



TRANSCRIPT

Episode # 3: Five Easy Ways to Build Rapport That You May Not Be Using

Well, hello, my friends! I hope you're in the mood for some simple tips you can use right now, because that's what I have for you today. In this episode, we're going to talk about some fun and easy ways to build rapport.

I don't know about you, but those two words are music to my ears. The work world can be hard and complicated place, even when you love what you do. We all deserve a little "fun and easy" sometimes! And when fun and easy things also are powerfully effective.....wow, why wouldn't we be doing them and creating good ourselves?

But before I get to those fun and easy tips, let's talk a little what "rapport" means. The dictionary definition of "rapport" is this: "A friendly, harmonious relationship

Especially: A relationship characterized by agreement, mutual understanding, or empathy that makes communication possible or easy.” In other words, rapport is that comfortable feeling among people where you like each other and often feel you “get” each other.... even when you disagree about particular issues.

Building rapport is one of those skills we call the influencing skills. You can learn more about what influencing is in Episode 2 of this podcast, the one called The Tools That Will Grow Your Power. That episode explores each of the power skills—the skills of influencing, persuasion, and presence—in depth.

But for today, let’s just say influencing skills are all about creating a supportive environment where people know, like and trust you. And when you have that environment of “know, like and trust”, then it’s easier for you to propose an idea and gain the approval or buy-in of other people. They aren’t skeptical of you—they want to be helpful.

So clearly, the ability to build rapport is a valuable influencing skill to have at your fingertips. When you have rapport with someone, they kind of “get” you, you kind of “get” them.... you feel like you’re on the same page.

When you have to make a presentation to a room full of people with whom you have rapport, it’s a good feeling. You know you’re likely to get a good reception

for your idea. So much of a better feeling than making a presentation cold to a room full of strangers, right? And when you have rapport with someone, it's also so much easier to ask for a favor, isn't it? When you don't feel in sync with someone, it can be uncomfortable to ask for a favor.

So, at this point you might be saying, "Yeah, I get it, Kathy. Having good relationships is really helpful when you want to win support for an idea or proposal. And I'm a friendly person—I already know how to build relationships." Well, yes.....you probably do. But you're also probably building those relationships slowly...over time.... the way most of us do. Wouldn't it be helpful to accelerate that process....to build rapport faster with someone who doesn't already know you?

That's where these tips come in. They're certainly no substitute for building a deep relationship. But they can definitely accelerate the process of feeling in sync with someone, and they make it easier to build that deeper relationship, if that's what you want. OK, time to get to the good stuff.....5 easy ways to build rapport!

Tip #1: Notice which word the person uses all the time----either the word "think" or the word "feel" ----and use that word too.

So, a really interesting but little-known fact is that we each have a preference for one of those words when we're talking about something that we're processing. You might say, "Kathy, I think we should do this." And I might say to you, "Oh, no, no, no.... I feel we should do something else."

What just happened there?

Well, each of us just revealed a preferred way of delivering information and opinions and making decisions. You used the word think, so it's likely that your preference is to express your opinions using objective logical terms. And I used the word feel, so it's likely that I have a preference for expressing my opinions in subjective.... well...feeling terms.

Once you know this fact, you begin to see this everywhere. Try it out for yourself. The next time you're in a lengthy meeting, you can entertain yourself by seeing who says "I think this" all the time and who says "I feel this" all the time.

Now, you may see more people who say "I think" than people who say "I feel." That's because corporate cultures tend to attract a lot of people who like to express themselves in objective, logical language. But I guarantee you'll start noticing the ones who say "I feel" as well.

Of course, neither style is inherently right or wrong. They are both useful styles, for reasons we can get into at some other point. But both you and I naturally feel more comfortable and on the same page with someone who has the same style.

So, a quick way of getting in sync with someone is to use their preferred style when you're talking with them. Say "I think we should do this" when you're with someone who has a preference for expressing themselves that way. And say "I feel we should do this" when you're with someone who has the "I feel" preference. When you do this with someone, they will feel that you "get" them in a very basic way.....that you have rapport.

OK, Tip #2: Remember to use the words "we" and "us" a lot vs the words "I" and "me."

SOOOO easy, right? Almost ridiculously easy! But do we remember to do this regularly? No, we do not! Even I can forget about this one.... and I should know better.

Using the words "we" and "us" send a message to the other person. The message is "You and I are the same page. We have a similar value or a similar point of view. We're in this together." The message is "We have rapport."

Imagine saying to someone: “I’d like to see fewer meetings. I’m juggling too much now, and these meetings are distracting me from the priorities.” Now imagine saying to someone “We should probably have fewer meetings. We are all juggling a lot right now, and these meetings are distracting all of us from our priorities.”

See the difference? The first version was you simply expressing your opinion. The second version was you saying, “we are aligned and have common interests.” The conclusion? Using the words “we” and “us” helps to build rapport.

On to Tip #3: Take people to the future.

WHAAAAT?

