

Persuasion Tips Newsletter

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The Inner Game of Rapport

"With rapport anything is possible. Without is nothing is possible."

To influence anyone in a persuasion setting (without threats, weapons or coercion) rapport is absolutely vital.

Most sales people attempt to establish rapport by finding a topic of interest that they might both have in common. This rapport building technique can often lead to long digressions away from why they are actually there - the sale!

A great deal of time is spent in teaching rapport and is one of the fundamental aspects of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP).

Typically, one is taught how to use their physiology to match the other person so that rapport happens at an unconscious level and doing so with a few seconds pause to avoid appearing as mimicry.

But very few people discuss what the mind sales person, negotiator or persuader can use even before the first meeting. At this level it's all an "inner game" that occurs in the mind of the persuader. So instead of going over all the traditional methods of rapport building let's discuss what you can do mentally to make the rapport there BEFORE even the first meeting.

The best way is to assume rapport. Often it is as simple as that. But let me add some meat to this by providing a few simple exercises you can do to make it happen.

To do that, on a mental level imagine a cord of light that links you and the person you're selling. Within that cord of light is trust, liking and connection that is already being exchanged even before the meeting. This will minimize any anxiety of the first introduction and you will demonstrate that comfort in the meeting.

A more advanced (and mentally strenuous) method is to imagine that you are that person. The image you can imagine is that they are talking to themselves and everyone has rapport with themselves.

In doing this experiment one of my clients began to momentarily feel as if he were the other person talking to himself and the degree of comfort he described was incredible.

One drawback of this degree of rapport is that a person may feel so in rapport that they forget their outcome. The solution is to momentarily return to "being yourself" and remember why you're there, bringing your outcome into the interaction.

The benefit of this "Inner Game" of rapport is that it becomes instant and you'll quickly find that won't you have to resort to finding an interest you both share in common.

As with everything important, rapport building is a skill so ,with practice, you'll find that playing the "Inner Game" becomes easier and easier over time.