

Rev Up Your Rapport

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Rapport can be defined as “bringing agreement, harmony and accord to a relationship”. Isn’t that what we want in our connections – to discover points of mutual interest or common ground, reach agreements, live and work together in harmony and enjoy interactions along the way- with more ease? Rapport is the magic ingredient for getting along with our customers, co-workers, colleagues, committee members, families, friends, neighbors and everyone else we encounter in any role, anywhere, anytime. Getting along means smoother sailing, fewer hassles, and more fun!

The key to revving up rapport lies in expressing the same qualities that people find attractive. It’s the pleasure/pain principle in action. We move toward the people we like- those who are easy to get along with, who make us feel comfortable, who bring out our best qualities (including our smiles, laughter and good feelings).

In the reverse, we move away from those who bring us discomfort- those with whom we find nothing in common, or who grate on our nerves, make us see red, hold up our plans, don’t meet our expectations, give us headaches, or provoke other negative responses.

The relationships that bring us pleasure and good experiences are likely to endear as well as endure, generating fond memories, long-lasting impressions and joyful feelings. In contrast, the relationships that bring us discomfort and cause negative experiences are likely to test our endurance; although their accompanying impressions, feelings, and memories may also last, we probably wish they wouldn’t.

The ability to rev up your rapport is critical to creating enduring connections. Without it, you’re more likely to suffer the pain and stress of troubled relationships and disappointing connections. You may also miss out on wonderful opportunities and their power to transform. All are typical fallout from choosing a life of disconnection

According to the book, “Get Along with Anyone, Anytime, Anywhere ... 8 keys to creating enduring connections with customers, co-workers – even kids, by Arnold Sanow and Sandra Strauss here are key traits you must focus on to rev up your rapport;

Authenticity	Good communication skills
Appreciation	Humor
Compassion	Neat appearance
Confidence	Positive attitude
Engaging style	Social skills
Enthusiasm	Respect
Friendliness	Sincerity

Conversely, here are traits that typically turn people off or turn them away;

Abrasiveness	Lack of humor
Apathy	Negative attitude
Coldness	Poor body language
Insensitivity	Poor communication skills
Insincerity	Poor social skills
Lack of appreciation	Profanity
Lack of confidence	Rudeness

Not only does rapport enhance your personal and professional relationships, it can also boost your company's bottom line. Communicating with insight, perception, and empathy strengthens your efforts to keep customers happy, gain and maintain trust, regain favor with disgruntled clients and customers and increase the likelihood of getting their repeat business and their referrals. Likewise, building good rapport with colleagues increases the quality of your working relationships, with corresponding impact on productivity, creativity, cooperation, morale and overall job satisfaction.

Here are 5 specific steps you can take to boost your rapport:

1. Call people by name. As Dale Carnegie stated in his book, "How to Win Friends and Influence People," there is nothing more important to someone than their name"
2. Pay attention. When conversing with someone by phone or in-person give them your full attention. Don't get distracted by other people or tasks.
3. Don't interrupt. When you interrupt someone, sensitivity, rapport and commitment are killed. If there is one thing people hate, it's being interrupted.
4. Treat others as special. To the extent that you treat someone as special and focus on their needs and concerns they will immediately gravitate to you and want to deal with and work with you in the future. A good way to remember this concept is to greet every person you meet as if they were a long lost friend!
5. Be interested not just interesting. This is the key to popularity. Too many people end up talking all the time, dominating the conversation and fail to have a two way conversation. People love people who listen to them.

As Norman Vincent Peale stated, "Getting people to like you is merely the other side of liking them"

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