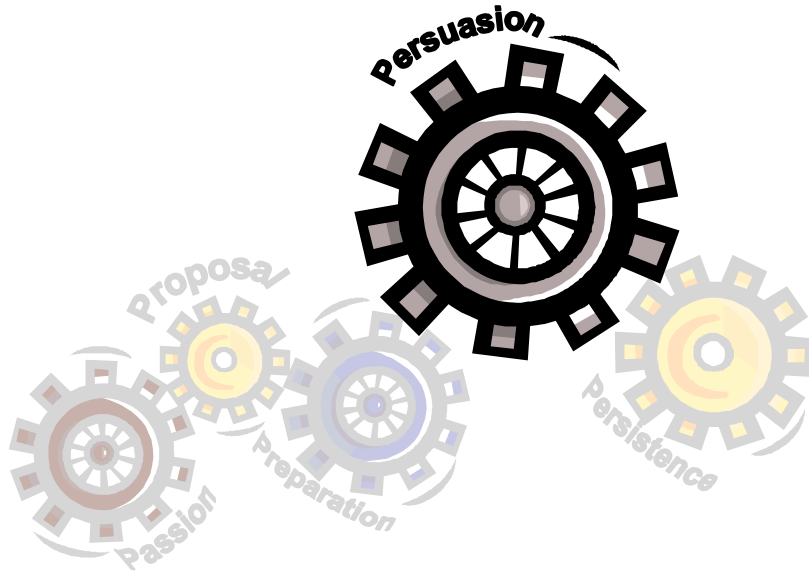


This chapter is taken from Bernard Ross's new book- written with Clare Segal on Influence to be published by Wiley in August 2008. It covers the material in the session. To find out more visit www.managementcentre.co.uk or www.managementcenterusa.com.

Chapter 7: Building rapport



Our next – and largest – influence cog is *Persuasion*. However, to persuade successfully you first need to build a *connection* to the person you want to influence – the donor, your colleague, a supplier. This connection allows you to understand the way they think and feel, which is essential for other parts of the influence process we discuss in Chapters 8 and 9. The easiest and quickest way to build a connection is to get *in rapport*. This can be particularly challenging when the person is very different from us, whether it's because of their age, gender, sexuality, faith, or even power and wealth.

In this chapter we look at the skills and approaches that will help you achieve rapport with anyone you need to. The four principles that underpin rapport are:

- seeking connection:
- identifying commonality

- **sharing feelings**
- **staying in the relationship ‘flow’**

By following these four principles you can ensure the way you *intend* to come across is the way you *actually* come across.

Finally, we explore body language, voice and words – the three key channels for transmitting and receiving information about ourselves to others, and vice versa.

Without rapport you will find it considerably harder to a sell yourself, your ideas or your cause. With rapport the *persuasion* process will be much easier and you’ll gain much greater trust from the donor.

Why bother with rapport?

As a fundraiser you have to deal with many people – including prospective and actual donors – who are not like you. They may be business people whereas you come from a non-profit background. Or they may be very wealthy and you have a modest income. They may not share your faith, gender or age profile. In addition, you may have to deal with these people in challenging situations such as at a busy donor cultivation cocktail party where you only have a few minutes to talk, or in a formal high-risk ‘pitch’ with you on one side of the table and the potential sponsor on the other.

To influence such people successfully – whatever the setting – you need to be able to get into rapport quickly. Rapport is often described as a feeling of being ‘in sync’ with the other person. When you’re in rapport, it’s easier to introduce your ideas and win people over to your cause. This makes the ability to *build* rapport, to create that feeling of trust and understanding when you need it, extremely important in influence generally, and fundraising in particular.

It’s important to stress that the techniques we’re going to cover build on the *natural processes* we all use to form positive working relationships and friendships. Most of the

time in our personal lives we achieve the rapport process *unconsciously*. Our experience in =mc – backed by a significant body of scientific data – suggests you can also develop the ability to *consciously* build rapport.

Using the techniques described below you can ensure that you both get your message across *and* that the person you're trying to influence feels confident you've understood and valued them and their views.

Manipulative or professional?

One of the most successful fundraisers we know is an American, Valerie Humphrey. She used to work for a major UK heritage charity, The National Trust, most of whose employees are quintessentially English – reserved, conservative and Conservative. Valerie is every inch a Californian – outgoing, bubbly and liberal. So at The National Trust she was very 'other.' Even so, she was very popular with both her staff and the donors, and a hugely successful fundraiser.

