

Increase Your Persuasion with Mirrors

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Communicators who are masters of persuasion know they need to make a connection in any conversation. They use a variety of techniques to establish that connection—like nodding as the other speaks or encouraging the other with verbal cues. Done in the right spirit, this isn't manipulation. It's simply good communication technique and good persuasion. The technique of mirroring will help you to take the connection one step farther.

For decades, sales trainers have taught professionals to establish rapport with customers by subtly mirroring or matching their customer's non-verbal behavior. For example, if the customer leans back in her chair with arms crossed, an effective salesperson will lean back in her own chair. Then, to subtly approximate the gesture of crossing, she will cross her hands on her lap.

Research has consistently shown that persuasion technique of mirroring works. People are more likely to respond favorably to those who mirror their own non-verbal patterns than to those who don't. The technique works just as effectively when selling your ideas and your credibility as when you are selling products or services.

To take the technique of mirroring one step further, try to match your receiver's vocal pitch and pace. Kevin Hogan, author of *The Science of Influence*, notes that the rate at which a person speaks reflects the way that person processes information:

If people tend to think in pictures (movies), they tend to speak very quickly. People who tend to speak very slowly process information through their feelings and emotions. In between are people we call the radio announcers who speak with more rich and resonant voices and normally think in words.

No matter what your persuasion situation, you can increase rapport by matching the rate and pitch of your recipient's speech. Mirroring in this way can increase the recipient's understanding, reduce potential boredom, and/or increase the feeling of being "in sync" with you. That feeling of "in sync," the essence of rapport and persuasion, will make your recipient unconsciously inclined to support your proposal, recommendation, or sales proposition.

Give the mirroring technique a try. It's simple and it's a persuasion technique that works!

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