Of course, I don’t mean literally. But I do mean, look for opportunities to ask people about their positive views, hopes and dreams for the future. These could be their personal hopes and dreams, for example..... for their family, for their career, for their dream trip or their hobby.

It could also be a work-related hope or dream----for their dream job or how they would like to make the organization better. Take a little time to explore that future with them. What are they doing and why? How do they feel about it? How is it impacting others?

When you get people out of the day-to-day issues that are occupying their minds and take them to a more interesting and energizing future, it's like you just gave them a mini vacation. They feel more light-hearted and at ease. And YOU are the one who gave them that mini-vacation and shared it with them! Kinda cool, right? A little moment of instant rapport!

Which leads us to tip #4: Take people to the PAST.

OK, stop rolling your eyes out there! I PROMISE you I'm not some closet time-travel geek!

There is some pretty solid evidence that taking people out of the present.... where they're feeling the pressure of their day-to-day commitments and deadlines....and bringing them into the future or back to the past---is a fantastic way of relaxing them and having a shared experience that builds rapport.

When you take someone to the past, it's less about connecting around their sense of anticipation.... who they can be in the future.... and more about connecting with their reflective side.... their thoughts about where they came from, what their important experiences were, and what shaped them into the person they are today.

Taking someone to the past can involve their positive experiences but also negative ones as well. You might ask them about their childhood or their first job. What was it like? What was the best part? What was the worst?

Or you could ask, why they did they made certain choices in their life? Who was the most important person and why? What things might they do differently and why? What is the luckiest thing that ever happened to them? What was the most challenging thing? What did they learn from all of that?

Be sure to convey openness, respectful curiosity, and empathy when you take someone to the past. They are opening themselves up and sharing some part of who they are with you. That's a gift and you should show respect when that happens.

And don't rush in to talk about your past. Give the person time to talk about himself or herself. When he or she is done doing that, perhaps you share something about your own past with them. But you don't want to inadvertently hog the stage. Give the person the space to feel you are sharing the experience with them, not just trading stories.

And finally, easy tip #5 for building rapport.....

Ask some variation of this question, “What’s the one thing we can do that will make the most difference to you?”

What does that look like? Well, lots of time in the workplace, we are meeting with someone to do some mutual problem solving. It could be a boss, or a peer, or even a direct report. It’s a pretty common activity in everyone’s work life, right?

This is an opportunity for a little tension to arise. We may be having thoughts like these: That person and I have different opinions. Will we end up having conflict? That person and I seem to be on the same page. But will I get stuck doing most of the work?

There are a lot of ways that things might get tense. But this is also an opportunity to build rapport, a sense of a shared experience. When you ask the question, “What’s the one thing we can do that will make the most difference to you?” you are sending a message. You are saying, “I see you. I get you. And I want to find out what’s your most important need.” You are also saying, “I want to know and share your priorities.”

The other cool thing about this question is that you are making it more likely that the person you are talking to really opens up to you.

Some of you may know that before I was a leadership coach.... And before I was a corporate executive and eventual CEO.... I was...wait for it.... a trial attorney. And one thing that you learn when you're a lawyer questioning witnesses is that you never know what answers you will get when you ask an open-ended question.

There's a time and place for those sorts of questions, of course. But at other times, open-ended questions can inadvertently lead to confusion, irrelevant information, and even answers you don't want to hear.

When you ask a more focused question, however, that's when you're more likely to get pure gold. The witness is so much more likely to give you the really relevant piece of information that will move things forward. And the same is true outside the adversarial world of the courtroom.

When you ask the question "What's the one thing we can do that will make the most difference to you?" you make it easy for the other person to open up. You make it easy for him or her to tell you that one thing that will move things

forward in a helpful and productive direction. And that person is grateful to you for having done that. You've made their life easier as well as your own life. Hmmmm.... a grateful person who feels seen? There you go, another little moment of building rapport!

So, there you have it5 easy ways to build rapport that you may never have heard of before. They're certainly not the only ways of building rapport, but they are great options for starting out.

Why don't you try one or two of them out, and see what you think? I bet you'll find that building even greater rapport with your colleagues can be fun, enjoyable, and even personally rewarding. And because rapport is one of the influencing skills, when you grow your rapport, you're also growing a more supportive environment for you....one where you're taken more seriously, and your ideas are more likely to get heard and approved. Not a bad outcome, right?

OK, go out there, and have a great week, my friends, and I'll see you in our next episode.

We're celebrating the launch of the podcast here, and I'd like to include you.

I'm going to be giving away AirPods Pro to five lucky listeners who follow, rate, and review the show. Now, of course, you don't have to give the show five stars, although that would be awesome and I do hope you love what you've heard so far. But I'd also love your honest opinion and feedback as well as your questions so I can create a show that's a valuable resource for you.

So visit significagroup.com/podcastlaunch to learn more about the contest and how to enter and I'll be announcing the winners on the show in an upcoming episode.

Thanks for listening to this episode of Mastering The Power Skills. If you like what was offered in today's show and want more insights and resources from Kathy, check us out at www.significagroup.com.