

## The 7 Secrets Of Power Persuasion & Influence

### Rapport

It has often been said that people like people that are like themselves. It doesn't mean that you can only have rapport with people who are like you, as it is perceived likenesses that create rapport. When you watch two people who are in rapport their gestures, eye contact and voices match, or complement, each other. Have you ever been in a conversation and noticed that your body posture is an exact mirror image of the other person? You cross your legs and moments later they do the same. That is the key to rapport - mirroring by becoming like another person. The golden rule is : People like other people whom they perceive as like themselves.

Masters of influence are all experts at creating rapport. However it is important to differentiate between matching, which creates rapport, and mimicking. Matching is a communication that usually takes place outside of conscious awareness. If you mimic someone they will become consciously aware of it and may be offended.

The more ways you can find to feed back to someone his own behaviour the greater rapport you will create. It's fun to be imaginative, though if someone is pacing up and down a room, it might not be appropriate for you to go and walk alongside them! However, you can tap your finger in time with their footsteps, rapport really can be that imperceptible.

To create commonality between yourself and someone else you don't have to mirror everything about them. Mastering the power of rapport is simply learning to become like other people. We all do this to some extent anyway, but masters of rapport do it consciously, and the person they are focusing on is a lot more likely to be influenced and persuaded by them.

### Reciprocity

One of the most widespread and basic norms in human culture is the rule to repay in kind what we have been given. If someone does you a favour then you feel obliged to do something for them in return. As the saying goes 'one good turn deserves another'. Most people feel uncomfortable with the feeling of owing something to someone. Research has shown that the reciprocity rule has nothing to do with liking another person, but only with the desire to repay them. The decision to comply with another person's request is frequently influenced by the reciprocity rule. If you give another person something right before asking for a favour the chances are much higher that they will agree.

Advertisers know this and use this rule to their advantage - free samples are the obvious example of this rule. Market traders often use this strategy by using standard salesman patter - Ordinarily this fine set of china crockery should cost, £100 but today it's not £80, not even £75, not even \$60, but to you madam £49. Of course it was always £49 but by making an outrageous request initially and then retreating, offering a concession, the buyer feels an obligation to do the same. They certainly wouldn't have spent £100 on china, but as the trader has so kindly offered such a concession then the buyer unconsciously feels the subtle pressure to return the favour by purchasing.

## Likeability

One of the most important bases of influencing and persuading others to do what you want is to first get them to like you. Human beings prefer to say yes to those they know and like. There are five key factors that affect our ability to like something or someone -

**Similarity** - People tend to like people who they perceive as like themselves. Make a point of focusing on similarities rather than differences when building rapport

**Familiarity** - Generally speaking we prefer things that are familiar to us. A university study showed that the more a person is exposed to something or somebody the more attractive it is. Be around the person as much as possible - familiarity breeds fondness rather than contempt.

**Attractiveness** - Attractive people are consistently assessed as being kinder, more talented and more intelligent than others. As a result attractive people are more persuasive in terms of getting what they request and changing other people's attitudes. Make yourself appear more attractive by being confident, upbeat, enthusiastic and happy about life.

**Association** - By pairing yourself with pleasurable feelings another person will begin to associate you with their feeling good. If you want to be liked by someone talk to them when they are happy or excited about something. These feelings will then be automatically associated with you.

**Compliments** - Psychological research has proven that we have an automatic positive reaction to compliments. Quite simply flattery works, just make sure it is not obvious. A subtle use of praise is one of the quickest ways of getting someone to like us.

## Flexibility

When influencing others it is vitally important to share or understand other people's experience and ask ourselves the same kind of questions that other's are asking themselves, and to feel the way they do. When I am thinking about influencing someone I

consider the goals or desires of the person whom I wish to persuade, as though they were my own goals or desires. Early in a communication I will often directly ask them what is it that they want? I might gather more information by asking what's important to them? I work from an assumption that it is easier for a person to agree with you if you have their best interests in mind.

The Great Indian leader Mohatma Ghandi used this approach in his negotiations. Some say he even brought about the end of the British Empire because 'he was flexible enough to imagine seeing things from the perspective of his opponents'. He would imagine standing over their shoulder or walking in their shoes, some would say even thinking their thoughts. He had prepared so thoroughly that he had an answer for all of their considerations and concerns before discussions started.

Use the Flexability exercise.

### Commitment and consistency

Psychologists have recognised within human beings a strong need to be consistent in their actions, words, beliefs and attitudes. A person whose words and actions do not match up is often considered unreliable or two faced. Conversely someone who is often consistent is seen as stable and honest. When I am helping a client to stop smoking I ask them to make a public commitment. As part of a series of exercises I ask a client to tell others that they are quitting smoking. Let the other person know that a new way of thinking or an idea is really consistent with who they are. Subtly point out other things they have done that are consistent with this course of action or idea. Get them to see your idea as consistent with their beliefs and not a departure from then and you will increase your chances of getting compliance.

