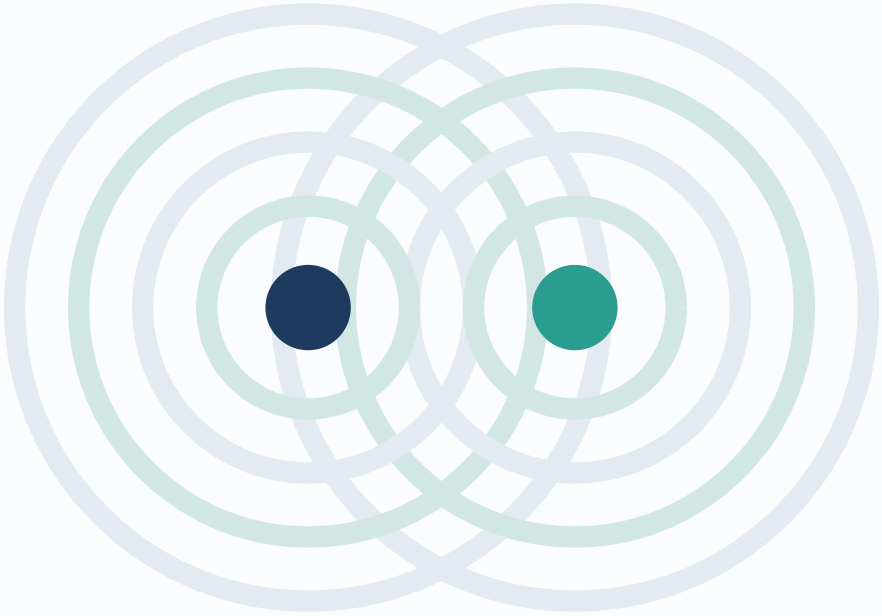


A VISUAL SUMMARY

Rapport

in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)

How people build trust and connection — through matching, mirroring, pacing and leading — and what the research says about using these skills well and ethically.

Foundations | Matching | Pacing & leading | Contexts | Evidence | Practice

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SECTION 01

What Is Rapport?

Rapport is a state of mutual trust, understanding and responsiveness between people. When it is present, communication flows; when it is missing, even simple messages are misunderstood or resisted.

The word comes from the French *rapporter* — “to bring back” — suggesting a relationship in which each person reflects something of the other. In everyday language we say people “click”, are “on the same wavelength” or “get on well”.

NLP treats rapport as the **foundation of all influence**: before you can help, teach, sell to or lead someone, they need to feel understood. Rather than seeing rapport as a matter of luck or chemistry, NLP breaks it down into observable behaviours that can be noticed, practised and improved.



Figure 1. Rapport is felt as a two-way flow of attention, warmth, understanding and responsiveness.

Trust
They believe you have their interests at heart

Heard
They feel understood and accepted

Ease
Conversation flows without effort

Influence
They are open to your ideas

Definition

Rapport is a relationship of mutual trust and responsiveness, in which each person feels understood and is open to the other's influence.

SECTION 02

Why Rapport Matters

Rapport is not just pleasant; it changes outcomes. With rapport, people listen more openly, share more honestly and cooperate more readily.

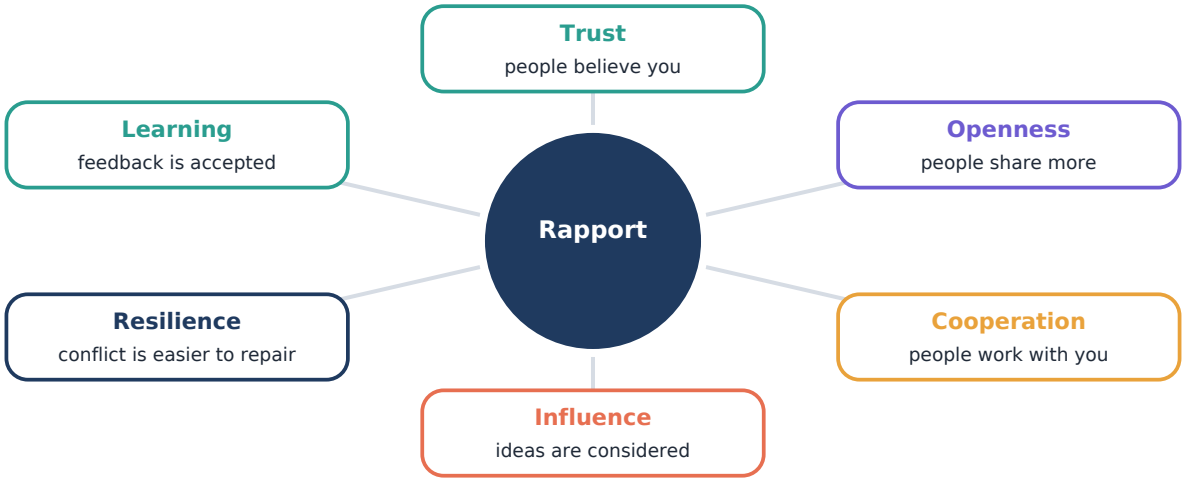


Figure 2. Benefits commonly associated with good rapport.

Setting	With rapport	Without rapport
Coaching / therapy	Client explores honestly; change feels possible	Client stays guarded; sessions feel stuck
Sales	Buyer shares real needs and objections	Buyer gives polite but useless answers
Leadership	Team raises problems early	Problems are hidden until they become crises
Teaching	Students ask questions and take risks	Students stay quiet and disengaged
Healthcare	Patient discloses symptoms and follows advice	Key information is withheld
Negotiation	Both sides search for shared solutions	Positions harden; trust breaks down

NLP presupposition

The meaning of your communication is the response you get. If people are not responding as you hoped, check the rapport before you check the message.

SECTION 03

Origins: Rapport in NLP

Bandler and Grinder noticed that the exceptional therapists they studied — Virginia Satir, Milton Erickson and Fritz Perls — all established deep rapport quickly. They tried to describe exactly how.

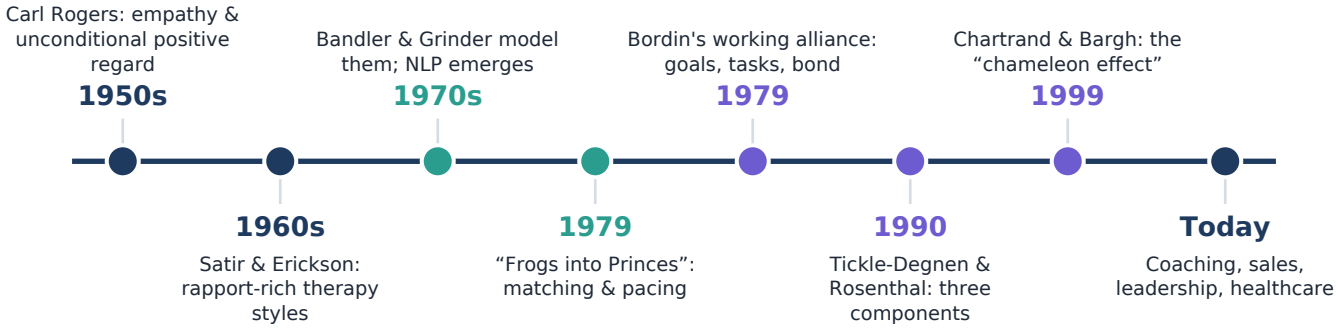


Figure 3. Key milestones. Teal = NLP; purple = academic research; navy = therapeutic roots (spacing not to scale).

What NLP added

Earlier view	NLP's contribution
Rapport as a personal quality (“she's a natural”)	Rapport as a set of learnable behaviours
Focus on empathy as an attitude	Focus on observable matching of body, voice and words
Rapport as a starting condition	Rapport as an ongoing process of pacing and leading
General advice (“be warm”)	Specific techniques: mirroring, cross-over matching, predicate matching

Note

NLP's emphasis on mimicking behaviour is its most distinctive — and most debated — contribution. Later sections look at what research says.

SECTION 04

The Three Components of Rapport

Psychologists Linda Tickle-Degnen and Robert Rosenthal (1990) proposed that rapport has three interrelated components. Their model offers a research-based frame for NLP's techniques.