We watched her 'working' a room full of current and potential donors. Within minutes of engaging an older donor in conversation she had slowed her speech pattern and was matching his deeper voice tone. She calmed down her natural vivacity and kept her gestures to a minimum, as she listened to and carefully answered each of his concerns. She then moved on to a younger woman entrepreneur and spoke to her about the business benefits of associating the woman's company with the charity. Valerie's speech pattern speeded up – she was excited to tell the entrepreneur about the proposition – she used her hands to illustrate and emphasise her points.

Valerie wasn't being insecure *or* manipulative – she was very skilfully building rapport by adapting her style to mirror and match the communication style of the donors. She was being *professional*.

The value of building rapport

Rapport, from a French word meaning relationship, is useful in a range of settings.

We need rapport in direct *fundraising* settings:

- to deal with a patronising, or even aggressive, attitude from a corporate sponsor whom you need to challenge but keep working with
- to secure a gift from someone very different from you – perhaps a donor from a culture or faith where you don't know the customs and values
- to take advantage of a chance meeting with a potential foundation funder at a conference – maybe even in a lift with only five floors to make your point

We need it in *other work* settings. For instance, you're in an awkward performance appraisal meeting with a member of your team and want to stress you value *them* but need them to change their *behaviour*. And you'll probably find it useful in *personal* settings such as making a good impression on the 'other' family at a wedding.

Key principles behind rapport

There are four key principles behind rapport:

Seek connection: When we meet people we actively seek connections. Think about what happens when you go to a party. You meet people you don't know and you ask their name, what they do, where they work, who else they know at the party, if they like the wine, if they like the music, and so on. You may compliment them on their dress or hairstyle or choice of décor if it's their house. All of these are attempts to find similarity.

Identify commonality: The connection as we feel as part of rapport above comes primarily from the identification of commonality or similarity. The commonality can be about a number of things – a similar sense of humour, shared values, shared interests. So in general we find it easier to get on with people who are like us in some way – in age, in gender, in attitudes, in musical tastes and in beliefs. The challenge for fundraisers, as we've seen, is we are often not at all like the donors we're seeking support from.

Share feelings: It's important to say that being in rapport *doesn't mean agreeing about everything with the other person*. For example, two friends could have a discussion about Harry Potter. One says, "I loved the last book," and the other replies, "You're kidding. I hated it." The first says, "I can't believe it – it's great." And so on. The friends

both have strong (though differing) *feelings* about the same subject. The rapport that they're in is focused around the strength of the feeling.

Stay in the flow: It's also important to understand that rapport *is a process not a state* – you may fall in and out of rapport several times in a single period. Have you ever been to a dinner party and found you don't know the person you're sitting next to, but on talking to them you find get on really well? Then the conversation dries up, so you talk to the person on the other side of you. And the same happens there. That's rapport as a *process*.

By applying the principles above and the techniques in this book, you can avoid 'drying up' with an important donor and remain positively engaged for longer.

Times to avoid rapport

Since rapport is a sense of connection with someone else, it's not surprising that there are occasions when you *don't* want to be in rapport:

- when the attentions of a potential donor or the person you want to influence are inappropriate –they invite you out for dinner then make it clear the purpose is not business
- when the views being expressed are offensive and unacceptable – maybe sexist or racist – and you need to signal very clearly that you disagree
- when the support or 'deal' you're being offered by the sponsor is unacceptable or unethical – they don't seem to recognise this and you need to make it very clear.

In these cases and others it's important to be able break rapport quickly – and to send a message to the other person that they need to change their behaviour.

