

Rapport

The Power of Rapport

Rapport is an energetic exchange or sense of resonance. We experience it emotionally, mentally, and physically.

Rapport is what allows us to connect and build relationships with others. It helps us establish connections and resonance with others.

While rapport does happen naturally, it can also be cultivated intentionally—for example, by proactively investing in reciprocal relationships and being curious about others.

Why Rapport Matters

When rapport is high, we feel seen, heard, understood, and valued. Rapport is a type of emotional alignment (i.e., it fosters a sense of belonging). In professional settings, it can offer a space in which to exhale.

Rapport helps you:



Be more effective



Be more efficient



Find more joy in your daily interactions



De-escalate negative interactions

Rapport helps systems/organizations:



Cultivate trust



Foster a better workplace culture



Enhance communication



Connect across differences

Strategies to Build Rapport

When people have rapport, they hold the capacity to engage with greater ease. Even without exchanging words, they can find alignment.



1. Physically match and mirror

Create physical resonance and build rapport by matching and mirroring; for example, you might try to:

- Adopt a similar stance or body language
- Adopt a similar voice tone and/or speed
- Use similar language (pick up keywords and favorite phrases and build these into your own vocabulary)
- Repeat key points or ideas back (actively demonstrate that you are listening)
- Notice patterns (e.g., how others manage information)
- Breathe in unison



2. Create an emotional connection

Seek to understand others and then be understood by others:

- Seek to understand who they are, what matters to them, how they see and experience the world, etc.
- Look below the surface to uncover their intentions or underlying aims
- Don't just take but also give back by making yourself vulnerable (i.e., share something about yourself to build authenticity and connectivity)
- Be respectful of others' constraints (e.g., time, money, energy, etc.)



3. Seek out commonalities

To create a connection, identify mutual interests and explore what you have in common by:

- Sharing of yourself
- Asking great questions
- Listening deeply (asking clarifying questions)
- Giving compliments
- Giving something that engenders reciprocity
- Mutual storytelling

Why this works?

- Social psychology teaches us that familiarity breeds likeness.
- Neuropsychology teaches us that we're hardwired to seek out people like ourselves (this is mainly due to mirror neurons—a class of neurons that prompt us to adjust and “mirror” actions seen in others).

Caution: Matching and mirroring only works when it is authentic and genuine. Too much matching and mirroring can feel like mimicry or feel disingenuous.

Why Rapport Matters Even More Now

As we live and work differently (i.e., interact with more people in more locations via social media platforms, work platforms, and video conferencing), rapport building is both more essential and difficult to achieve. We increasingly interact with more people but often engage with these individuals on a more superficial level (e.g., only on a specific social media platform or only on Slack or Zoom).

IN-PERSON	REMOTE	HYBRID
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More data due to proximity/ shared physical context• More ways to influence (i.e., not constrained by tiny screen)• Ability to pick up nonverbal cues• Smaller worlds with more overlap.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More people with whom to build rapport (often from more diverse locations/ backgrounds) with fewer cues• Loss of nuance (e.g., inability to read body language)• High turnover on teams = greater need to initiate rapport building often• Requires more intention and attention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pressure to toggle between face-to-face and remote forms of rapport building (sometimes simultaneously)• Rapport builds at different paces depending on the type of interactions (in-person or remote)• Greater energy, attention, and agility is needed to build and sustain rapport.

Ideas Into Action

Who are you in rapport with?

- List anyone with whom you feel you already have a great rapport!

Where do you feel a natural resonance or sense of rapport?

- What does it feel like? How do you know you are in rapport?
- What makes you feel in rapport?
- What are the benefits of being in rapport?
- How did you get in rapport? / What creates a feeling of rapport?
- What makes it easy versus hard?

* Identify where you're already building rapport and the tools you already have at your disposal to keep building rapport in other contexts and with other individuals.

Who do you want to be in more rapport with?

- Where are you not in rapport?
- Why?
- What might move you towards rapport?

* Start small and use things that already work to build momentum.

Discover how to build rapport at work and in other parts of your life.
Set up a time to talk to **Dr. Camille Preston and the AIM Leadership team.**

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