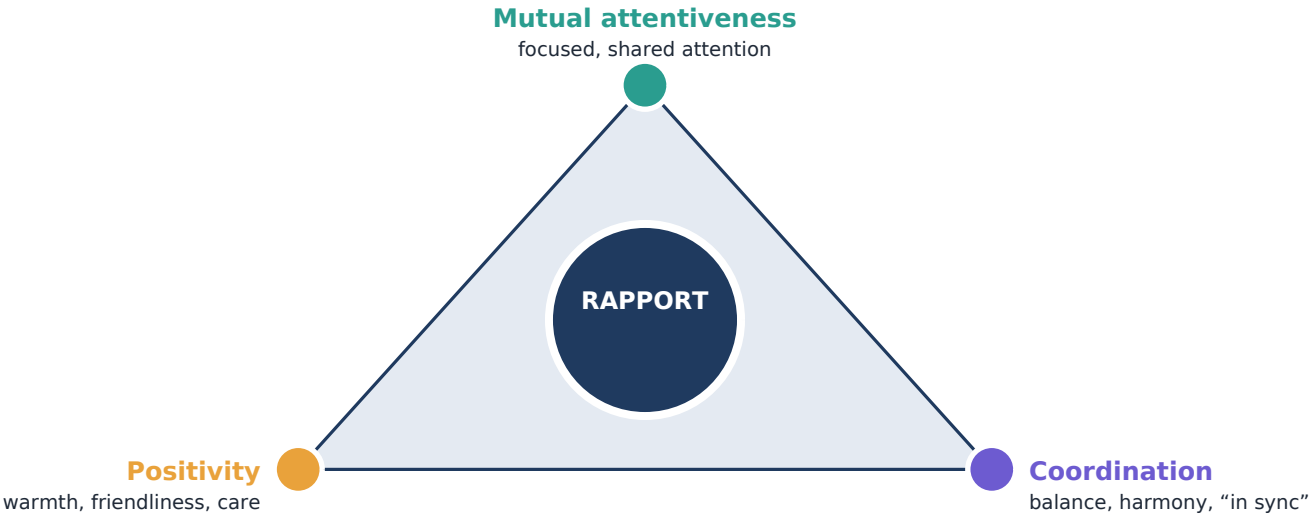


Figure 4. The three components of rapport (Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990).

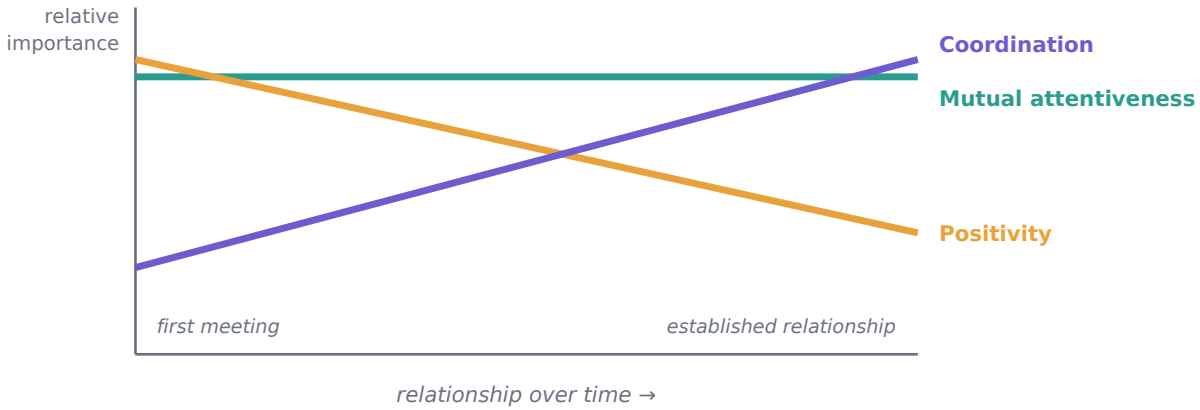


Figure 5. Conceptual model: positivity matters most early on; coordination grows in importance as relationships develop; attentiveness stays important throughout.

Component	What it looks like	NLP skills that support it
Attentiveness	Eye contact, orientation, listening, follow-up questions	Sensory acuity, calibration, backtracking
Positivity	Smiles, nods, warm tone, open posture	Matching emotional tone, acknowledging values
Coordination	Smooth turn-taking, shared rhythm, synchronised movement	Matching, mirroring, pacing voice and breathing

SECTION 05

The Channels of Rapport

NLP describes rapport as being built across several channels at once. Matching on more channels usually creates a stronger sense of “being alike”.

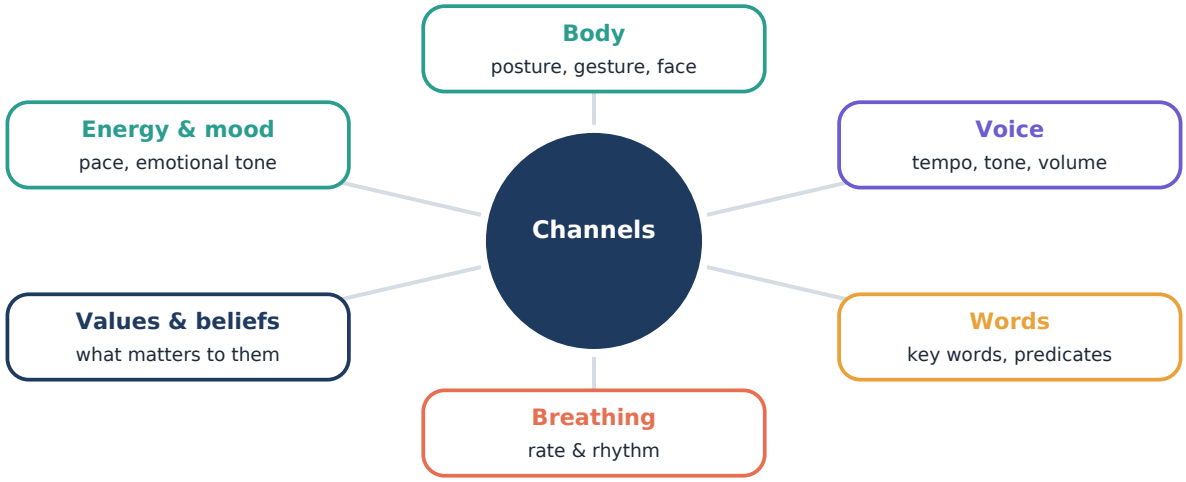


Figure 6. Six channels through which rapport can be built.

Channel	Depth	Notes
Body & gesture	Surface	Quick to match; easily noticed if overdone
Voice	Surface–middle	Very effective on the phone; often matched naturally
Breathing	Middle	Subtle and powerful; rarely noticed consciously
Words & language	Middle	Using their key words shows you've listened
Mood & energy	Middle	Matching emotional intensity, not necessarily the emotion
Values & beliefs	Deep	The most lasting rapport; built by understanding what matters

A popular myth

The often-quoted claim that communication is “7% words, 38% voice, 55% body language” comes from narrow experiments by Albert Mehrabian about conveying feelings with single words. Mehrabian himself warned it does not apply to communication in general.

SECTION 06

Matching and Mirroring

Matching and mirroring mean subtly reflecting aspects of another person's behaviour. People naturally do this when they are in rapport; NLP suggests doing it deliberately can help build rapport.

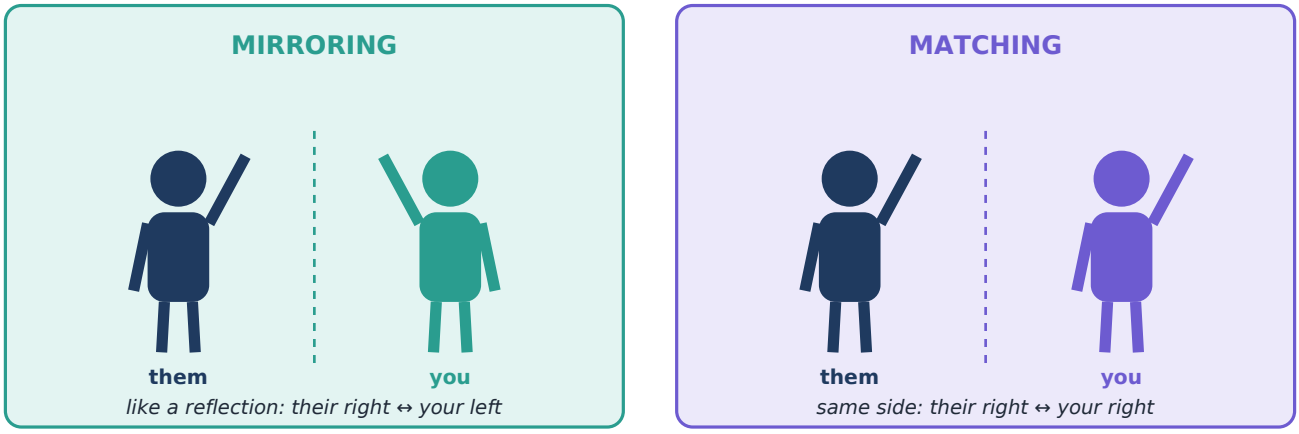


Figure 7. Mirroring reflects as in a mirror; matching copies on the same side.