Aligning your communication: three channels

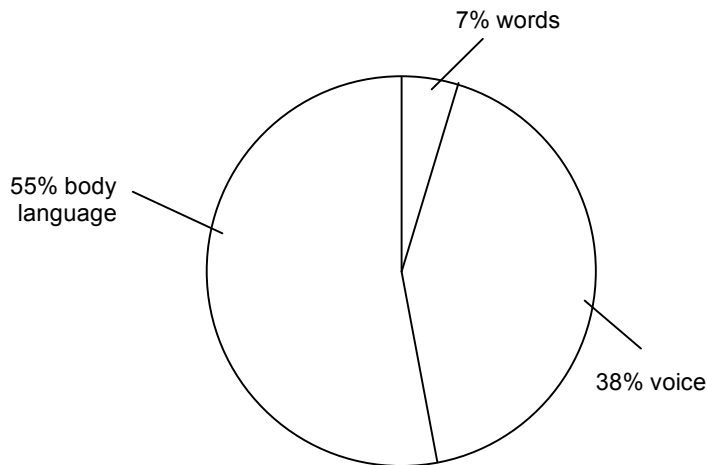
To build rapport successfully, it's very important that we understand how we send and receive information. Unless we choose to tell them, other people can never truly know our innermost thoughts and feelings – and we can't know theirs. The **words** we use make up one primary 'channel' by which we transmit and receive information. The other

two are **voice** and **body language**.¹

Consider an example when the channels work *together*. You get off the plane after a long trip. Your partner is waiting for you as you step through into the arrivals hall. There's a loud shout of pleasure, and he or she runs towards you smiling, and throws their arms around you and says in an excited, happy voice "You're back! I missed you *so much!*" All the channels are in sync. You know your partner really *is* pleased to see you.

But what if, instead of running gleefully towards you, your partner stands and waits for you to walk to them. He or she looks down as you approach, not making eye contact. And when you reach them, they give you a quick peck on the cheek and say flatly, "You're back. I missed you so much." Chances are, you're starting to feel quite anxious. Although the words are positive, the tone of voice and the body language aren't, and you're getting a *mixed message*.

There has been a significant amount of research into the *relative* impact of the different channels. The man who codified what other scientists and social scientists from Charles Darwin to Irving Goffman also observed, is Professor Albert Mehrabian of UCLA. His research in the 1980s, based on a series of careful experiments, established that the *relative* impact of the three channels is:



¹ These three channels transmit two kinds of data. The first provides the surface content of the communication – I like you, I need your help, I'm worried, etc. The second is the basis on which we form some fundamental views about the person: are they being truthful, do they feel confident, can they be trusted, etc.

Mehrabian's research is often misquoted and misunderstood, so let's be clear what this does and doesn't mean. It does *not* mean that the words don't count. It *does* mean that we take in and prioritise data around body language and voice. And it *does* mean that the words can be seriously compromised when the body language and voice are 'out of sync' with them. In other words, arguably the *most* important channel in the communication – the words – can be compromised because the other two channels have greater *relative impact*.

When you're on the receiving end of this clash, you experience a phenomenon called 'cognitive dissonance', where the voice and/or body language undermine or work against the meaning of the words. Think of the ratios involved. Body language accounts for 55% of the communication. Voice for 38%. Words for 7%. That's roughly 8:5:1. So if the words and the body language aren't congruent, the body language is *eight times* more likely to be transmitted than the words. If the body language and voice are *consonant* with the words, the words become incredibly powerful and we experience that person as being sincere. (Depending on the body language and voice, they could also be perceived as authoritative, angry, relaxed...)

To make sure your influence message comes across *as you intend* it's essential all your communication channels are aligned.²

Let your body talk – the 3 'M's of rapport building

If body language carries 55% of the message in any face-to-face communication, it's clearly the major component in building rapport. And voice, with 38%, is not far behind. Think back to that party example. The *words* "Who are you?" "This red wine is lovely

² The relative importance of each channel is altered when the communication is not face-to-face. For example:

- When you talk to someone on the telephone you can't see them, so words and voice become more important. But if you listen carefully you'll find you can 'hear' a smile or a frown in their voice tone – which is why telesales people often have a mirror in front of them when they're making a call.
- When you email someone the *only* channel is the words so naturally they acquire an extremely high level of importance. (That's why emoticons – :), :O, :(, etc. – can be helpful in emails or in instant messaging. They allow you to show you're being ironic or humorous.) The skill then is to find a way to inject the right 'tone of voice'.

By clever and sensitive use of written language we can encourage a reader to replay a voice in their head, or even to call to mind a picture. This is especially important in distant or remote communication.

have you tried some?” are important – they provide the subject. The way you use your *voice* – matching a quiet reflective tone or an excited high energy one is also *important* – it conveys the mood. But the channel that outweighs both of them in the impression you’re making – in building rapport – is your *body language*. If you want to start to build rapport with donors quickly, start by focusing on matching body language and voice.