I have found that a powerful way to get someone to agree with you is to first build a pattern of agreement by asking questions that someone can only answer 'yes' too (either out loud or in their mind). Salespeople call this approach the 'yes set'. They ask a set of questions, or make a number of statements that the customer will say 'yes' too. When the pattern of answering 'yes' has been established the sales person asks the customer to purchase. In simple if someone say yes to you 4 times in a row, they are more likely to say yes a fifth. For example 'You want value for money? (yes) and you want something that's reliable? (yes) that's proven to be effective? (yes) so which one are you going to take?

For somebody to remain consistent and having committed thus far, they are highly likely to agree to the request rather than go back.

### Assumptions

Never underestimate the power of words, they can put us in good moods or bad moods and even, in extreme cases, start wars, they can certainly sell products. There is so much I could say about language, however the single most important language pattern in persuasion are assumptions. The reason why is because the listener has to accept whatever is presupposed in your sentence in order to make sense of it. For example, 'If he's as funny as she is we'll all be laughing'. In order to understand the sentence you have to accept that she's funny.

Hypnotists use this linguistic technique all the time, for example they say; 'Would you like to go in to a trance now or in a few moments'. Although at first it appears as though there is some choice here, the truth is this sentence pre-supposes, presumes, that the client will go into a trance whichever option they choose.

I was shopping for a new fax machine and halfway through the sales process the salesman said "Before you choose which machine you'd like, I need to ask a few more questions." The salesman assumes that I will choose a machine from the selection I have been shown, and hidden in that is the suggestion that I will buy it.

Obviously an assumption will not force someone to do something against their will, however the more assumptions in your use in your language the more persuasive you become. For example, instead of saying 'Do you want to go to dinner? It's much more persuasive to say 'Which night do you want to go to dinner? Rather than asking 'Is there any chance of a discount? It's far stronger to ask 'What's the most discount you can give me? Once you have mastered the art of using assumptions pepper your language with them so that you assume that you will get what you want in everything that you say.

## Scarcity

People assign more value to opportunities when they are less available. They want what they can't have. This principle operates because things that are difficult to attain are typically more valuable. The scarcity principle creates a cognitive short cut in the mind because humans know that generally those things that are harder to obtain are usually more valuable. So if you present an opportunity as something that is scarce or could well be lost if not taken immediately it is likely to appear much more attractive to the other person.

Marketers frequently use the phrase 'Limited Edition'. Human beings have a natural opposition to losing choices or freedoms. This is again something that is ingrained in us from childhood. In the popular book on dating 'The Rules' emphasis is encouraged on not being too available when asked on a date. In simple; make others jump through a hoop to get you and your perceived value increases.

One experiment beautifully demonstrates this idea. In what was called a 'consumer preference study' participants were given a chocolate chip cookie from a jar and asked to grade its taste and quality. For some of the participants the jar contained 10 cookies for others it contained only 2 cookies. Not surprisingly the cookie from the jar containing only 2 were rated much higher - because it was in short supply it was considered more expensive and desirable,

### Emotional associations

When trying to get somebody to do something, you need to remember that logic is largely irrelevant. The most successful way to persuade is to appeal to a person's emotions. As the brilliant behavioral scientist Dr Richard Bandler says 'Whenever you are selling anything, ultimately you are selling good feelings'. Ninety percent of the decisions we make are based on emotions - we only use logic afterwards to explain or back up our actions. When you want to impress someone, telling them how good you are will never compare with how good you make them feel in your presence.

Questions are an excellent way to drive others in to positive feelings. Questions such as: Who in your life makes you feel happiest ? What was the best holiday you've ever had ? What was your most romantic experience ? All serve to force the person to associate to positive feelings. By then asking for more information about what makes someone feel good and repeatedly being in the vicinity of the answers means the good feelings get subconsciously linked to you.

Advertisers understand that we are influenced not primarily through our intellect, but the sensations we link to their products. For example, Nike has created powerful associations with sports stars, Ronaldo, Denise Lewis and Tiger Woods. Their commercials show the stars who perform in a way that entertains and excites millions of people, eliciting positive states in the viewers whilst simultaneously flashing up the Nike logo. A link between the good feelings about the sporting heroes and Nike is formed in the mind. The commercial is then repeated many times to strengthen the neural pathways in the brain that associate the good feelings with Nike.

### Flexible Perspective Exercise

Think of somebody you are having a problem with or that you want to negotiate with. Return to the situation where you had a conflict or imagine that person is standing in front of you now. See what you see, hear your internal dialogue, and take note of how you feel. Now float up out of your self and let those feelings go.

Next, float in to the shoes of that person you don't get along with. If you like, you can even imagine putting on their head like a virtual reality helmet. Notice how the world looks from their perspective. See yourself through their eyes. What might they be saying to themselves about the situation? How does it feel to be in their shoes? Now float out of that person and let those feelings go.

Next, think of someone whose intelligence and wisdom you admire. It can be a friend, mentor or even a character from history. Step into their shoes and imagine they are watching the two of you interact. How would they perceive this situation as a neutral observer? Move to a position where you can see both yourself and the person you were having the problem with. Observe what's going on with 'those people over there'. What's are they doing? What kinds of things are they saying to another? What kinds of insight do you gain inside the mind of this wise mentor? What advice do they have for you?

Finally, take what you've learned and step back in to your own shoes. Look at that person you were having the problems with in new ways, and choose at least one thing to say or do to move towards a happy resolution