Approach	How it works	Example
Direct mirroring	Reflect their posture as a mirror image	They lean on their right elbow; you lean on your left
Matching	Adopt a similar posture on the same side	They cross their right leg; you cross your right leg
Partial matching	Match one element only	Match head tilt but not arm position
Delayed matching	Match a few seconds later, more subtly	Adjust your posture after they've settled
Cross-over matching	Match with a different part of the body	Tap your finger in time with their breathing

Mirror, don't mimic

Aim for **respectful approximation**, not copying. If someone notices that you are imitating them, rapport usually falls. Match the general shape and energy, softly and with a slight delay.

SECTION 07

Body: Posture, Gesture and Face

Physical matching is the most visible form of rapport building. Small, natural adjustments are more effective than exact copies.

Element	What to notice	How to match	Avoid
Posture	Upright or relaxed; leaning forward or back	Adopt a similar overall stance	Copying every shift
Orientation	Facing you directly or angled	Mirror the angle; side-by-side can feel less confrontational	Squaring up to someone who is angled away
Gestures	Size, speed and frequency	Use gestures of a similar size when you speak	Repeating their unique gestures
Facial expression	Serious, animated, neutral	Match the general expressiveness	Smiling broadly when they are upset
Head movement	Nods, tilts	Nod at a similar pace	Exaggerated nodding
Movement tempo	Fast and energetic or slow	Move at a similar speed	Rushing someone who is slow



Figure 8. Broad postural patterns to notice. Any single posture can mean many things — calibrate to the individual.

Don't over-interpret

Crossed arms can mean defensiveness — or simply that the person is cold or comfortable. Read clusters of signals and changes from the person's own baseline, not single gestures.

SECTION 08

Voice: Tempo, Tone and Volume

Voice matching is one of the most powerful rapport tools, especially on the phone. People tend to feel most comfortable with speakers whose pace and energy resemble their own.

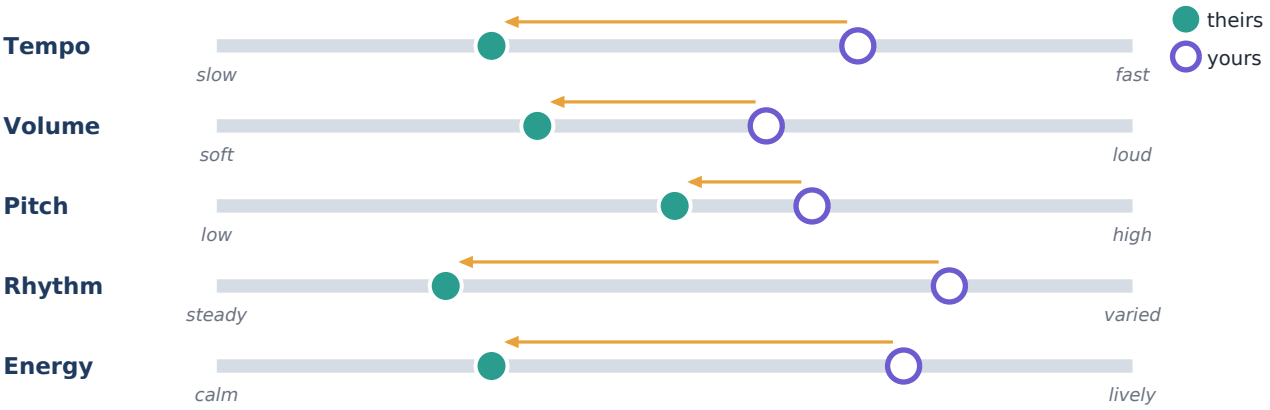


Figure 9. Voice “dials”. Move your settings toward theirs (arrows) to pace, before gradually leading.

Quality	What to match	Example
Tempo	Speed of speech and length of pauses	Slow down for a thoughtful speaker; speed up for a fast one
Volume	Loudness	Lower your voice for someone who speaks quietly
Pitch	Higher or lower overall	Move slightly toward their range
Rhythm	Steady or varied; pattern of emphasis	Match whether they speak in long flows or short bursts
Tonality	Warm, crisp, formal, playful	Match the emotional colour
Energy	Overall intensity	Match enthusiasm — or calm

Accents

Don't imitate accents or dialects — it can easily seem mocking. Match tempo, volume and energy instead.

SECTION 09

Words: Using Their Language

People feel understood when you use their words, not your translation of them. Listening for — and reflecting — key words is one of the simplest rapport skills.

They say…	Rapport-breaking reply	Rapport-building reply
“I feel **stuck** at work.”	“So you're feeling unfulfilled.”	“Stuck — in what way?”
“We need a **robust** solution.”	“You want something reliable.”	“What would make it robust for you?”
“It's been **chaotic** at home.”	“Sounds stressful.”	“Chaotic — tell me more.”
“I want to **grow** the team.”	“You want to hire more people.”	“What does growing the team look like?”

Backtracking

Backtracking means briefly summarising what someone has said using their key words before you respond. It shows you've listened, checks your understanding and keeps you paced with them.

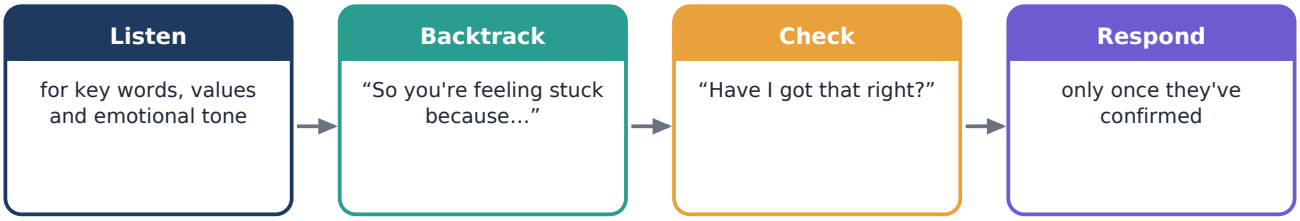


Figure 10. The backtracking sequence.

Matching chunk size

If they speak in…	Respond with…
Big picture, vision, concepts (“We need to transform how we work”)	Purpose and direction before details
Specific details (“Line 4 of the report has an error”)	Concrete specifics, not abstractions

SECTION 10

Representational Systems & Predicates

NLP proposes that people favour particular senses in how they think and talk — visual, auditory or kinesthetic — and that matching their sensory words ("predicates") builds rapport.

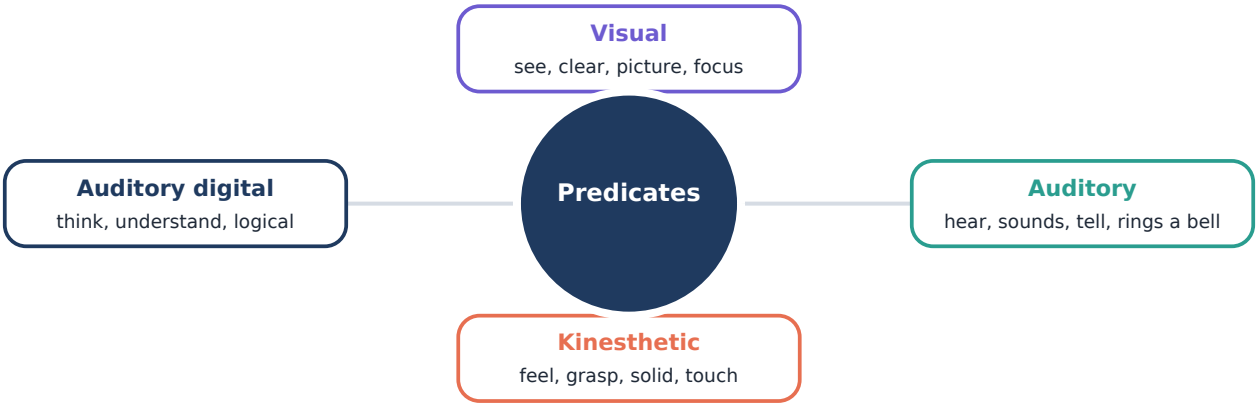


Figure 11. Sensory predicate families used in NLP.