It’s helpful to distinguish three different levels of activity in rapport building that are often confused:

- mimicking
- mirroring
- matching

Mimicking

Mimicking is *exactly* copying every aspect of someone’s body language. We *don’t*, under any circumstance, recommend that you use it when you’re working to get in rapport with anyone – least of all a donor. The literal copying of body language may be obvious and make the other person uncomfortable.

But when we’re training fundraisers in influence we often start by asking people to ‘mimic’ each other’s body language as it helps to notice just how much data is transferred in non-verbal communication. This might be useful for you too. We’ve found some people are very good at matching upper body posture but fail to notice huge amounts of lower body activity such as a tapping foot. So use mimicking to *learn* but not to *do*.

Mirroring

Have you ever found yourself enjoying a conversation with someone, and then noticed that you’ve unconsciously adopted broadly similar positions? For example, leaning back and laughing at a comment at the same time, or picking up drinks in parallel. This is known as *mirroring*, and is the equivalent of taking a series of behaviour ‘snapshots’ of another person’s body posture and then *approximating* them. It’s basically a good thing to do when seeking to build rapport.

You can see examples of unconscious mirroring all around you. Next time you go into a

bar or restaurant take a moment to spot the people who seem to be getting on well. The chances are it's the fact that they are sitting in similar positions or using their hands in a similar way that leads you to that conclusion. They are mirroring each other's body language.

Matching

Matching is the full-colour, 3D, real-time movie version of mirroring's Polaroid snapshots. Sometimes called pacing, matching uses body language, voice and words and involves getting in sync with another person's movements, rhythms, language and gestures. Because you're using all channels the impact is richer and stronger.

Again, it's important to stress that matching is a *natural* process – it's something we do all the time. And like mirroring, we're often completely unaware of what we are doing. When you're standing talking to someone, have you found you both start to gesture at the same time, and even to make the same kinds of gestures? (For example, using a chopping motion with one hand into the other to reinforce points.) Have you ever spent time with someone who has a distinctively different way of speaking from you – maybe their intonation rises at the end of sentences – and found yourself speaking like them? Have you found the words or phrases you use said back to you by other people when you're with them? What you've been doing is *matching* the other person.

There are special challenges in matching body language across gender. Men, for example, will often sit with their legs spread apart. Women in Europe and North America tend not to do this as it's seen as unfeminine. If they match this particular male body language, they are likely to come across as mimicking. In other cultures, however, it's entirely acceptable. In Kenya you often see women in traditional long-flowing dress sitting with legs akimbo, so they can appropriately match the man.

Below we explore *how* you can become excellent at matching. Try to observe it in action and you'll soon notice how common it actually is. For example TV chat show hosts often use matching techniques to build rapport with guests. (Notice how Larry King often adjusts his voice to match that of the person he's interviewing.) Interviewers do this to persuade the guest to 'open up' about their lives and careers more easily.

What can you match?

When you match you're choosing to identify and build rapport through a selection of the other person's *behaviours*. The real skill is to identify those behaviours that make the biggest (unconscious) impact on the other person in terms of conveying commonality and similarity.

Some of the main types of behaviour you might see are listed in the box below. These behaviours are all significant opportunities to match. For example, if you see someone sitting forward, in general so should you – and see if this helps to make the communication easier.

Behaviour	Elements you can match
posture and body movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● sitting or standing position – e.g. crossed legs.● movement while speaking – e.g. leaning forward or back
gestures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● types of hand gesture – e.g. some people 'draw' with their hands when talking● types of gesture – e.g. some people touch themselves for emphasis (this is called a 'disclosure' gesture)
facial expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● amount of smiling and grimacing plus length of time it's done.● facial 'ticks' – e.g. brow wrinkling or lips puckering
speech rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● speed at which the person speaks – 'normal' is 120-140 words a minute, but some people are faster/slower● pauses – e.g. some people have longish pauses between sentences and you can match these

voice tone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● intonation and emphasis – e.g. rising or falling at sentence end ● stress on specific words or phrases – eg “<i>My investment,</i>” “<i>This joint commitment</i>” ● distinctive accent – eg Texan, Irish, Spanish with English as second language
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As you become more skilled in matching these behaviours, you’ll find you have the chance and ability to observe other more subtle behaviours. Matching these latter can help to take you to very deep rapport. They include:

- breathing patterns – rate of breathing and depth
- eye contact – amount of gaze and blink rate
- language – type of language used

Behaviour	Elements you can match
breathing patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● speed of breathing – fast, medium or slow ● breathing location – high in the chest or lower in the stomach ● depth of breathing – lots of shallow breaths or occasional deep ones
eye contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● blink rate – how often the person blinks³ ● gaze – do they look at you directly or indirectly ● length – how long someone looks at you and the number of times they look away to gather their thoughts, etc.

