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# **Creating Relationship Synergy through Rapport Building**

How often have you wanted to create a connection with someone or a group but somehow missed the mark? You keep getting the same results every time you make an attempt at establishing any relationship, and it's a result you're not happy with. If this is the case you really need to change how you do things.

Rapport building is one of mutual influence, a give and take within a relationship, includes having regard for the feelings of others, respecting and understanding them, and looking at life from someone else's perspective other than your own. Walk a mile in someone else's shoes and begin to understand where they're coming from – it doesn't take much, just your willingness to give it a try.

One of the great things about rapport is that it doesn't matter whether you have agreement or not with the other party. Remember some conversations you've had in the past with your best friend, partner, or even children. Do you always agree with them? What happens when you disagree? Is it the end of the world or is there friendly banter? Sometimes we simply agree to disagree. I heard someone say once "You can either be right, or you can be happy." I know I'd rather be happy.

You can also build relationships with those you personally don't get along with. I've had jobs in the past where I had absolutely nothing in common with my bosses, however I still respected their position – they were still my boss, they were running the show and for all intents and purposes knew what they were doing. With that, my professional integrity remained intact.

So what can we do about getting rapport happening?

Interaction with others is multifaceted. We all have our own views on life that we believe is right, we have different values and beliefs; there are cultural issues as well as many other things that need to be taken into consideration when dealing with others. So I've come up with some very basic rapport building strategies that might just make it happen for you.

Firstly, take baby steps. If you're uncomfortable matching and mirroring the behaviours and language of others, start by practising with yourself in front of a mirror, find yourself a partner you'll be comfortable practising with, or mirror someone on television. The more you practise the more fluid your rapport building skills will become – think of this as if you engaging in a slow moving rhythmic dance with someone.

Read each point first and give yourself time to absorb its meaning.

\*Take a genuine interest in the other person.

\*Become curious as to how the other person thinks, what they value most, what type of humour they have, what language they use – is it visual, auditory or feeling?

\*If there is an apparent age gap between you and the other person, learn about that generation, what their values are, what motivates them and show an interest in their history.

\*Be willing and flexible enough to see life through the other person's eyes? How do they view the world?

\*Have open communication with others and be willing to disclose some things about yourself, of course within reason and when appropriate.

\*People can sense manipulation, if not consciously then subconsciously. I can sense manipulation a mile off and don't like it one bit! Sometimes I've kicked myself for agreeing to something I really didn't want to. Rapport is about mutual influence – give and take, an example is sharing in jokes, brainstorming a project together, a class, or being part of a team.

\*Mirror and match their posture and movements. This isn't about copying or mimicking. When movement's flow like a dance it shows you're in sync with others.

For example if someone crosses their arms you could subtly do the same or cross your feet. You could match someone's breathing rate with your blink rate, foot tapping can be equalled with nodding in rhythm, tugging of the earlobe could be tugging at skirt/trousers/shirt. Again, this takes practise and subtle observation.

\*Notice and really hear their voice. What tone, pitch, pace, volume and wording do they use?

\*What's their breathing rate – fast, slow, even, erratic? Notice their rhythm of breathing and do the same. I find when I do one-on-one sessions with my clients, my breathing rate and that of my client becomes as one. I know then that my client and I are totally in the present moment and focused on each other.

\*We all have a unique way we move, some of us are slow, fast, steady or barely make a movement. I apparently move something like a penguin (womanly would have been nice but there you have it). The unique movement of others is something else that can be matched though I wouldn't be overdoing the penguin waddle!

\*Actively listen to the other person – be interested in what they have to say. Even my young son knows when I'm

not present and not really listening to him.

\*Know and understand what your relationship with your 'Self' is before building rapport with others.

\*Be in the Present moment.

\*And finally, the biggest and most effective rapport building strategy is when you are personally involved in the rapport building process! Makes sense, does it not?

May you have many wonderful moments in building relationshi

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