System	Typical predicates	Matching reply
Visual	"I can't **see** where this is going. It looks **unclear**."	"Let me **show** you the **big picture**."
Auditory	"That doesn't **sound** right. Nothing **clicks**."	"Let's **talk** it through until it **rings true**."
Kinesthetic	"I can't get a **grip** on this. It feels **heavy**."	"Let's **break it down** into **manageable** pieces."
Auditory digital	"It doesn't **make sense** logically."	"Let's go through the **reasoning** step by step."

Evidence check

Research has **not** supported the idea that people have a fixed "preferred representational system" that can be reliably identified from eye movements or words (e.g. reviews by Sharpley, 1984, 1987). Using someone's own words remains good practice — but treat VAK typing as a loose guide, not a diagnosis.

SECTION 11

Matching Beliefs and Values

The deepest rapport comes not from matching posture, but from understanding and respecting what matters to the other person.

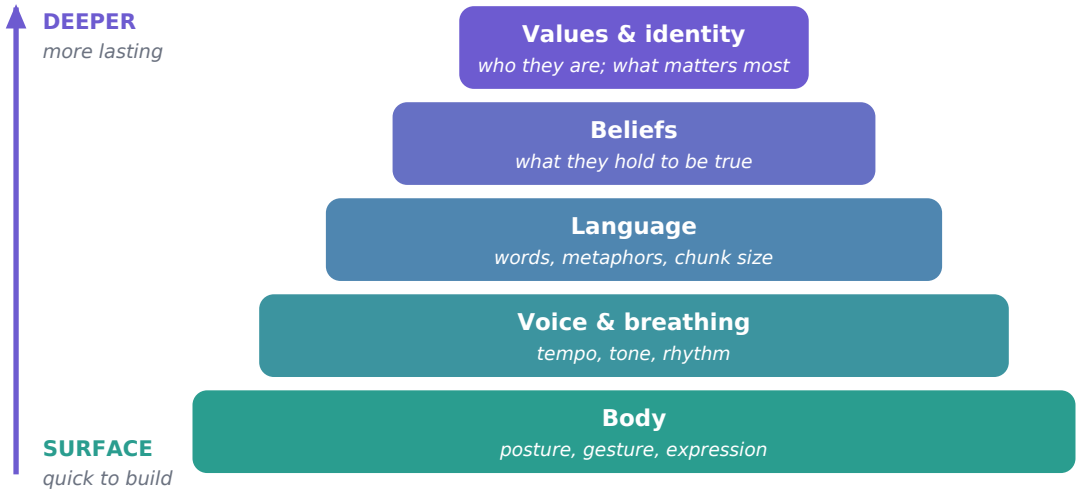


Figure 12. Levels of rapport, from surface behaviour to shared values.

Approach	Example
Acknowledge their values	“It's clear that fairness really matters to you.”
Chunk up to shared values	“We both want the patients to be safe — we just disagree on how.”
Respect without agreeing	“I see it differently, and I understand why this is important to you.”
Find common experience	“I've been in a similar position, and I remember how frustrating it was.”

Rapport ≠ agreement

Matching values does not mean pretending to share them. Rapport is about **understanding**, not agreement.

SECTION 12

Cross-Over Matching

Cross-over (or indirect) matching reflects one aspect of someone's behaviour with a different behaviour of your own. It is subtle and rarely noticed.

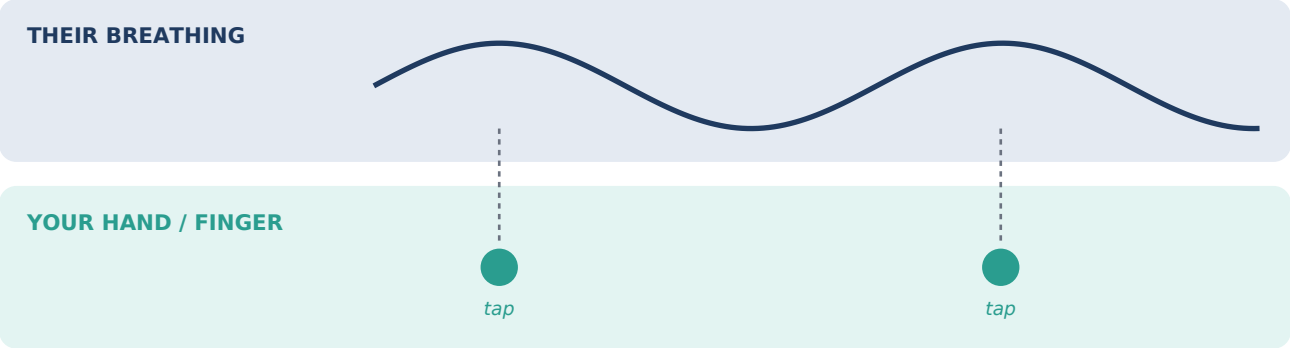


Figure 13. Cross-over matching: tapping a finger in rhythm with someone's breathing.

Their behaviour	Your cross-over match
Breathing rhythm	Gentle foot or finger movement; nods; speaking on their out-breath
Leg jiggling	Small hand movements at the same tempo
Blinking rate	Nodding at the same rhythm
Speech rhythm	Head movements or gestures in time with their speech
Rocking	Swaying slightly, or moving a pen at the same tempo

Subtle
Hard to detect consciously

Flexible
Useful when direct matching isn't appropriate

Respectful
Avoids copying distressed behaviour

When it's especially useful

If someone is agitated — pacing, fidgeting, breathing fast — matching directly could amplify the state. A softer cross-over match lets you pace without escalating, before gently leading toward calm.

SECTION 13

Calibration and Sensory Acuity

You cannot match what you have not noticed. Sensory acuity is the ability to observe fine details of behaviour; calibration is learning what those details mean for a specific person.

Signal	Signs rapport is building	Signs rapport is slipping
Posture	Turned toward you; relaxed; mirroring you	Turned away; tense; leaning back abruptly
Eyes	Steady, comfortable eye contact	Looking away often; glancing at the clock or door
Face	Relaxed; genuine smiles	Tight lips; furrowed brow
Voice	Warmer, fuller, more animated	Clipped, flat, or louder
Speech	Longer answers; spontaneous detail	Short answers; “fine”, “okay”
Breathing	Slower, deeper	Shallow, held or rapid
Movement	Synchrony emerges naturally	Out of rhythm; restless

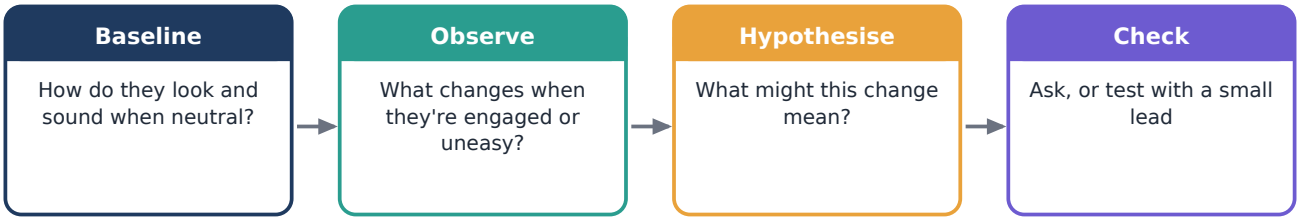


Figure 14. Calibration compares current signals with the person's own baseline.

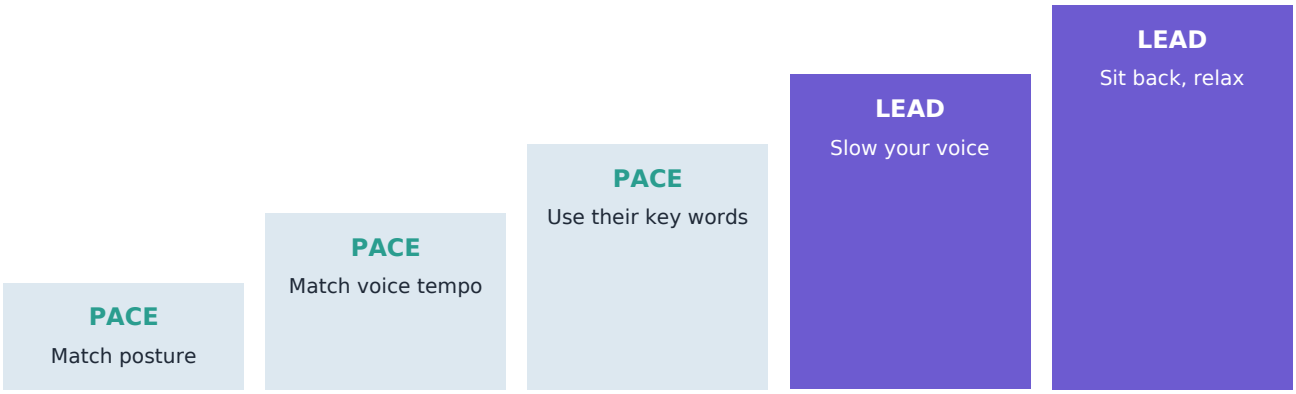
When in doubt, ask

“You seem a bit hesitant — is something not sitting right?” A gentle check turns an observation into a conversation, and is itself rapport-building.