³ Hypnotists work initially by developing rapport and then leading. (See later in this chapter for a discussion on *leading*.) If you watch their technique, typically you’ll see they often start by asking someone to relax. Then they focus on *matching* a person’s blink rate – so they’ll say “You feel... sleepy” and use the word “sleepy” as the subject blinks. Then they wait until the subject blinks again and on the ‘blink’ say, “Your eyes feel t-i-r-e-d” and so on. This reinforcement of a *natural* behaviour begins the process of *leading* into a state like a light sleep. And when the eyes finally remain shut the hypnotist has succeeded in putting the subject into a trance.

language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● visual, sound or feeling words – for more on this see Chapter 7 <i>Using the language of influence</i>. ● formal or informal language – e.g. “Hi” versus “Good morning”
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Matching voice

Many people are aware of the importance of body language, but voice is often ignored – even though it’s up to 38% of the relative impact of any communication. Voice matching is particularly important when you’re working on the telephone –arranging a solicitation meeting, for example.

There are a number of elements in voice to consider:

- *Speed*: the rate at which words are said
- *Timbre*: the resonant qualities of the voice
- *Volume*: the loudness or quietness of what is said
- *Tone*: the ‘brightness’ of the overall voice
- *Stress*: where the emphasis is in the sentence

Note that voice varies considerably across cultures. For example in general, Spanish speakers – especially from Northern Spain – tend to speak very quickly. Whereas Nordics, especially Finns, have a relatively slow speech rate.

First Direct works on its tone of voice

There’s a UK bank that has built its success on being able to match voice elements.

First Direct only does telephone banking. And everyone who banks with them always comments on how good its customer service is. How does it do this? After all, its interest rates are the same as all the other banks’; its credit cards are only as useful as any other credit cards; its cheques are no more or less valid than any other. So what is it about its customer service that’s so good?

The answer is simple. All its operators are trained to match voice tone. If you ring up and ask in a confident, assertive tone to borrow some money for a new car, the operator takes you through the process in a confident, assertive tone. And if you sound anxious and hesitant asking for a car loan, the operator will respond in a quieter, more hesitant tone, all the time taking you through the same process.

They're even trained that if they call you and you sound like you're relaxed with your feet up in on the table, they'll put their feet up on the table in the call centre. Or if they catch you when you're walking around the kitchen cooking, they'll stand up, tuck the receiver under their chin like you're probably doing, and talk to you as they pace around the call centre.

As a result of this expert voice matching, First Direct is consistently ranked the top bank in the UK for customer service. We've helped a number of telephone fundraising departments learn from this company and its approach

There's some extra important learning here. Voice quality is often most easily matched by changing your body posture or movement, technically called your *physiology*. By matching someone's physiology you'll find it easier to match their voice. So if the person at the other end of the phone is speaking more quickly than is natural to you, try waving your hand at the same rate like a conductor's baton. You'll find you speed up almost without thinking about it.

Beyond body language and voice

Rapport is not just about body language and voice though these are very important. It's also possible to match:

- experiences: 'Wow, that's exactly what happened to me.'
- skills and talents: 'I play piano too. Isn't it great?'
- likes and dislikes: 'Yes, I think that too much cream is sickly.'

You can then move on to match at a deeper level through:

- beliefs: 'Good point, there is too much emphasis on the individual today.'

- values: 'We obviously agree on the importance of education.'
- attitudes: 'You're right, the young should be more respectful.'

You can be more sophisticated in matching beliefs, values and attitudes than simply saying the right words – you can demonstrate your real commitment. Below are some examples:

Value, belief or attitude	How to demonstrate your commitment
I am trustworthy and reliable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ensure you carry out any action you promise to do ● always turn up for meetings or make calls on time ● use words like 'commitment', 'promise', and 'certainty'
I am creative and flexible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● offer an number of different options or possibilities ● encourage left-field thinking from the person or people you're working with ● be prepared to change your opinion or decisions when there's reason
I am principled and value-led	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● share any appropriate values or beliefs you hold ● display interest and understanding of others' values and beliefs ● avoid any suggestion of compromise on inappropriate issues

As with body language and voice, you don't want to match *all* the beliefs and values of your donor. Nor is it necessary to become a clone of the other person or slavishly copy everything they do. The secret, as before, is to choose a small number to match. Try these and see if you can build greater rapport.

