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# Rapport Skills for Greater Success

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## Rapport Skills for Greater Success

by Kathleen Gage

In order to succeed both personally and professionally it is essential to have effective communication skills. Effective communication involves building rapport with others. The more rapport you have, the more receptive people tend to be. One way to do that is to understand and acknowledge the mode in which other people communicate. There are three primary modes: visual (picturing something), auditory (words and tones) or kinesthetic (feelings).

Visual people tend to talk in pictures and to talk more rapidly and in higher voice tones. They use words such as: see, look, picture, image, and colorful. They may say, "How does that *look* to you?" "Do you *see* what I'm saying?" or "Can you picture this?"

Auditory people tend to talk in tempo. The tone and tempo is somewhere in between visual and kinesthetic. Auditory people use terms that have more to do with hearing, listening or speaking. An auditory person may say, "How does that *sound* to you?" "Do you *hear* what I am talking about?" or "I want to *talk* to you." They communicate more in terms of hearing and talking.

Kinesthetic people use terms that relate more to feeling. They want you to connect with their idea or really get a sense of what they are communicating to you. They want you to walk away with a good feeling about their project. Kinesthetic people tend to slow down their rate of speaking and really feel what is going on. This does not in any way mean they are intellectually slower.

Everyone communicates in all three modes. However, one is usually favored and tends to be more dominant. No one mode is any better than the other. It just happens to be that we all have a different way to communicate at different times in different situations. The pace a person is speaking and the predicates they are using are just one way to identify whether they are audio, visual or kinesthetic at that moment.

There was a situation where a sales rep was scheduled to make a presentation to group of decision makers from a large corporation. The rep knew he was going to make a great presentation because he did his homework, knew the different levels of status of the people present, had all the answers to potential questions and objections and was very familiar with his company's product. The one area he failed to understand was the mode of communication the primary decision maker was in. The sales rep is very visual and the primary decision maker happened to be very kinesthetic.

As the rep was presenting his ideas he spoke with rapid excitement and used visual predicates such as, "Look at this idea. Picture the look on the everyone's face when we implement this plan. Can you see how this will benefit your company?"

The deal did not go through. It's not because the rep presented a bad idea. It may be the *way* it was presented. Perhaps if he would have slowed the pace and increased the kinesthetic predicates his idea would have been more readily accepted. He would have built more rapport with the primary decision maker. To build more rapport with a kinesthetic person you might want to start with something like, "How do you feel about this plan? Can you connect with it? Based on our conversation I assure you things will run smoothly."

A primary benefit to understanding how people communicate is so that you can present your ideas in a way that they can more fully receive the information. When people are in rapport with others they tend to trust them on a deeper level.

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