SECTION 14

Pacing and Leading

Pacing means meeting people where they are. Leading means gently guiding them somewhere new. In NLP, rapport is what makes leading possible.



Rapport builds through pacing ▸ then you test whether they follow your lead

Figure 15. Several steps of pacing build rapport; leading then introduces a change.

Channel	Pacing	Leading
Voice	Match their fast, tense tempo	Gradually slow and soften your voice
Posture	Match their forward, tense lean	Sit back and relax your shoulders
Emotion	Acknowledge frustration: “This is really annoying.”	Shift to options: “What would help right now?”
Ideas	Agree with what's true in their view	Introduce a new perspective
Experience	Describe what they can verify	Suggest what they might notice next

> **Pace, pace, pace, lead**
> A common rule of thumb: pace several times for every lead. If they don't follow, go back to pacing — the rapport isn't strong enough yet.

SECTION 15

Testing Rapport: The Lead Test

How do you know you have rapport? NLP suggests testing it: make a small change and see whether the other person follows.

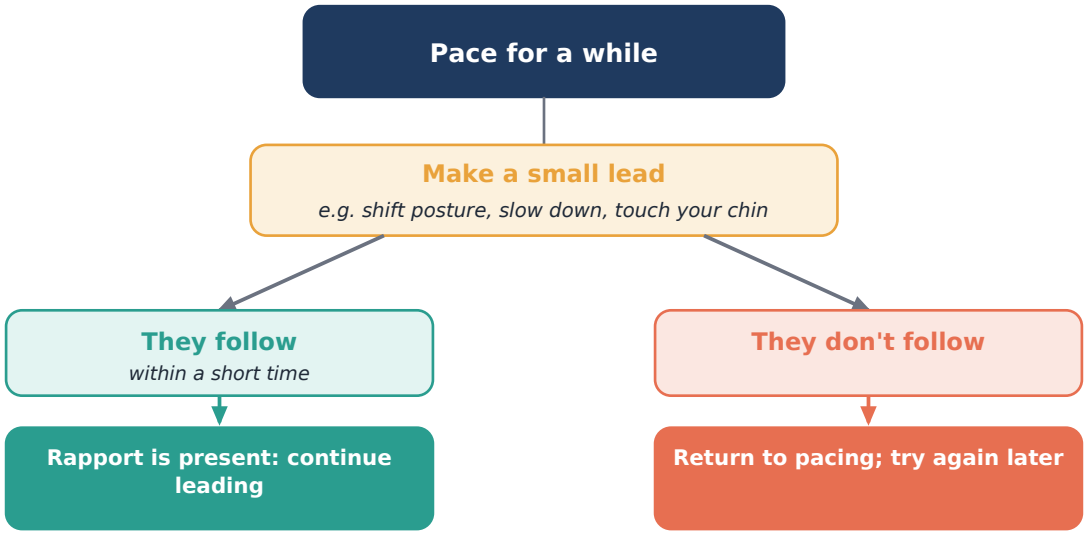


Figure 16. The lead test.

Lead	What following looks like
Change posture (e.g. lean back)	They also adjust their posture shortly after
Slow your speech	Their speech slows too
Take a sip of water	They reach for their drink
Shift the topic gently	They follow without resistance
Lower your voice	They match the lower volume

Use with judgement

A single “failed” lead isn't proof of anything. People move for many reasons. Treat the lead test as a rough signal, alongside how the conversation feels.

SECTION 16

Breaking Rapport Deliberately

Sometimes it's useful to reduce rapport on purpose — to end a conversation, set a boundary or interrupt an unhelpful pattern. This is called mismatching.

Purpose	Mismatching technique	Example
Ending a conversation politely	Break eye contact; change posture; begin closing gestures	Stand up, gather papers: “Great talking — I need to head off.”
Setting a boundary	Change voice tone to firmer; square posture	“I'm not able to agree to that.”
Interrupting an escalating argument	Change pace, location or topic	“Let's take ten minutes and come back to this.”
Interrupting a loop of complaining	Shift energy, then lead to solutions	“Okay. What's one thing we can do about it?”
Avoiding over-attachment	Lower intensity of matching	Keep professional distance in helping roles

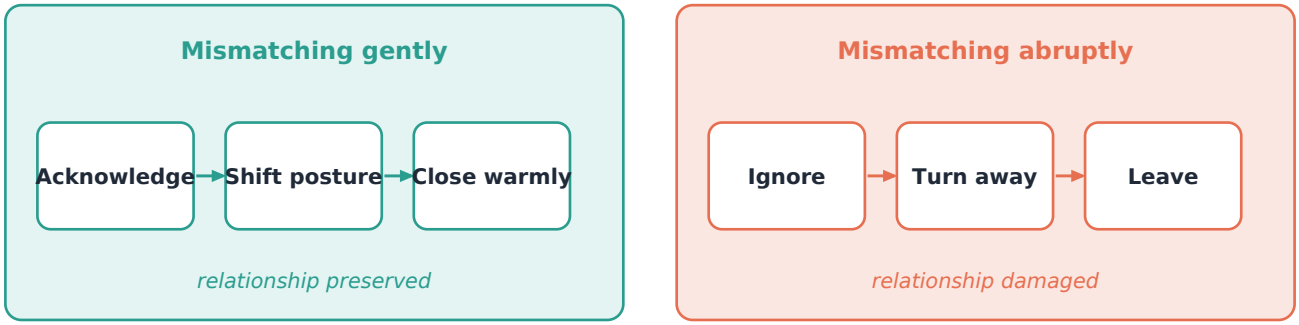


Figure 17. Mismatching can protect or damage a relationship depending on how it's done.

Key idea

Rapport can be **broken and rebuilt**. Disagreeing, ending a meeting or saying no doesn't have to destroy a relationship if it's done respectfully.

SECTION 17

Perceptual Positions

NLP's perceptual positions help you understand a situation from more than one angle — a powerful way to deepen rapport, especially in conflict.

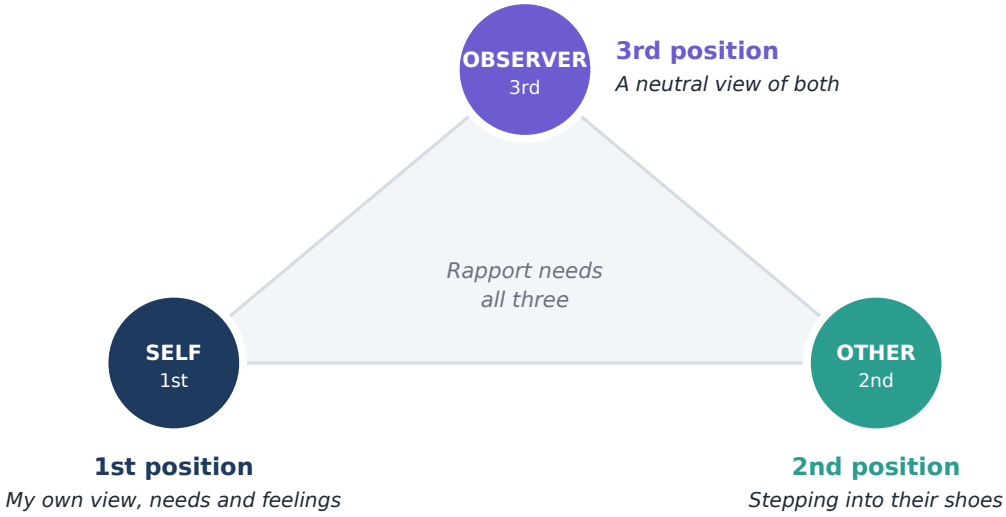


Figure 18. The three main perceptual positions.