Rapid Rapport

When you want to build rapport with someone quickly there are seven key steps:

1. **Begin with them:** before you start trying to communicate any ideas or to influence someone, build a relationship by paying attention to them and their preferences and interests. Be *genuinely* curious.
2. **Complement their body language:** pick up on the pattern of their gestures, and how they stand or move. Match these, where appropriate, and notice the effect this has.
3. **Find the signature:** people often have a ‘signature rhythm’ – that is they’ll repeat certain movements (nodding head, tapping the table.) If you can pick this up and match it, you will very quickly build rapport.
4. **Match their communication style:** notice what type of words or phrases, or even ways of speaking they prefer, and work them subtly into your own communication. (See Chapter 8 *Using the language of influence* for more on this.)
5. **Breathe and blink in sync:** this one takes practice! Match their breathing and blink rates. Be careful not to mimic, but if you get it right you’ll find it a very powerful bridge to building subtle rapport.
6. **Work with their preferences:** notice how they like to receive information. Some people like big picture stuff and some prefer details. Others prefer to work *towards* positives and some *away* from negatives. (See Chapter 10 *Helping donors say yes* for more on this.)
7. **Review and replay:** always review the success or failure of your rapport initiative. Look at it in terms of what you planned to do, what actually worked and what didn’t. Use the movie technique and freeze frame your actions to assess them. (Chapter 6 *Building self-confidence* will offer insights here.)

Rapport undercover

In the Preface to this book we talked about Nikki, development director of an artificial heart research charity. We explained how she secured the opportunity to make a 20-minute presentation to the Saudi Royal family and their advisors to secure a \$15M donation for her cause. She sought advice from us on how to present the case. Some of the advice we offered was helpful and productive. Some was wide of the mark. Some of the most helpful advice concerned the rapport element of the interaction.

There were some big challenges. To be respectful of the status and culture of those she

was going to meet, Nikki had to efface herself behind a loose-fitting, full-length dress and headscarf, which meant all that could be seen were her hands and face. So how was she to build rapport when denied much of the 55% of information from body language? And how was she to do it in just 20 minutes wearing a garment that felt very alien...?!

We coached her to focus on two specific areas. One was matching the blink rate of each person as she spoke to them. Nikki thought this a little strange but agreed to try. She found it easy with the two women in the group she met. With the men this was harder, but she reported she had matched them as best she could. A second coaching tip was to match the voice pattern and volume of each person as who spoke to her. (This also proved hard since much of the conversation was being translated from Arabic. But we had anticipated this and told her to focus on matching the *speakers* rather than the *translator*. We wanted her to build rapport with the decision makers not the translator.)

Nikki worked hard to follow our advice. She concentrated on matching the different blink rates of each person as she shared the charity's vision. One individual, she said seemed like he would never blink as he held her gaze while looking quizzical about the size of the investment she was asking for.

She answered questions at the end methodically. She focussed on listening to the questioner and their voice then taking note of the translation. In her responses she carefully adopted the slower pace of one individual, the fast speaking pattern of another, and the long, long pauses between phrases of a third in her answers.

The next day she rang us from the airport to say they'd loved her presentation. As important the translator- who dropped her off for her flight- had feedback that he'd been impressed at what he called "her confidence and charm." Most people who presented to the group, he said, failed to make an impact. He could tell they had liked her and her ideas.

