

How to Build Rapport with New Clients

People are generally more receptive to people like themselves. Whether that's right or wrong, it's built-in to the most primitive parts of our brain and it's something that you can tap into in various ways, but especially through subtle mimicry. For example, there was a study done in which an interviewer talked to participants and then dropped several pens on the floor. Participants who were mimicked during the conversation were two to three times more likely to pick up the pens!

1. Mirror their body language.

- Posture/Body Movement: Wait 10 seconds, and then shift your body in the same way.
- Gestures: Use the same hand gestures they use, but only when it's your turn to talk.
- Facial Expressions: Match their facial expressions instantly. If they raise their eyebrows, raise yours to acknowledge their emotion.
- Head Nods: When they nod their head, nod yours instantly to signal agreement or affirmation.

2. Mimic their tonality.

- Accents: Copy their accent slightly. You don't want to come across as mocking them, but listen to how they pronounce words. Mimic them just enough to hint that you might have lived in their part of the country at some point in your life. Many people do this naturally to some extent, and saying that accents rub off on you easily may be a sufficient excuse if they react negatively to it.
- Do they talk loud or soft? You'll want to talk at their volume level at all times.
- Mimic the depth of their voice. People talk in one of three ways: through their nose, throat, or chest. Figuring it out won't be too difficult. Compare them to the descriptions below and shift the depth of your voice a little bit closer to theirs.
 - Throat: A very throaty person will sound similar to Kermit the Frog
 - Nose: A person who talks through their nose will sound a bit like they're congested.
 - Chest: People who talk to their chest usually sound very deep and loud.

3. During the conversation, breathe like they breathe. This will create a hypnotic synchronization.

4. Match their rate of speech. Some people talk really fast, and some people talk very s-l-o-w-l-y. If they talk slow and you talk fast, what's the first thing that might come to someone's mind? Usually when you hear someone who speaks really fast, your brain links them to a slick fast talking sales person. We automatically go into defense mode: "warning, warning, salesman, salesman!" The opposite scenario would be when you talk slowly to someone who speaks fast. They might think that you're not very intelligent. Another thing to listen for is their cadence, or the rhythm, of their speech. Do they speak in bursts, or at a steady rhythm?

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5. Repeat and approve. This is so simple yet but probably one that most people often forget. After they speak, make sure you repeat a very brief synopsis of what they say and then approve (excellent, great, amazing, that's exciting). This shows that you are indeed listening. For some odd reason, people like it when you listen! Learning How to Be a Good Listener helps establish empathy, which is crucial building block of rapport.

6. Assume you already have rapport. Talk to the person as if they're a close friend whom you completely trust, and who completely trusts you. If you act in this manner, you will send out subconscious signals encouraging the other person to view you the same way.

Final Tips:

- Mimicry can also work through e-mail, in terms of the other person's use of slang, capitalization, acronyms and emoticons.
- Note the person's dialect, if it's different than yours. Do they say sneakers or trainers? Soda or pop? Beach or coast? Y'all or you guys? Use the same term they use when it's your turn to talk.



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