Position	Viewpoint	Useful question	Risk if overused
1st — Self	Your own perspective	“What do I want, feel and need?”	Self-centred; ignores the other person
2nd — Other	The other person's perspective	“How does this look, sound and feel to them?”	Losing yourself; people-pleasing
3rd — Observer	A detached, neutral perspective	“What would a fly on the wall notice?”	Coldness; disconnection

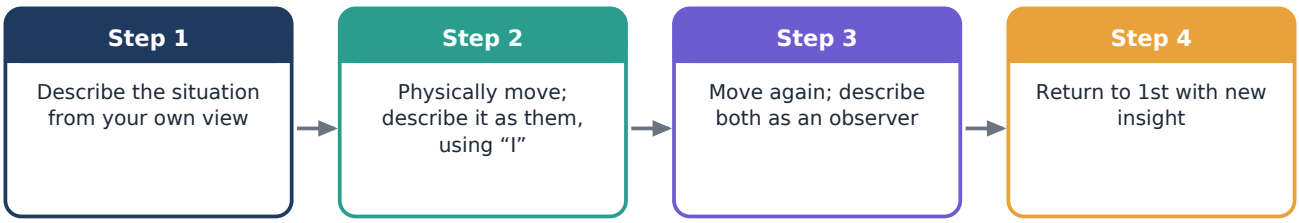


Figure 19. A simple perceptual-positions exercise for preparing a difficult conversation.

SECTION 18

Rapport with Groups and Audiences

With a group you can't match everyone individually. Instead, pace the group's shared experience and the room's overall energy.

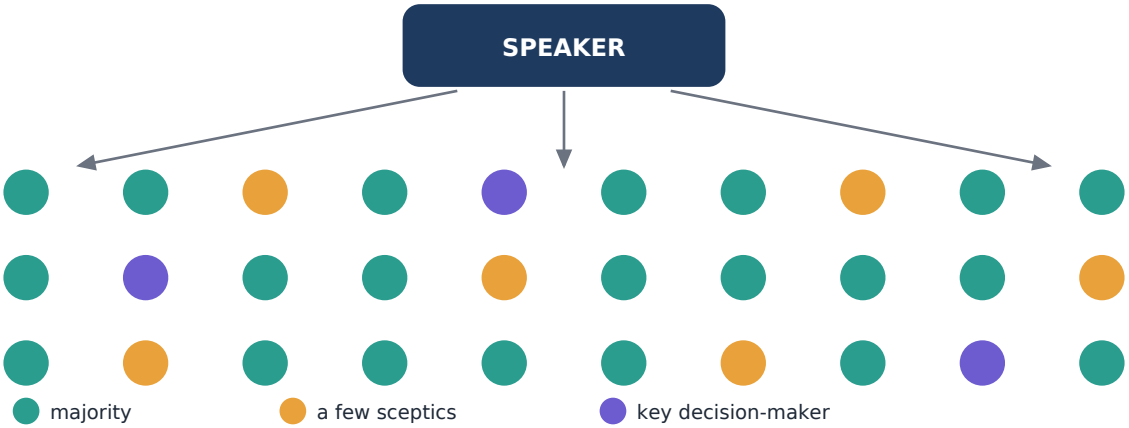


Figure 20. Read the overall energy of a group, while noticing sub-groups and key individuals.

Technique	How to use it
Pace shared experience	“It's been a long day, and here we are in the last session…”
Match group energy	Start at the room's energy level; then lift or calm it
Use inclusive language	“We”, “us”, “all of us here”
Acknowledge different views	“Some of you may be sceptical — and that's fair.”
Spatial anchoring	Use consistent places on the stage for different topics
Mirror the majority	Adopt the dominant posture or mood in the room
Rapport with key individuals	Connect briefly with decision-makers and sceptics

Before you begin

Arriving early and chatting with people as they come in builds rapport before you speak. You'll also know a few names and concerns to reference.

Arrive early
Meet people as they come in

Pace the room
Name the shared moment

Include all
Look at every part of the room

Lead
Shift energy once they're with you

SECTION 19

Rapport Online, by Phone and in Writing

Remote communication removes some channels and changes others. Rapport is still possible — it just relies on the channels that remain.

Medium	Channels available	Rapport tips
Video call	Face, voice, upper body (with lag)	Look at the camera when speaking; nod visibly; reduce delay-related interruptions
Phone	Voice only	Match tempo, volume and energy closely; use more verbal acknowledgements (“mm”, “right”)
Email	Words, structure, formality	Match length, greeting style and formality; reuse their key terms
Chat / messaging	Words, speed, emoji	Match response speed, length and tone; mirror their use of emoji sparingly
Voice note	Voice, pace	Match their length and energy

Number of the six rapport channels (Figure 6) directly available

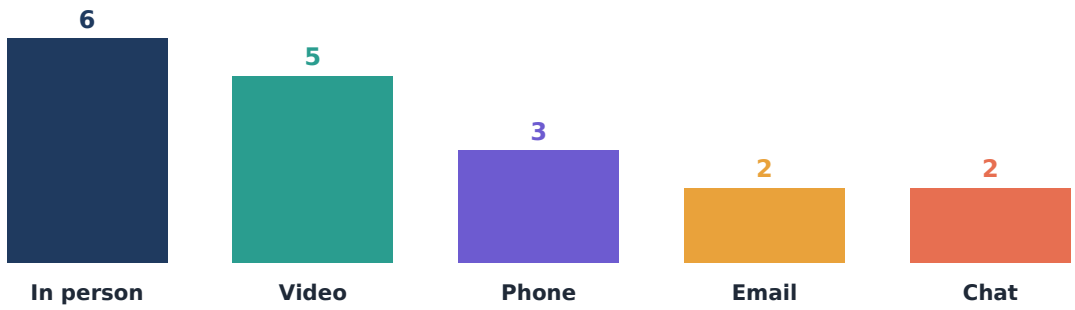


Figure 21. Fewer channels mean each remaining one carries more weight (author's count, for illustration).

Writing tip

In writing, matching formality matters most. Replying a breezy “Hey!!” to a formal email — or a stiff paragraph to a friendly one-liner — mismatches immediately.

SECTION 20

Rapport Across Cultures

What builds rapport in one culture may break it in another. Matching works best when it's informed by cultural awareness.

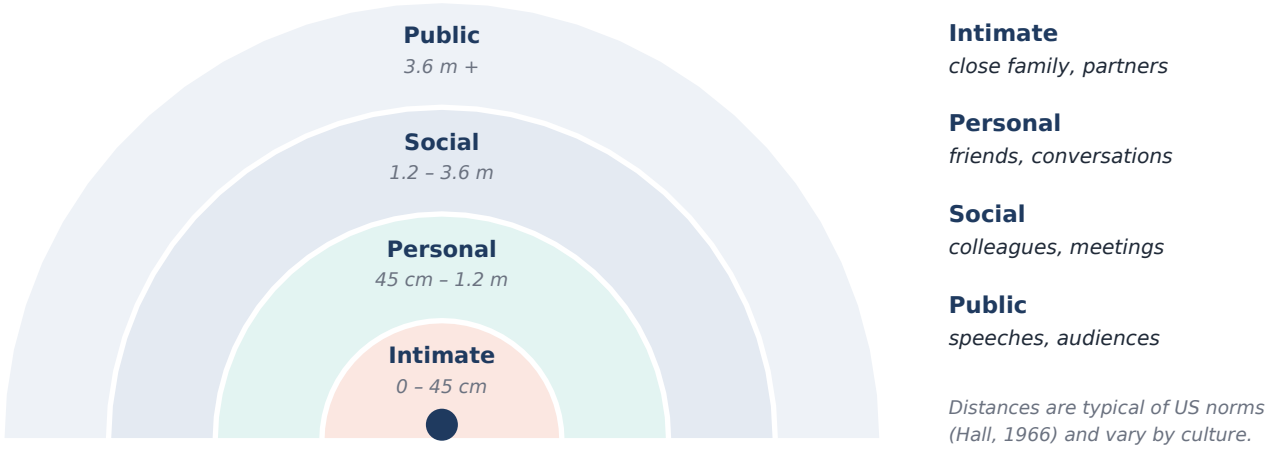


Figure 22. Edward T. Hall's personal-space zones. Comfortable distances differ widely across cultures and individuals.