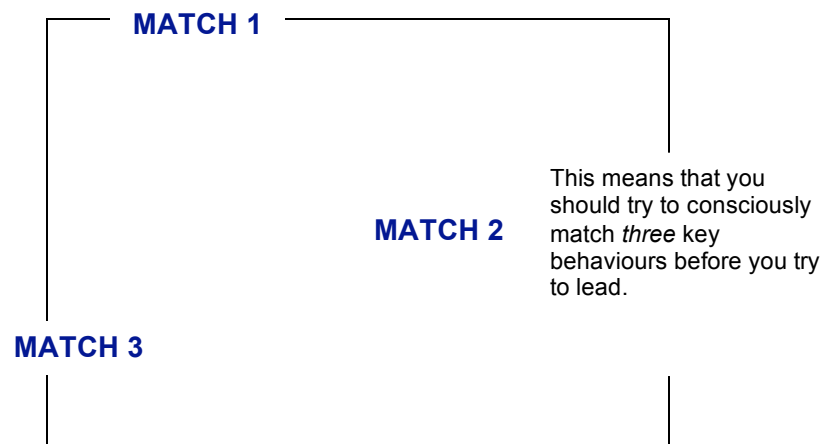
The day after she forwarded the email she received telling her she'd got the money – and had secured the future of the research unit and its pioneering work.

Leading – taking control

There are times when simply matching someone you want to win round to your point of view isn't enough, as they themselves aren't currently in the right frame of mind to agree to your idea or request. They appear tired and disengaged, and you want them to be excited and fired up by your project or idea. If that's the case, you need to take your rapport-building one step further and see if *leading* will help.

Leading is when you consciously work to *change* the other person's state or perception. It's useful when you want that person to understand the world from *your* perspective or change their behaviour. Whatever your purpose, you need to begin with rapport: Don't try to lead someone to a new state *before* you've spent time matching where they are now. The rule is simple: *in order to change someone's view of the world you first have to enter into their world.*

The rule of three applies to leading. That is, you'll most likely need to match three behaviours before you've achieved a high enough level of rapport to be able to lead. If you're not at the right level of rapport, the other person is much less likely to follow.



You normally lead by changing some aspect of your body language. For example, if you've been *matching* a donor's relaxed position by sitting back, breathing deeply and speaking slowly. You're in rapport. But you don't want to match their spoken perception that there are many challenges to consider with the fundraising campaign

You now want to *lead* and get them excited and engaged. So you lean forward and offer a positive affirmation of something positive they've said and stress, "That's a good point." You continue, "I wonder, then, if you'll be interested in the community hospice project we're running which answers that challenge." See if they move forward to adopt something closer to your position.

If they do – you're *leading* and you've succeeded. If not, you need to match and pace them some more. If the behaviour you've matched isn't enough then try matching a different behaviour such as their voice tone, or their language pattern. Then have another go at leading them to a more engaged state.

Leading can also be a useful technique in job interviews. When the interviewee arrives they may be feeling nervous. Giveaways about this can be the interviewee speaking quickly, moving awkwardly, leaning forward anxiously, and clasping and unclasping their hands. By leaning forward yourself, matching the speed of their speech and clasping and unclasping your hands you'll match their anxiety and build rapport. But in this case you don't want them to *stay* nervous – you want them to relax.

So after a few minutes of such matching you comment on how interesting some answer they've made is and smile. Then you lean back in your chair and adopt a slower speech pattern which you think might help them to become more relaxed. If they respond, and also lean back and smile, you've succeeded.

Summary

We communicate through three main channels: words, voice and body language. The relative impact of these channels is one of the most studied ratios in social psychology. The channels with the greatest *relative* impact are body language and voice. Words are important for content or the *information* we're trying to convey.

When these channels are working in harmony we appear honest, authentic and sincere. When one or more of these channels conveys a different message to the other two – say, shaky hands alongside a strong voice and upbeat message – we can appear inconsistent or dishonest. This phenomenon is known as *cognitive dissonance*.

It's easier to win people over to our point of view when we're in rapport. Rapport is a sense of trust and responsive between you and another person.

Building rapport involves matching a careful selection of behaviours from within the three communication channels to demonstrate to others that you're in tune with them. This is a *natural* process that we can become good at in a conscious way. Once In rapport we become more effective at influence.

We can build rapport simply to help transmit our message more clearly. Or we may do it to help lead someone to understand, accept and act on our cause. When you want to build rapport quickly there are seven key steps:

1. **Begin with them**
2. **Complement their body language**
3. **Find the 'signature'**
4. **Match their communication style**
5. **Breathe and blink in sync**
6. **Work with their preferences**
7. **Review and replay**

Just as matching is a useful way to build rapport, *dis pacing* is useful when you want to deliberately break rapport. You can dispace by *mismatching* body language, voice or language.

Finally once you have rapport you can *lead*: that is, change someone's state or attitude by introducing a more positive piece of body language accompanied by a positive verbal reinforcement.