hey, you're like me!" Since people trust those who are most like themselves, you need to think of non-verbal rapport as a dance, where you are the follower and whomever you want to influence is the leader.

Now that you know that non-verbal communication is such an important part of communicating, there are a few techniques you can try to strengthen the rapport you have with others. Remember, the key is to be subtle and discreet. The purpose of mirroring, for example, is not to mimic precisely what a person is doing, such as scratching your left cheek whenever they do. It simply means trying to capture the atmosphere of the interaction, while keeping your actions outside their conscious awareness. The following notes discuss how rapport-building skills are essential when establishing a relationship with a potential student.

RAPPORT-BUILDING SKILLS

Establishing rapport - having people like us and remember us fondly - is an invaluable skill. Whether you are in a business, a friendship, a relationship, selling, or just want to be more well-liked, rapport building skills can help you reach your goals.

Listen

Listening is the 'King' of all rapport building skills. Everyone loves to be listened to! Think about it. How do you feel when someone ignores you or talks over you? Do you feel connected to these people? No. Listening says, "I'm listening because what you have to say is important." People's greatest desire is to be truly listened to. Help them accomplish this most important goal, and they will like and admire you for it.

Link Interests

Usually, people like each other because of their similarities. So, whenever possible, find common ground or notice similar interests and be sure to talk about and expand on them. This may take some searching and questioning to discover their interests, but students will be glad that you are so interested in them.

Ask For their opinion

Asking for their opinion is perhaps the most sincere compliment you can pay to a person. You also have to humble yourself ever so slightly to ask, and this vulnerability will create a sense of openness and trust between you. People are always happy to talk about their opinions and will associate that sense of happiness to you quickly. People also admire someone who can ask for and accept your opinion.



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Compliments & Praise

Notice praise-worthy things students discuss and mention them to the person. Noticing and commenting on the good people do and their special qualities is a great way to connect with others.

Demonstrate Liking & Appreciation

Most people instinctively like people who like them. Many people like each other, but rarely tell each other. Sincere appreciation supports friendship and cements relationships.

Notice Their Values and Beliefs

As you are listening to the student speak, notice their values/beliefs, and discuss areas where your values/beliefs sincerely overlap with theirs. By doing this you will make a friend, and at the same time, subtly promote the areas you believe in and starve the areas you don't.

Enthusiasm

Communication is the transfer of energy/emotion. Encourage open, authentic communication. Sharing your own thoughts, feelings, and rationale demonstrates your desire to communicate candidly. Everyone seems to love someone with enthusiasm because we all admire it and wish we had more! Enthusiastic people seem to brighten up a room with their positive energy, and we want that to rub off on us, we want to be a part of it. When someone is enthusiastic about your thoughts and ideas we immediately feel understood, appreciated and just plain great! No one will ever be offended by you getting excited about their ideas!

Matching and Mirroring

Matching & mirroring simply means that you match the approximate characteristics of the other person to help create alignment with them. Therefore, if they cross their legs do the same shortly after. If they tend to talk more slowly, slow your rhythm down so it is closer to theirs. If they use certain lingo, you can use it later in the conversation. If they are reserved, you be more reserved. And so

on. Remember, we like people who are like us. This is a natural process that most people do unconsciously anyways - now you can know to do it consciously. It is a very powerful tool because vocal tone/speed and body language account for 93% of communication. This tool will make people very comfortable around you and is a very subtle technique.

Smile & Warmth

The first contact with another person is your face! Make sure that you present yourself as warm, friendly and happy. A smile and a sincere desire for friendship will resonate in your voice and be demonstrated in your every action. First impressions are powerful; present the way you want to be remembered - SMILE! Smiling shows that you are happy to see the other person. Smiling and warmth make others feel good around you.

Attending Skills

This simply means that you attend to the needs of the students you are with. It follows the lines of simple good manners, i.e., holding the door for someone, offering them a drink or a chair, shaking their hand right away when you see them, etc. Almost any small courtesy or act of kindness falls in this category. These simple acts say without words that the other person is liked, respected and appreciated.

Do what you say and say what you mean

Inconsistency in your thoughts, words, or actions can create a strong sense of distrust that can ultimately destroy any rapport that exists in a relationship. If you can't keep your promises, discuss and develop mutually agreeable alternatives.

TOP 10 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

- First, make sure that your body language, words, and tone all match.
- Make eye contact with the student.



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- Capture the atmosphere and spirit of the conversation, and match the other person's posture. Stand, walk, or sit like them. Pay attention to how they move or remain still. Then, gradually adapt your positions so that they match or mirror theirs.
- Match their tone of voice. Vocal tone is comprised of pitch (high or low), speed (fast or slow), and volume (loud or soft). If those around you are speaking in quieter or more boisterous tones, do the same.
- Be genuinely excited and enthused. Students are more easily influenced when they sense that you are enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and interested in what you are sharing. So smile, and always look confident.
- Know the audience you want to influence.
- Gesture and motion as others do, or don't. If they fold their arms and lean back, you do it too.
- Always thank students and everyone who takes the time to talk to you about themselves. When you give something to someone, they respond in kind. In the case of a thanks, you give them your genuine interest in them, and they respond by giving you their time or commitment.
- Remember that it takes less than one minute to make an impression. Make the right impression and you will develop trust. Develop the wrong impression and you will lose the potential student.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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- [Rapport-building skills](#)
- [Building rapport](#)