Behaviour	Varies in…	Rapport tip
Eye contact	How much is respectful vs. intrusive	Follow the other person's lead
Touch	Handshakes, hugs, kisses, none	Wait for them to initiate; ask if unsure
Personal space	Comfortable distances	Let them set the distance
Directness	Explicit vs. implicit communication	Match how directly they make requests or say no
Small talk	How much comes before business	Follow their pace before getting down to business
Silence	Comfortable pause or awkward gap	Allow pauses if they do
Gestures	Meanings of common gestures (e.g. thumbs up)	Keep gestures neutral until you know

SECTION 21

Rapport in Coaching and Therapy

In helping professions, rapport is closely related to what researchers call the therapeutic or working alliance — one of the most consistent predictors of successful outcomes.

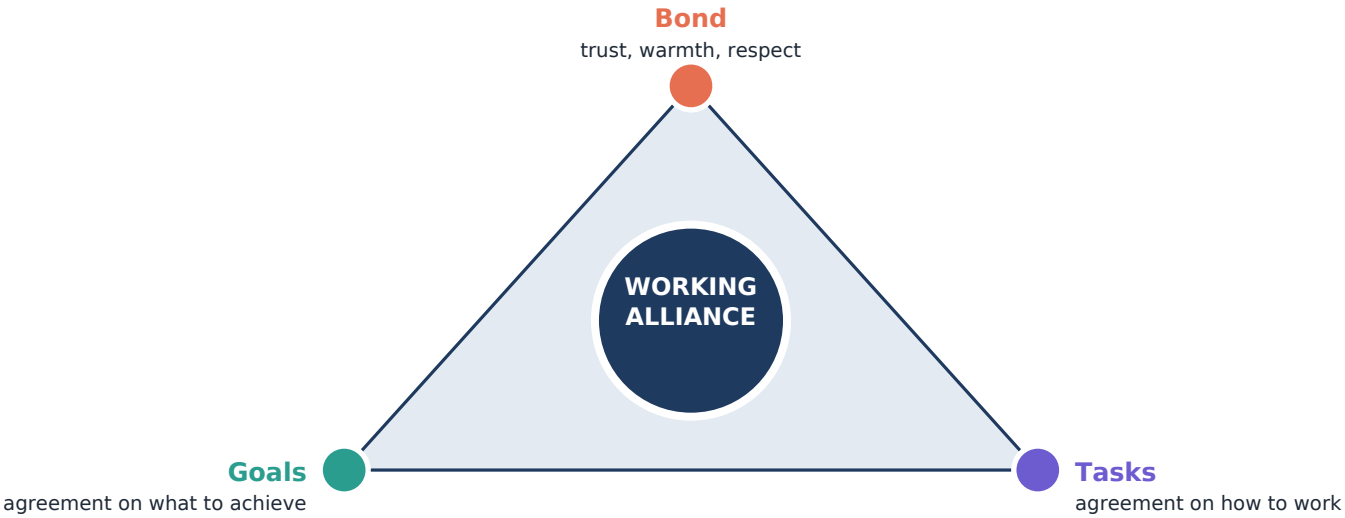


Figure 23. Bordin's (1979) working alliance: rapport (bond) plus agreement on goals and tasks.

Phase	Rapport focus	Example
First contact	Warmth, safety, clarity	Welcoming, explaining confidentiality, matching their pace
Exploration	Attentive listening; their language	Backtracking; reflecting feelings
Goal setting	Shared direction	“So what you want is…”
Change work	Pacing and leading	Matching emotional state, then leading to resources
Rupture & repair	Noticing and repairing strain	“I sense I may have misunderstood you — can we look at that?”
Ending	Respectful closure	Reviewing progress; acknowledging the relationship

Rupture and repair

Research suggests that noticing and openly repairing strains in the relationship (“ruptures”) can strengthen it. Rapport isn't about never getting it wrong.

SECTION 22

Rapport in Sales and Business

In business, rapport turns transactions into relationships. But customers are quick to spot rapport that feels like a technique.

Stage	Rapport behaviour	Watch out for
Opening	Match their pace and formality; genuine interest	Over-familiar greetings; scripted small talk
Discovery	Ask, listen, backtrack in their words	Talking about your product too soon
Presenting	Link benefits to their values and language	Generic pitch
Objections	Pace the concern before responding	Arguing or dismissing
Closing	Lead only if rapport is strong	Pressure tactics
Follow-up	Keep promises; remember details	Disappearing after the sale

Research example: verbal mirroring

In a 2003 field study by van Baaren and colleagues, restaurant servers who repeated customers' orders back word for word received noticeably larger tips than servers who paraphrased. Verbal mirroring — simply using someone's own words — appears to increase goodwill.

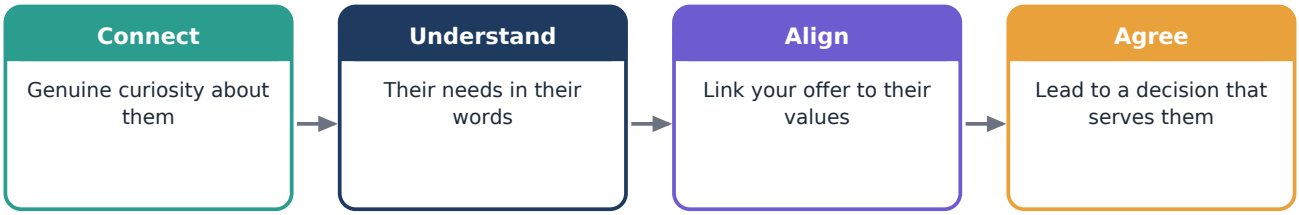


Figure 24. A rapport-centred sales conversation.

SECTION 23

Rapport in Leadership and Teams

Leaders build rapport both one-to-one and with the team as a whole. Teams with good rapport tend to share information more and resolve conflict faster.

Leadership situation	Rapport practice
One-to-ones	Give full attention; match their energy; use their language for goals
Team meetings	Pace the team's mood before setting direction
Giving feedback	Acknowledge their intention before discussing impact
Change announcements	Pace concerns honestly before leading to the vision
Conflict	Use perceptual positions; chunk up to shared goals
Remote teams	Regular informal contact; cameras on for key conversations

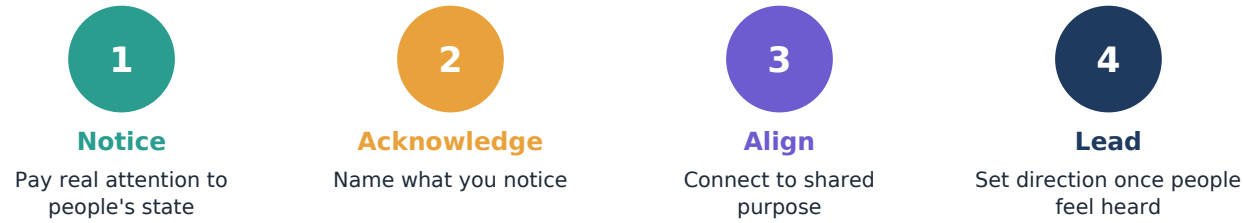


Figure 25. A four-step leadership rapport sequence.

> **Leading by state**
> Leaders' moods are noticed and often copied. A leader who stays calm under pressure gives the team something to match.

Signs of strong team rapport

Candour
Bad news is shared early

Humour
People laugh together

Overlap
Ideas build on each other

Repair
Conflicts are resolved quickly

SECTION 24

Rapport in Education and Healthcare

Teachers and clinicians often work under time pressure, yet rapport has a large effect on learning and on patient engagement.

Setting	Rapport practice	Why it helps
Classroom	Learn and use names; greet at the door	Students feel seen and safer to participate
Classroom	Match students' energy, then lead	Calms an excitable class or lifts a flat one
Tutoring	Use the student's own words for concepts	Shows understanding; reveals misconceptions
Consultation	Sit at eye level; face the patient, not the screen	Signals attention and respect
Consultation	Ask about concerns in the patient's words	Patients disclose more
Bad news	Pace emotion before giving information	Information is more likely to be heard

Small investment, large return

Even a minute of full, unhurried attention at the start of a consultation or lesson can change how the rest of the time feels — for both people.

