

The Art of **Rapport Building**

Transform your **relationships!**



Suresh Sivaraman



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"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel"

Maya Angelou

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There's a lot riding on Rapport!

Establishing rapport is critical for the success of relationships at work and in personal life. Some people seem to exude a natural effortless charm which draws people towards them. The conversation gets off to a wonderful start from the word go. There are folks who seem to be born with this ability to connect well with others. That's a great quality to have. It isn't that common either.

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Sometimes, you find that the rapport isn't happening at all! You aren't that introverted or shy by nature. For some reason, there's difficulty in establishing a connect. It could be difficulty to establish trust. You may not even recognize it explicitly. It's like some internal radar has been activated. The only thing you may notice is that the conversation with this person isn't going that smooth. You're not able to put a finger on what's exactly misaligned. Have you noticed this happening with you? Or with others you know?

And sometimes, the rapport is established fine. But as the conversation proceeds, things don't quite go as expected! It could happen even if both parties have reasonably good articulation skills. You get a sense that the initial enthusiasm is waning. Maybe, one person is disproportionately hogging the airtime. Perhaps the content isn't that engaging, and the person is just rambling on and on. It's likely that you aren't feeling valued and respected enough. The person simply seems to be full of himself/herself. Too fond of listening to their own voice!

Some conversations can make you too conscious about yourself, your weaknesses or even difficult situations in life. Misplaced humour, not-so-hidden or even unintentional taunts, discounting positives of others, over-smart observations, judgmental statements, callous expressions Boy, there are so many ways in which an otherwise enjoyable discussion can unexpectedly turn turtle! You want the interaction to conclude at the earliest.

"One of the most sincere forms of respect is actually listening to what another has to say."

Bryant H. McGill

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And then, there are those who are deliberately provocative. They seem to go out of their way to damage the rapport even before it's created. They bring in contrarian views and opinions, create doubts and unscrupulously cast aspersions on others, just to inject an extra dose of discomfort and disharmony.

And you're wondering, why would anyone do that, and risk damaging relationships? Are they really such creeps? Or, are they hiding behind a facade? Whatever be the case, one thing is certain: it's tough to salvage the relationship. Think of the immense potential opportunities that are being consigned to the dustbin.

You'll soon realize that your options are pretty limited with such people. The least you can do is to stop internalizing the provocation and the negative energy. Staying unflappable and not getting impacted at a deeper level can itself be amazing if you can manage that. Easier said than done for sure!

But, we can't just walk away from many such interactions. There is a genuine need to keep the relationship working. Human beings make many of their decisions based on the trust and comfort level that they enjoy with others. We may not exactly be that rational and scientific in our thinking as we like to believe. And that's true of not just ordinary folks. You'll see many examples in politics, businesses, cross cultural engagements, and even international relationships, where poor rapport has led to terrible decisions and tragically poor choices. The stress that it causes in our lives is significant as well!

"Rapport is the ability to enter someone else's world, to make him feel that you understand him, that you have a strong common bond."

Tony Robbins

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As you can see here, the challenges are three levels

- Building Rapport
- Maintaining Rapport
- Making the best of the situation, if it's just not meant to be!

Use the **IN SYNC** Model to work through these challenges.

I	Importance	Know why you need rapport, and consequences of not having it
N	Nature	Know the natural patterns & triggers that raise/lower rapport
S	Strong Intention	Have strong intentions and outcomes for the relationship
Y	Yes	Do's
N	Noes	Don'ts
C	Comeback	Recovering after rapport is broken!

Learn more about **IN SYNC** in the Practice Chart:

[Practice Chart & Notes for IN SYNC Model](#)

"Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply."

Stephen R. Covey

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