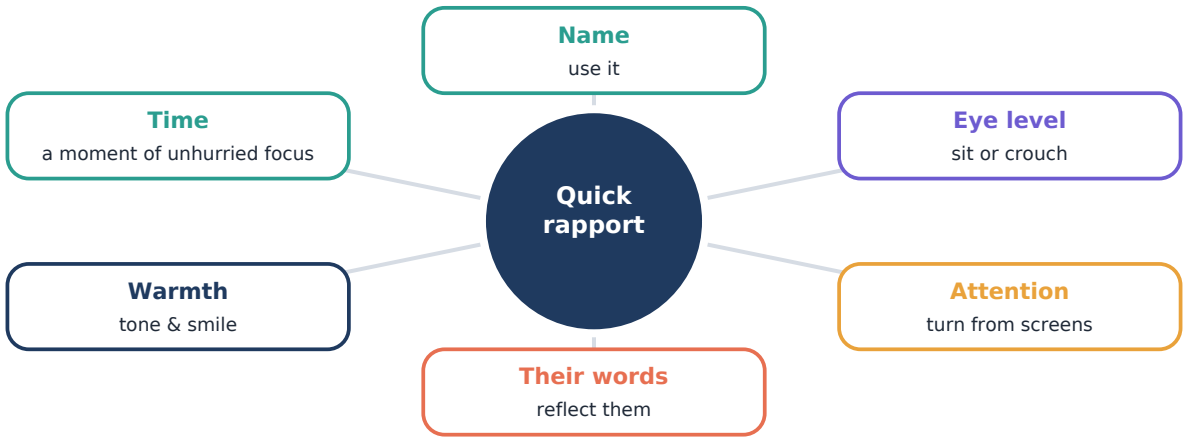


Figure 26. Fast rapport habits for busy professionals.

SECTION 25

Common Mistakes

Rapport techniques can backfire when applied mechanically. Most mistakes come from focusing on technique instead of the person.

Mistake	What happens	Better approach
Obvious mimicry	The person notices and feels manipulated	Approximate, delay, and match only some elements
Matching distress	Panic or anger escalates	Cross-over match; pace gently, then lead to calm
Faking interest	Incongruence is sensed	Find something you're genuinely curious about
Rushing to lead	Resistance	Pace longer; test with small leads
Agreeing to everything	Loss of credibility	Respect their view while keeping your own
Ignoring culture	Offence or discomfort	Let the other person set norms for touch, distance and eye contact
Labelling people's VAK type	Stereotyping; mismatching	Listen to actual words in each moment

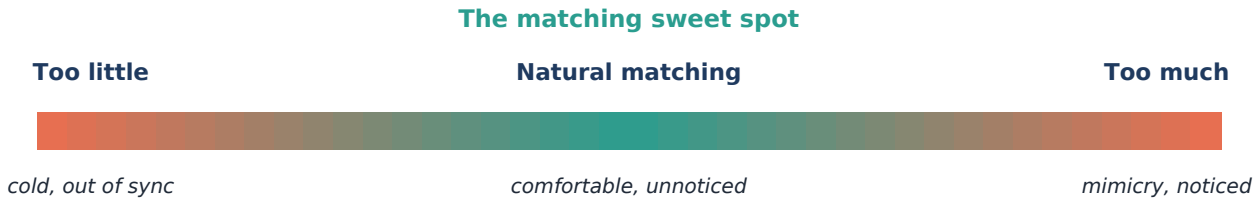


Figure 27. Both too little and too much matching can reduce rapport.

Quick self-check

- [ ] Am I genuinely curious about this person?
- [ ] Would they notice what I'm matching?
- [ ] Have I paced enough before trying to lead?
- [ ] Am I respecting their culture and boundaries?

SECTION 26

What the Research Says

Several of the ideas behind NLP rapport have support in social psychology. Others — especially the more specific NLP claims — do not.

Claim	Status	Comment
People unconsciously mimic those they interact with	Well supported	The “chameleon effect” (Chartrand & Bargh, 1999)
Being mimicked tends to increase liking and smooth interaction	Some support	Found in many studies; effects can be small and context-dependent
Verbal mirroring increases goodwill	Some support	e.g. van Baaren et al. (2003), tipping study
Moving in synchrony increases affiliation	Some support	Research on interpersonal synchrony
Mimicry that is noticed can backfire	Some support	Detected or inappropriate mimicry may reduce liking
Relationship quality predicts therapy outcomes	Well supported	Working alliance research across many studies
People have a preferred VAK system you can detect	Not supported	Reviews (e.g. Sharpley, 1984, 1987) found little support
NLP as a whole	Not supported	Reviews (e.g. Witkowski, 2010; Sturt et al., 2012) found little or insufficient evidence



Eight claims from the table above, grouped by evidence status

> **A balanced view**
> Mainstream research supports the idea that attention, warmth and coordination build rapport. NLP's specific techniques are best seen as practical ways to train these behaviours — not as proven methods in their own right.

What this means in practice

- Focus on genuine attention and warmth first; matching is a supporting skill.
- Use people's own words — the evidence for verbal mirroring is encouraging and the practice is low-risk.
- Keep physical matching loose and natural; obvious mimicry can backfire.
- Don't sort people into “visual” or “kinesthetic” types.

SECTION 27

Ethics of Rapport

Rapport creates trust — and trust can be misused. Influence that depends on hidden techniques raises real ethical questions.

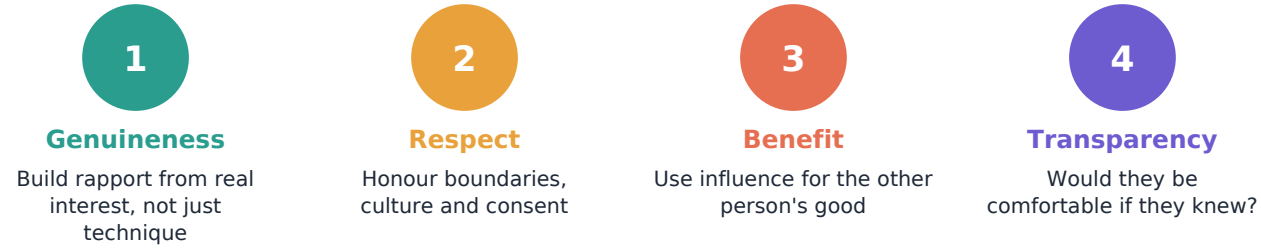


Figure 28. Four principles for ethical rapport.

Situation	Ethical approach
Sales	Use rapport to understand needs, not to pressure people into buying what they don't need.
Negotiation	Build rapport to find mutual gain, not to lower the other side's guard.
Coaching / therapy	Keep professional boundaries; avoid dependency; stay within competence.
Dating and personal life	Never use rapport techniques to manipulate someone into intimacy or commitment.
Vulnerable people	Take extra care with people who are distressed, young or isolated.

Protecting yourself

The best protection against manipulation is to notice when someone is matching you unusually closely or pacing you toward a decision. Rapport can be felt and enjoyed — and you can still take time to decide.

SECTION 28

Practice Exercises

Rapport is a skill. These exercises build it step by step. Use the tracker to record what you notice.

Day	Exercise	Focus
1	Watch two people in a café who are clearly in rapport. Note what matches.	Observation
2	In one conversation, notice only the other person's voice tempo, then match it.	Voice
3	Use three of a friend's key words back to them, naturally.	Words
4	Match one person's posture loosely. Then try a small lead.	Body & leading
5	On a phone call, match energy and pace. Notice the difference.	Remote rapport
6	Prepare a hard conversation using all three perceptual positions.	Perspective
7	Deliberately mismatch to end a conversation warmly.	Mismatching

Rapport tracker

Date	Person / context	What I matched	What I noticed	Rapport (0–10)

SECTION 29

Cheat Sheet, Glossary & Further Reading

Skill	In one line
Matching / mirroring	Softly reflect posture, gesture and energy
Voice matching	Align tempo, volume and tone
Their words	Reuse key words; backtrack before responding
Cross-over matching	Reflect one behaviour with another
Values	Acknowledge what matters to them
Calibration	Notice changes from their baseline
Pacing & leading	Meet them where they are, then guide
Lead test	Make a small change; see if they follow
Mismatching	Break rapport gently when needed

Term	Meaning
Rapport	Mutual trust and responsiveness.
Pacing	Matching someone's current experience or behaviour.
Leading	Guiding toward a new state once rapport exists.
Predicates	Sensory words (see, hear, feel) in speech.
Perceptual positions	Self, other and observer viewpoints.

Further reading

Work	Why read it
Bandler, R. & Grinder, J. (1979). *Frogs into Princes*.	NLP's original account of rapport
Tickle-Degnen, L. & Rosenthal, R. (1990). *Psychological Inquiry*, 1(4).	The three-component model
Chartrand, T. & Bargh, J. (1999). *J. of Personality and Social Psychology*, 76(6).	The chameleon effect
Bordin, E. S. (1979). *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research & Practice*, 16(3).	The working alliance
Hall, E. T. (1966). *The Hidden Dimension*.	Personal space and culture
Witkowski, T. (2010). *Polish Psychological Bulletin*, 41(2).	Critical review of NLP research